

IDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT ARE MOST INFLUENTIAL IN VETERAN TEACHERS
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING LEAVING THE PROFESSION

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors most influential when veteran teachers seriously consider leaving the teaching profession. Teachers in the education profession who are in the later stages of their careers hold the experience that benefits all who teach in schools. There is ample literature discussing why new teachers leave the profession, but not as much empirical work about experienced teachers and ways to maintain their commitment in the field. Top factors in the literature that influence teachers to leave the profession were identified. Surveys were distributed to educators in six public elementary schools in a Midwestern state. The mixed methodology study relied on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers who had seriously considered leaving the profession within the past three years. Mean rankings were calculated for each item to determine the top three professional or life events teachers ranked as most influential when considering leaving the profession. Qualitative responses on the surveys were coded to determine themes identified by teachers. The researcher, through mean rankings and by coding responses, identified the top three reasons as those directly related to the students they teach. Various professional development opportunities and supports were outlined to offer continued support of veteran teachers. The research corroborated the hypothesis that veteran teachers offer long-term value as mentors and repositories of experience for future generations of educators.

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IDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT ARE MOST INFLUENTIAL IN VETERAN TEACHERS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING LEAVING THE PROFESSION

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH PROBLEM

“Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.”
--Japanese Proverb

Introduction

As the proverb above illustrates, great teachers are central to the success of students in schools across the United States. Retaining effective, quality teachers in the educational institutions across our country is vital to the success of students and crucial to the teaching profession. When great teachers are not retained in the educational field, the profession is left with the problem of how to fill teaching positions with qualified and viable educators.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the number of public school teachers in the United States reached its peak at 3,222,154 teachers before the Great Recession of 2008 (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). There are an estimated 150,000 fewer teachers currently than in 2008 (Brenneman, 2015). This number is important because the teaching profession represents 4 percent of the entire civilian workforce, and the rate of teacher turnover seems to be higher than in other professions (Ingersoll, 2001).

Teachers' decisions to stay or leave the teaching profession have been found to be related to their age (Ingersoll, 2001). The relationship between an educator's teaching experience and turnover follows a U-shaped curve in which researchers have found that younger teachers have higher rates of attrition, mid-career teachers' turnover rates decrease, and attrition rates rise again at the end of a teacher's career (Ingersoll, 2001).

Whereas there are fewer teachers now than in 2008, NCES (2015) reports the student-teacher ratio (1:16) nationally has remained relatively consistent (Brenneman, 2015). Even though the ratio has remained relatively consistent, available teachers aren't always located in the areas where they are needed most (Brenneman, 2015). Teacher turnover has been related to the teaching field, and special education with mathematics and science having been found to have the highest turnover rates (Ingersoll, 2001). The retention of high-quality teachers is a challenge for public education. Reports reflect that shortages of qualified teachers entering the profession might not be the only challenge, but also teachers who transfer to other schools or leave teaching altogether (Kelley, 2004).

Ingersoll (2001) conducted an analysis that suggested that it is the imbalance of teacher supply and demand that is especially problematic. He found that the staffing problems in schools are due to excess demand in which large numbers of teachers leave for reasons other than retirement. He further found that lack of support from administration, difficult student behaviors, and limited faculty input into school decision-making, as well as low salaries, were reasons teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2001).

Highly qualified and effective teachers exist in our schools. These are often the teachers who are passionate about their work and are genuinely concerned about their students. These teachers also represent different generations and life experiences. They also experience varied challenges from new teachers who have a lack of experience in the field to those who are balancing family obligations to those facing impending retirement. These challenges are all based on the current phase of teachers' personal lives. These challenges change as teachers grow from brand new in the educational field to those with many years experience as veteran teachers. There is a body of research that identifies veteran teachers by various concerns, levels of knowledge, characteristics, and attitudes throughout their teaching careers, leading to varying levels of stress and possibly early exit from the career (Burden, 1982).

Various levels of stress, both personal and job related, can influence a teacher to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession (Burden, 1982). This study was designed to identify the factors veteran teachers indicate as ones most likely to influence their decisions to leave the teaching profession. Identifying these factors will help administrators focus on how to better support experienced teachers and encourage them to remain in the teaching field.

Research Question

This study attempted to answer the following research question:

RQ1: What do veteran teachers and supervising administrators report as the factors that are most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession?

A related sub-question was also explored to identify how experienced teachers and supervising administrators described critical factors that might increase the likelihood of leaving the profession. Explaining the events that were identified as most influential to a teacher when seriously considering leaving the profession assisted the researcher in a teacher's personal thoughts related to the event.

It was believed that the answers to both the research question (RQ1) and the sub-question would help inform the literature and provide guidance for administrators to better support their experienced teachers and to better understand career matters/stage of veteran teachers development in order to better support them and to more fully engage them in the work of the school in terms of their knowledge about curriculum and teaching.

Significance of the Study

This researcher identified factors that experienced teachers give as most influential in their decisions to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession. The study looked at ten professional and personal events and conditions that have

been identified in the research literature as reasons identified to have influenced educators to leave the profession.

This study also identified administrators' perceptions on why experienced teachers consider leaving the profession. By evaluating the perceptions of administrators on why they believe experienced teachers leave, both administrator and teacher responses can be compared to see if they are similar to one another.

Teachers who are in later stages of their professional careers possess experience that benefits all who teach in our schools. These teachers are often the individuals who know how best to work with difficult students, instruct students to understand the curriculum, and work through complex situations. A viable induction experience can assist a new teacher in avoiding a "trial by fire" experience (Hochberg, 2015). Strong, formal mentoring that supports beginning teachers is essential, as mentoring has been linked to improved teaching, teacher retention, and strong student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The data gathered from this study will most importantly help teachers as they gain more experience in the classroom to identify ways to stay current and relevant in the field and have higher levels of job satisfaction. It is also important research for administrators because it will help to identify reasons experienced teachers identify as those that influence them seriously considering leaving the profession. The data in this study can result in identifying different supports for more experienced teachers to enable them to continue to be quality leaders in the school, help mentor new teachers in the field and most importantly use their vast experience to teach students.

Veteran teachers have the experience to mentor new teachers to the profession or to mentor teachers who are new to a different subject area or grade level. A quality mentor experience for a new teacher can help support them at the beginning of their career (Connell, 2006). Both formal and informal forms of mentoring can expand the support for new teachers (Hochberg, 2015). Experienced teachers are critical for this mentoring, as important characteristics include expertise in the content area, and familiarity with the school and its students (Hochberg, 2015).

As the literature was reviewed for research published about veteran teachers and reasons for their leaving the profession, there were many studies about teachers in their first five years of teaching and reasons they chose to leave. There was not as much recent empirical work about experienced teachers and ways to maintain their commitment to the field.

Summary

According to the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), at least 3,720 teachers left their jobs during school year 2014-2015. Data from KSDE shows that 2,326 educators retired that year compared to 1,260 during school year 2011-2012. During the same school year, 740 teachers left the profession and 654 teachers decided to leave the state, compared to 491 and 399, respectively, during school year 2011-2012 (Klein, 2015). Clearly these statistics show Kansas, and likely other states, are losing significant numbers of highly experienced teachers.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported the average teacher salary in Kansas for the 2012-2013 school year was \$47,464. This is lower than the average teacher salary in all but seven states (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). The other seven states include Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and West Virginia.

In any organization, employee turnover is important to study because there is a link between employee performance and the effectiveness of the organization (Ingersoll, 2001). Turnover in an organization is normal and important, as too little turnover of employees is tied to organizational stasis; effective organizations eliminate low-caliber performers and bring new employees with fresh ideas to the group (Ingersoll, 2001).

It was important and necessary to determine the top factors that have influenced veteran teachers to seriously consider leaving the profession. This is not to say that it is necessary to keep all experienced teachers, as some are ineffective and exiting the profession is desirable. Effective, experienced teachers are important to helping mentor new teachers who enter the education profession. As in all professions quality experience is essential to the maintenance of high quality practice for the clients served. As the number of experienced teachers leaving the profession is increasing, it is crucial to identify the reasons why, especially for administrators as they plan more suitable professional development and work to retain their most talented teachers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Is the educational utopia in sight?

W.W. Carpenter
Missouri educator, 1931

In this chapter, recent literature on teacher retention was reviewed describing both the early years of a teacher's career and in the latter years of a teacher's career. The literature review identified ways to encourage great teachers to stay in the profession. Various bodies of research were summarized to identify career phases in a teacher's life and various professional and life events were identified that contribute to veteran teachers seriously considering leaving the profession. In synthesizing this literature, themes were identified that may contribute to veteran teachers choosing to leave the profession.

Maintaining Quality Teachers in the First Years of Teaching

Research conducted in professions other than education confirm that retaining quality employees is not just an issue in education but is a potential issue where the mentality of staying with one employer and one career is becoming an obsolete track (Margolis, 2008). Studies show that up to fifty percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Brill & McCartney, 2008). As a result, identifying reasons teachers exit the profession and finding ways to promote teacher retention may have significant implications in the teaching field over the long term.

If talented, effective teachers are going to be retained in the profession, it is necessary to identify what is causing young teachers to leave the profession and identify ways to support them and keep them in education. Much research has been conducted to identify viable mentoring programs to assist new teachers.

Experienced educators often support and mentor the younger generation of teachers. The U.S. Department of Education conducted a longitudinal study and found the number of beginning teachers who were assigned a first year mentor and stayed in the profession after their first year was larger, 86 percent, than those not assigned a first year mentor, 71 percent (Gray & Taie, 2015).

Furthermore, a survey conducted in April 2014 by the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the American Institutes for Research found mentors provided the most value to new teachers over all forms of assistance (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). Administrators need to be aware that strong mentors make a difference when propagating and retaining new and effective teachers. Administrators also need to be aware of the differences in the thinking of the most recent generation that are entering the work force compared to the thinking of the previous generations.

This mind shift to the newest generation of the workforce includes a way of and individual's thinking that wants flexible work schedules, recognition on the job, and constant feedback. These are not necessarily characteristics at the forefront of the daily work of teachers (Margolis, 2008). Previous generations of teachers entering the work force entered with a plan to stay in education until retirement. Today's generation of teachers enters the profession with the expectation of having

more than one career. As this new group of teachers enters the profession, many enter with no career commitment to education (Tamir, 2010).

Ingersoll (2001) has suggested that teacher shortages are not only based on the lack of new teachers entering the profession but the inability to retain effective teachers in the beginning stages of their careers. He states in his organizational analysis of teacher turnover and teacher shortages that one of the issues of keeping qualified teachers is teacher job dissatisfaction. This teacher turnover is not due solely to lower salaries as much as a lack of support within the context of the school (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Experienced educators can help to support new teachers through mentoring and help to retain them in the beginning stages of their careers.

A report from the U.S. Department of Education from April 2015 states that while there has been considerable research regarding beginning teachers in public schools regarding teacher attrition, retention, and mobility, the findings can be inconsistent or found to cover only two years of a beginning teacher's career. According to the National Education Association, about 20 percent of new teachers leave within the first two years (Vierthaler, 2008).

In order to find more accurate data relating to how many new teachers leave the profession, a longitudinal study was developed by the NCES and began in 2007 to study new teachers in the first five years of teaching. The NCES concluded that among all beginning teachers from 2007, 17 percent did not teach through the fifth year (Gray & Taie, 2015). The researcher also concluded that the percentage of beginning teachers who continued to teach after the first year varied by the first year salary level. Ninety-seven percent of beginning teachers whose base salary

was \$40,000 or more were teaching the next year, compared to eighty-seven percent making less than \$40,000 (Gray & Taie, 2015).

Maintaining Quality Teachers in the Latter Stages of their Career

Research that is focused on experienced teachers who are in the latter phases of their career and ways to encourage their continued commitment will help identify ways to keep quality teachers in the profession. These are teachers who are content with their careers and continue to want to be a part of the meaningful endeavor of seeing a possibility that their work may have an impact on future generations (Nieto, 2003a). Research focused on how these educators can remain committed and enthusiastic while others find themselves unhappy in their jobs can help to improve teacher self-efficacy (Cohen, 2009).

These committed and experienced teachers are important to the profession because they have the experience necessary to mentor new teachers and make continued valuable contributions to the field. Mentoring allows new teachers to move from simple to more demanding tasks under the tutelage of experienced teachers whose skill has earned them status within the teaching occupation (Lanier & Little, 1986). These veteran teachers know interventions that work both with difficult student behaviors and academic difficulties within the classroom. This knowledge is crucial to pass on to new teachers and to best serve current students and their families.

According to Day and Gu (2008), many industrialized nations are finding their teacher workforce is aging. Governments are aware of this dilemma and are spending more time and effort recruiting new and effective teachers than they are discovering ways to retain veteran teachers. One of Gu and Day's (2007) findings was that more experienced, veteran teachers were at a greater risk of lessening commitment, thereby lessening their effectiveness in the classroom. Commitment is essential to sustaining teaching passion and effectiveness (Day, 2004).

Recent literature on teacher retention in the early years of a teacher's career is abundant. As various studies on teacher career cycles were examined, common themes began to evolve describing why teachers seriously consider leaving the profession and are reviewed next.

VITAE Study – England

Day (2008) examined relationships between teachers' phases of experience and their levels of commitment to the field. In the Variations in Teachers' Work and Lives and Their Effects on Pupils (VITAE), a study commissioned in England, six professional life phases were identified throughout a teacher's career. The intended outcome was to investigate and identify factors that contributed to some teachers becoming more effective in their professional lives while others did not throughout their careers.

Day, through the VITAE study, found six different professional life phases of teachers that influenced their effectiveness in the classroom. These phases reflected

teacher perceptions of their students' achievements during the specific phases in their professional lives. The study identified professional challenges for teachers as they progressed through the phases in their careers and continued with varied efforts to educate their students.

One such challenge identified by teachers as they progressed through their careers was a perceived decline in student behavior in the classroom. As researchers surveyed teachers in the VITAE study, 40% of the 1000 teachers questioned reported they had considered leaving the profession because of disruptive student behaviors (Gu & Day, 2013). Among new teachers, it was estimated that up to half of beginning teachers dropped out within the first five years of teaching. This statistic regarding new teachers has been similarly reported in the United States (Gu & Day, 2013).

Teacher effectiveness in the VITAE study was defined in terms of student achievement and teachers' perceptions of their own effectiveness in the classroom. The study identified that effectiveness involved both a teacher's perception of her own work as well as her impact on student progress and achievement (Gu & Day, 2013). Teacher effectiveness was influenced by variations in work, lives, commitment and resilience, and identities across the teacher career cycle. Effectiveness was also affected by a teacher's own personal capacity to manage the variations in her life.

It is important to note that effectiveness was not a linear process. In other words, the effectiveness of the teacher did not necessarily improve as more experience was gained. Effectiveness is more directly related to the quality of

teaching and learning as opposed to years of experience and education (Gu & Day, 2013). Teacher effectiveness was influenced by variations in work, lives, commitment and resilience, and identities. These researchers identified a teacher's effectiveness as mediated by continuing professional development across all career phases. More important than continued professional development were the conditions in which a teacher works, school leadership, and personal events.

In gathering information on perceived teacher effectiveness, researchers conducted a phenomenological study in which they saw how teachers interpreted their own lived experiences and how they constructed those experiences within their professional work lives. The data was collected, narrative portraits were constructed, and researchers looked for individual patterns in regards to perceived effectiveness.

Researchers identified a teacher's effectiveness as mediated by continuing professional development across all career phases. More important than continued professional development were the conditions in which a teacher works, school leadership, and personal events.

Stages of the Career Life Cycle and VITAE

Teachers' professional life phases were identified as the main influences on teacher effectiveness. The study authors concluded that teacher effectiveness does not necessarily improve as a teacher stays in the teaching career longer. They conclude that a positive personal identity was connected with job satisfaction and was considered a factor in effectiveness.

Stages of a teacher's career as defined by VITAE:

1. Commitment: Support and Challenge (0-3 years)

A teacher in the commitment phase was developing a sense of efficacy in the classroom. As students displayed poor behaviors, teachers in this phase saw it as having a negative impact on themselves and their classrooms. Teachers who successfully negotiated through this stage reportedly felt they had the support of their school leaders, an important aspect of navigating through this stage.

2. Identity and Efficacy in the Classroom (4-7 years)

As teachers navigated this stage, they felt increased confidence about their effectiveness as a teacher. Three fourths of teachers in this phase took on additional responsibilities in the school. Heavy workloads were seen as having a negative impact on some teachers in this stage. As teachers moved through this phase, they were identified as sustaining a strong sense of identity, self-efficacy, and effectiveness. One-fifth of the teachers in this stage were identified as having their identity, efficacy, and effectiveness at risk as a result of heavier workloads and more responsibilities.

3. Managing Changes in Role and Identity (8-15 years)

This stage was identified as a defining moment for teachers in their professional lives. Most (80%) had positions of responsibility and were at a point of making decisions about how to progress in their careers in education (Gu & Day, 2013). One fourth of teachers at this stage began to show loss of motivation for their teaching career as they navigated the next steps in their careers.

4. Work-Life Tensions: Challenges to Motivation and Commitment (16-23 years)

As professional life workloads continued to be heavy, many teachers at this stage were identified as having additional demands outside of the school day. The balance between work and personal life was a concern, often reported as a negative impact of this stage. Teachers in this stage were identified as feeling a lack of support from school administrators, as well as negative perceptions of student behavior. Half of the teachers at this stage felt the desire to seek further career advancement, resulting in an experience of increased motivation and commitment. One third of teachers felt they were sustaining their motivation, commitment, and effectiveness, and one tenth were experiencing decreased motivation, commitment, and effectiveness.

5. Challenges to Sustaining Motivation (24-30 years)

As curriculum became more prescribed and the government issued external policies and initiatives, teachers at this stage viewed the policies and initiatives negatively. They also struggled with declining student behavior. Two-thirds of primary teachers retained a strong sense of motivation in this stage, while more than half of secondary teachers reported losing motivation.

6. Sustaining/Declining Motivation, Coping with Change, Looking to Retire (31+ Years)

Of the teachers surveyed in this group, almost two-thirds were identified as having high motivation and commitment. This was due to positive teacher-student relationships and student achievement. Teachers in this stage identified negative impacts as government policy, health issues, and negative student behavior. One

third of the teachers in this group felt disillusioned. Whereas teachers in the later years were identified as having a greater risk of becoming less effective, they were still in the minority of teachers at this stage.

As further research was conducted at the conclusion of the VITAE study, researchers combined the six professional life phases in to three groups: early career teachers (0-7 years), middle career teachers (8-23 years), and late career teachers (24+ years). Researchers identified that teachers in the later stages of the professional life phases experienced less job satisfaction due to declining student behaviors, increased workload, poor health, and increased paperwork (Gu & Day, 2013).

Theorists' Stages of Teacher Development

Frances Fuller

Frances Fuller was a pioneer in this field of study as she worked to identify the planning of meaningful pre-service programs for education students at the University of Texas in 1969 (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). Through her study, Fuller formulated the stages teachers move through as they gain professional experience in the school (Fuller, 1969). She found that new teachers to the profession had experienced pre-teaching concerns prior to student teaching. She discovered that student observers were often seen as critical or hostile toward the classroom teachers they observed.

Fuller also discovered that new teachers were concerned about the demands and limitations of teaching as they tried to transfer their university learning to teaching situations. She discovered that new teachers progressed from concerns

about themselves to concerns for teaching tasks to the concerns for the impact they had on their students.

Fuller's theory regarding professional stages for teachers were motivated by her observations that many teachers follow the same glide path of change, allowing her to acquire a common perspective of her professional stages (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Fuller (1969) identified the stages as:

1. Survival Stage

The teacher was preoccupied with her own adequacy in the classroom. This was coupled with her concern over whether or not she would survive in the classroom. She tried to figure out her place in the school and her ability to answer questions. She wanted to have freedom to occasionally fail, to anticipate problems, and to make changes when met with failure. The teacher at this stage was concerned with meeting the expectations of others.

2. Mastery Stage

The teacher concentrated on her performance and her concerns focused on the teaching task. Teachers at this stage were concerned if they were teaching the content properly and whether or not they had the appropriate teaching skills. They also worried about whether or not they had good control over their classes.

3. Impact Stage

The teacher at this stage became concerned about her effect on her pupils. The teacher in this stage was usually concerned about student progress and how the as the teacher were contributing to student learning. Their concerns were less on

how others felt about them and more about evaluating themselves based on student growth and understanding their own students' capacities to learn.

Unruh and Turner

In the 1970's, Unruh and Turner proposed the idea of career stages for teachers. Their research helped to set the foundation for a framework for further research on the career stages of a teacher (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). Unruh and Turner (1970) identified the following stages:

1. The initial teaching period

Period during the first five to six years of teaching, where new teachers had problems with management, organization, curricular development, and being accepted by the staff (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). They further identified problems of the novice teacher as discipline, routine and organization, grading papers, and curriculum development (Burden, 1982).

2. Period of building security

The second stage covered the next six to fifteen years of a teacher's career. Teachers at during this stage began to find satisfaction in their teaching lives as they felt they knew what they were doing. They continued to improve their background and knowledge and took additional courses for salary increases and to improve their teaching.

3. The maturing period

The final stage was one of maturity where teachers felt security in their professional lives and began to be involved in outside interests (Fessler &

Christensen, 1992). These teachers were also noted to look for new ideas and concepts for the classroom.

Burden

Paul Burden (1982) further labeled the characteristics of a teacher's career into three stages. His stages were identified through the use of interview data:

1. Survival Stage

During the first year of teaching, teachers in this stage were concerned about classroom control, knowledge of the subject, their own teaching skills, and planning.

2. Adjustment Stage

This stage encompassed the second, third, and fourth years of teaching. Teachers were seen to be more knowledgeable about teaching and more confident. They looked for new techniques to help a wider range of student needs. Teachers at this stage felt they were better at meeting their students' needs.

3. Mature Stage

This stage included the fifth year and beyond. Teachers in this stage were comfortable teaching and felt they could handle anything that happened throughout the day. Not only were they concerned with meeting their students' needs, but also their relationship to the students.

Sharon Oja

Sharon Oja (1990) described the different stages of development pertinent to teachers in alignment with adult stages of development. She found that teachers at

higher stages of human development appeared more effective in classrooms than their colleagues at lower stages. She labeled the stages as (Oja, 1990):

1. Self-protective stage

The teacher, due to her own impulsiveness, had a hard time managing aggression. During this stage, the teacher could possibly develop a negative response to teaching, which may result in the manipulation of others. Few teachers fell in this stage.

2. Conformist Stage

The teacher at this stage wanted to help and be liked by students. As a result, when a student was demanding, the teacher could feel unappreciated or frustrated. This diminished her commitment to her students. Fear of being different, she was concerned at this stage with expectations from colleagues and administration.

3. Conscientious stage

Teachers at this stage had a strong sense of accomplishment and achievement and could set and evaluate long-term goals. This teacher could recognize different alternatives in problem solving. The teacher at this stage could be frustrated, face emotional exhaustion and diminished personal worth when she couldn't solve all of a students' problems.

4. Autonomous stage

Teachers in this stage had developed an understanding and tolerance when faced with conflicting needs and duties. The teacher in this stage was aware of the social context in which the school operated and had a realistic view of her own

limitations and responsibilities. These teachers valued the mutual interdependence they had with colleagues, and they recognized the individual exceptions and causes of behavior or students. These teachers could see multiple points of view and prioritized choices for action.

Fessler and Christensen

Ralph Fessler and Judith Christensen developed a framework of career stages in 1992. They collected data to identify eight stages of a teacher's career: pre-service, induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, stability, career wind-down, and career exit (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). As they identified their framework, they considered it to be a dynamic process as opposed to linear. The stages they identified are as follows:

1. Pre-service

Defined as preparation for the professional career in teaching.

2. Induction

This was the transition from being a student to becoming a teacher. Considered the first few years of teaching, this was the stage when a new teacher strived for acceptance from all stakeholders and a comfort in dealing with everyday issues. This stage could also occur when a teacher changed schools or grade levels. Support systems provided by the administration and personalized professional growth activities were important to be put into consideration.

3. *Competency Building*

These teachers survived the trials associated with the induction period and attention was channeled towards improving teaching abilities. A teacher's job was seen by the individual in this stage as challenging, and she wanted to improve her teaching skills and abilities. Incentives in this stage included praise and recognition, including written and verbal from principal, parents, and students. Teachers at this stage were more likely to be involved in extra work in the summer. They desired a more flexible workday, influence in the school decision-making process, and control of instructional decisions.

4. *Enthusiastic and Growing*

This stage included high a level of competence and enthusiasm, as well as high levels of job satisfaction. These teachers were identified as the competent and self-confident educators. These teachers had a positive influence on school climate and other teachers. Professional growth needed to include reinforcement of leadership, including curriculum, professional activities, and mentoring. The challenge for administrators at this stage was to create a climate that maximized the opportunity for teachers to remain enthusiastic at this stage.

5. *Career Frustration*

This stage was most often identified at the mid-point of the teacher's career, but could also happen towards the beginning. Teachers at this stage wondered why they were in teaching. These teachers were frustrated at the lack of recognition and the failure to find help from others that would improve teaching success. The

teacher at this stage was at the beginning of burn out and was at a high risk of withdrawing from teaching. Support from principals at this stage could be imperative in determining whether the teacher would exit the profession or become more enthusiastic and committed.

6. *Stability*

This was a stage of plateau. Teachers at this stage did what was expected of them, but weren't committed to growth. Teachers in this stage had either lost their enthusiasm and found teaching to be a daily grind, or they had maintained a competent and steady commitment to teaching. Effective professional development at this stage would encourage teachers to move toward more positive stages of the career cycle.

7. *Career Wind-Down*

The teacher at this stage prepared to leave the profession. This could be a period of reflection on positive experiences and could last several years. For some teachers this was a time for positive reflection, while for others it was be a period of frustration. This stage could be seen as a precursor to leaving the profession, but it could also be seen as a phase for a new role within the school or for a new career.

8. *Career Exit*

This was the exiting stage of a teacher's career. It could happen at the end of a teacher's career or during a natural transition in life such as childbirth. This stage could be resentful if the exit was involuntary, but it could also be enthusiastic if a

teacher was looking forward to a change in career. The stage could also have been seen as satisfactory if a teacher has had a long and rewarding career.

Early Stages of a Teacher's Career (0-7 Years)

The early stages of a teacher's career, defined here in the first seven years of a teacher's career, are important in the career of a neophyte teacher. There is a substantial amount of research to support the importance of effective mentoring programs and support in the early years of a teacher's career. The early stages of a teacher's professional life, according to Gu and Day (2009), are focused on high commitment. This commitment is a result of support given by school leaders and teacher mentors.

There is a vast amount of research available regarding teacher efficacy and how to retain teachers in the profession within their first five years of employment. The research regarding the beginning phases of a teacher's career has assisted in creating effective mentoring programs and positive supports to aid new and overwhelmed teachers in the profession. Researchers are hopeful they will discover continued reasons new teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years of their career (Day, 2008).

Pre-service teacher education needs to focus more on preparing teachers to work with enthusiasm, competence, and caring (Nieto 2003). A strong educational foundation in education will assist new teachers in preparing for the reality of teaching in a classroom. A teacher's first five years in the classroom are the most important when speaking of attrition, as there are high levels of stress (Gu & Day, 2007).

Pre-service teacher beliefs about teaching are well established by the time she enters her first classroom. Teacher beliefs include what it takes to be an effective teacher and what effective classroom management looks like (Pajares, 1992). This is a result of the many years a new teacher has spent in the educational system as they matriculate through high school and college.

How Educators Can Help to Retain Newer Teachers in Education

Common themes emerged in the literature review on teacher retention in the early years of the teaching career. These themes explain reasons teachers leave the field in the first stages of their career:

Improve Administrative Support

Ingersoll (2001) recommended that educators work within the school context to improve administrative support and increase opportunities for teachers to make decisions. He saw increased administrative support and increased decision making as ways to encourage teachers to stay in the profession. Newer teachers enter the teaching career with fewer experiences to affect their attitudes about education. They need to have guidance and clear expectations, but also the sense of empowerment in their everyday work in matters that include how they teach and setting high standards for student achievement (Watkins, 2005). Inadequate administrative support has been identified as a common reason given by teachers who have considered leaving the teaching profession (Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Professional Development Opportunities

Margolis (2008) states teachers in the early stages of their career are searching for opportunities to grow professionally. Teachers new to the career are clean slates who need support from administration and experienced teachers to help them grow in the profession. Challenging teachers in the early stages of their career with various professional development opportunities assists in their continued development.

Effective professional development is important for educators, no matter what career stage they are in. Professional development that encourages collegiality can aide in facilitating discussion among educators. Mentoring beginning teachers can also be an effective way to keep experienced teachers current in the field. A strong mentoring program helps the mentor teacher grow professionally as much as the new teacher being mentored (Watkins, 2005). Effective mentoring demands that the mentor knows what effective instruction looks like that will result in high student achievement. Mentoring is not only for experienced teachers. There are opportunities for new teachers to mentor, as well.

One way to improve the retention of teachers in the early stages of their career, according to Margolis (2008), is to give teachers in the early stages of their career the opportunity to mentor pre-service teachers. This construct breaks the traditional norm of teachers in schools who have many years of experience being the only ones who host and mentor pre-service teachers. Mentoring new teachers provides an effective teacher in the beginning stages of the teaching career with an opportunity to step into a leadership role and reflect on current practice.

Professional development such as working with pre-service teachers helps in providing leadership roles, encouraging professional dialogue among colleagues, and fosters a sense of increased commitment to the profession (Margolis, 2008). Fostering positive experiences with professional development can encourage teachers in the early career cycle to experience higher job satisfaction in their schools.

High functioning teams in a school can foster strong professional dialogue in a school and continue to support new teachers in having higher job satisfaction. New teachers can benefit in the early stages of their career by being a part of a strong professional community where support and involvement in decision making is evident (Brill & McCartney, 2008). These professional communities can encourage teachers to reflect on best practices and become more involved in professional dialogue.

Coupled with strong communities that foster professional dialogue, teachers early in their career share a need for support and belonging (Watkins, 2005). In one study, a group of more than sixty beginning teachers reminded principals and experienced school staff that school staff need to make an effort to make newer teachers feel a part of the school community (Ewing & Smith, 2003). A sense of belonging can help foster a new teacher's commitment to the school and profession.

A way to help teachers at the beginning of their career to feel a part of the community is to assign a teacher mentor. The assignment of a mentor has been found to be effective in building and retaining new teachers (Ewing & Smith, 2003). Mentoring not only builds a relationship of trust, but it also provides continued

professional development for a newer teacher. Effective mentoring relationships can assist with curriculum, classroom management, and organization. Effective mentoring relationships can also help teachers with classroom management and dealing with student discipline.

Student Behaviors

Teachers in the early stages of their career want respect from their students and desire for students to like them (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). This is a tough balance for new teachers as the desire to be liked can impede strong classroom management. Student behavior problems have been found to be a contributing factor to retaining teachers. Severe behavior problems have been identified as having a negative correlation with teacher satisfaction (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Administrators can support teachers in defining appropriate discipline procedures and classroom management.

Administrative support, quality professional development, and assistance with student behaviors are all contributing factors to retaining quality teachers in the early phases of their career. These themes are interwoven throughout a teacher's career, and can be applied to teachers in the later stages of their careers.

Conclusion

Research on the retention of new teachers and how experienced educators can help support and maintain them in the profession can be synthesized into common themes that are beneficial for the retention and encouragement of continued commitment of veteran teachers. Many of the challenges that face

teachers early in their career have been identified as similar later in a teacher's career. It is important to be aware of the challenges to aide in continued commitment of veteran teachers. These challenges include further administrative support, professional development germane to the teacher's life cycle phase, and assistance with student behaviors.

Mid-Career/End of Career Teachers (8+ Years)

Experienced teachers in this review are defined as those with more than eight years of teaching experience. Teachers in the mid to end of career stages of their careers are, ideally, in the phase of their career where they have the most experience, yet they begin to complain more about students and their behaviors. They are not as likely to be looking to further their careers and can experience more stagnation (Day & Sachs, 2005).

Research is not as robust when looking into the lives of experienced teachers and what assists them in staying committed to the profession. In national surveys of teachers in urban schools, results show that there is an average yearly attrition rate of twelve to fifteen percent amongst all teachers (Cohen 2009). Teacher identities are deeply rooted within their classrooms, their teaching styles, and their perseverance (Nieto, 2003b). According to the National Commission on Teaching in America's Future in 2000, teachers cite the top reasons for them to consider leaving the profession are a lack of professional support, poor leadership, low pay, and personal reasons (Leimann, Murdock, & Waller, 2008).

Researchers conclude that satisfied teachers are, whether new to the field or experienced, empowered by their school administrators and by the encouragement they receive (Cohen 2009). Administrative support for teacher learning and development, leadership trust of teachers, and positive feedback from parents and students are key positive influences on a teacher's motivation and resilience (Day & Gu, 2013). The best teachers share similar characteristics: acknowledgment that it isn't easy to improve student learning coupled with a sense that they will not give up on their students; flexibility throughout their professional lives; willingness to modify lessons to meet the needs of students; and a concern to align state standards with the chosen curriculum (Cohen 2009). These characteristics keep teachers dedicated to their students and focus on the positive.

Successful teachers have the ability to forget negative experiences throughout the day and to move forward. Psychologists have identified this characteristic to forget negative experiences in soldiers and professional athletes, measuring their resilience to let go of negative experiences and recover their baseline functioning (Cohen 2009). Assisting teachers in developing the trait of moving forward can be helpful in maintaining a positive self-efficacy. This encouragement, coupled with reminding teachers to have a feeling that they have an impact on their students, could facilitate the retention of great veteran teachers in the field.

All teachers want to work in schools that provide them greater autonomy and higher levels of administrative support, as well as clear expectations (Hughes 2012). In order to retain committed veteran teachers, schools need to be made into

more adult-friendly places. Cohen (2002) suggests offering paid sabbaticals, reallocating more money to textbooks, giving teachers more autonomy in what to teach, and involving teachers in the evaluation process.

School administrators are important in maintaining a positive culture in the school and assisting teachers daily. They play a crucial role in guiding the school and staff through changing social conditions and policy landscapes; and in providing optimal structures and school cultures for learning and teaching. They also play an important role in assisting teachers through unavoidable certainties throughout their everyday professional lives; and to help teachers to sustain their commitment, effectiveness in making a difference in the achievement of the students they teach. Administrators must be able to help teachers to raise morale, reduce work related stress, and burnout (Day & Gu, 2013).

Day and Gu (2009) conducted research to understand more fully the trials and tribulations that effect veteran teachers. Most research had been focused on the beginning phases of a teacher's career and the causes of attrition within the formative years of teaching. There was less information about the challenges that face veteran teachers and aspects of supports to keep them motivated to continue to be focused on student achievement (Day & Gu, 2009).

Veteran teachers have discovered various challenges as they have continued their careers. The emergence of high stakes testing has diminished a teacher's ability to practice autonomy in the classroom. The art of teaching has changed drastically over the years, with the focus being more on ensuring students are aligned to the state standards prescribed to the grade level and less on curricula that

does not align directly to the tested standards. As state standards become more prescribed, some teachers have become less committed to what they have been doing in the classroom.

Many studies of teacher retention focus on how many teachers are leaving the profession as a result of loss of commitment instead of the ways the commitment may have become eroded while in the classroom. Why is commitment eroding? In most schools, teachers are expected to reap their own rewards intrinsically, including a sense of purpose and engagement in meaningful work (Cohen 2009).

Finding ways to retain quality, experienced teachers is of the utmost importance, as they are the educators who can best prepare our novice teachers for the future of education. The VITAE research project conducted in England found that a combination of personal, situated, and policy-related circumstances affect a teacher's resilience and quality retention. Findings spotlighted how enthusiasm and motivation will suffer without the active support of administration and colleagues in the school. Retention is a process as opposed to a result. It is important to identify conditions that sustain a teacher's high commitment to the profession over time (Day 2008).

Teacher Efficacy

Some veteran educators who have been in the field for many years are finding themselves losing their capacity to sustain themselves in terms of their commitment and effectiveness in the classroom. Some are nearing retirement, while others are affected by factors such as negative student behavior and lack of

support in the classroom. As fewer experienced teachers choose to remain current in the profession, it has become a challenge to transfer knowledge and best practices to the next generation.

Teacher professional development happens over a teacher's entire career. It is dynamic, and hopefully lasts a teacher's career (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). Administrators need to identify the reasons veteran teachers lose their commitment and work to support them. There is abundant research and literature on teacher burnout, but there is less literature on teacher retention (Cohen 2009).

New and bright teachers have been hard to retain in the profession, and it is imperative that administrators continue to discover viable ways to support them. It is also important to discover ways to support effective veteran teachers. Some attrition in the teaching profession is normal. Whereas it is imperative that schools find ways to support and retain quality teachers, it is not necessarily desirable to retain all teachers (Scheopner, 2010).

As teachers continue their careers, they continue to develop meaning and direction. Teachers develop their teaching philosophy coupled with a pedagogical personality. They also develop their assumptions of qualities that relate to teacher practice. Finally, they develop their repertoire to facilitate learning in the classroom (Ayers & Schubert, 1992). This is a process that happens over a period of time, and veteran teachers can help model these pedagogical processes for beginning teachers. The reenergizing of veteran teachers is just as poignant to the success of our educational system (Cohen, 2002).

Maintaining a Passion for Teaching

Many veteran teachers maintain a passion for teaching. The paradox happens when teachers' lives outside of the school aren't safeguarded so they can commit their entire selves to the classroom. When a teacher devotes her entire life to school out of a daily routine and becomes permanently tired, her occupational effectiveness resulting in enjoyment, satisfaction, and commitment decreases (Day, 2004). Helping veteran teachers maintain a healthy balance between home and school is crucial.

There needs to be a priority in research related to retaining quality teachers who have served numerous years in education as well as research on how to retain new teachers. Our nation is facing a looming teacher shortage because a large group is nearing retirement (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006). Many are nearing retirement age, and there is a large number of vacancies in rural and inner-city school districts. This is compounded with fewer college students training to become teachers (Vierthaler, 2008). This shortage is a problem in areas including math, foreign languages, and sciences, as well as for schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas (Day & Gu, 2013).

Challenges in the Career of Experienced Teachers

Experienced teachers have challenges and stressors that are different compared to their younger counterparts. Experienced teachers are some of our best teachers, and we see as a nation that we are facing a challenge in retaining qualified teachers (Hughes, 2012). This is not to say we need to retain all teachers in the field. Some teacher attrition is beneficial as there are ineffective teachers in the

field. We need to work to retain quality teachers in the field of education (Scheopner, 2010). As experienced teachers continue throughout their career, they need to continue to be effective in the classroom. They need to maintain the belief that they can make a difference in the lives of children they are teaching and see their students are learning (Day, 2004).

Many experienced teachers must continue teaching in the field in order to amass the required number of years to reap the benefits of a pension in retirement. Questions must be raised on how to keep veteran teachers energized and engaged in best practices during the final phases of their career. Discovering ways to assist these educators can help those who have lost sight of their valuable contribution to the profession and have reverted to teaching as a job they will vacate as soon as they can retire.

Professional Development

Educators know veteran teachers who continue to participate enthusiastically in professional development opportunities and find ways to stay current in the field. Administrators need to rethink the way they deliver professional development opportunities, encouraging more intellectual activity (Nieto 2003). The following are ways identified in research to provide appropriate professional development for the various career phases during a teacher's professional career.

Appropriate professional development for various career phases

Professional development for teachers is a complex topic. It is not as simple as choosing one theme or an idea and teaching it to educators on one specific day. Professional development is no longer about being defined as the myriad activities a teacher participates in over a course of a career. Instead, the definition of professional development has become more of a complex and intellectual opportunity to raise standards of teaching and achievement in schools (Day & Sachs, 2005). Making this even more complex is the tailoring of professional development to benefit the needs of teachers in their various stages of career development.

It is because of this shift in definition that current professional development in schools needs to parallel the current prescriptive needs as outlined by state and federal governments. There has been an increased emphasis placed in education on standards based curriculum and teaching with an eventual emphasis on results of state tests. More school districts are turning toward Professional Learning Communities (PLC) as a form of professional development to examine student data and assess ways to remediate or enrich students.

Professional development needs to transition toward a sustained and intensive study of how students learn best and achieve to the best of their abilities. Gone are the days when teachers could choose from one-day workshops or lectures to support lifelong learning and come back to their classrooms and close their doors. In contemporary collaborative environments, individual teachers can no longer ignore the need to collaborate with other educators. As school budgets tighten, professional development has become more focused on in-service education within

the school district focused on staff and student maintenance, improvement, and change affecting student achievement (Day & Sachs, 2005).

In-service education as continuous professional development is intended to provide intensive learning over a limited period of time (Day, 2004). The leader of professional development has a role to facilitate and stimulate learning.

Professional development should include relevant topics that teachers can use immediately in the classroom. The end result is to accelerate growth, regardless of the career phase in which teachers reside.

In our academic environment, educators know adults learn differently than children. Our learning is less global and more germane to our professional lives. Educators need time to discuss and use newly presented information. Depending on major life tasks, educational needs, and work and personal roles, learners differ in motivation and abilities to learn in various venues (Hansman & Mott, 2010).

Professional development is intricately linked to a teacher's career. Solid professional development opportunities can provide teachers with the continuing education they need to foster continuous improvement and retention. The following are suggested professional development opportunities appropriate for each stage of a teacher's career life cycle – for both new and experienced teachers.

Effective Professional Development

Teaching is a profession that demands a person have a large amount of intellectual and emotional commitment (Day & Gu, 2013). Many teachers are drawn to education because of an enthusiasm for teaching children. This enthusiasm helps

them to continue to teach their best, even as challenges face them throughout their career. As education changes and more demand is placed on student achievement as defined by state and national assessments, Nieto (2003) says professional development needs to be rethought. She suggests that the rethinking of professional development begins with pre-service teachers and continues throughout a teacher's professional career.

Pre-Service Professional Development

The rethinking of professional development begins with pre-service teacher programs at the university level. Whereas universities have shifted to incorporate newer research and pedagogy, teachers are still observed as entering the profession without knowing what to fully expect (Nieto, 2003a). Knowing how to teach appropriate best practices is important, but just as important is knowing about the students and how to teach them, being aware of our own personal bias in regards to culture and gender, and how to best use time to work with fellow educators to assess student need (Nieto, 2003a).

When developing effective professional development at all stages of the teacher career cycle, staff developers need to have the belief that all teachers can learn and become better teachers in our diverse educational communities, providing safe and trusting environments to conduct the professional development (Elliott & Schiff, 2001). Supporting professional development requires challenging teachers to give sustained attention to both the problems and possibilities in our schools (Nieto, 2003a).

Our students and schools are becoming more culturally diverse, and teachers need to be prepared to examine their own personal biases as they work to enhance and support student achievement. They also need the opportunity have a say in their own learning and be involved in conversations with one another. Dialogue in a trusted setting is important to creating community among teachers (Nieto, 2003a).

Professional development should prepare teachers to improve instructional practice and hold teachers accountable for standards based instruction. It should also help to ensure teachers are using high quality instructional materials and working towards an awareness of bias in schools (Elliott & Schiff, 2001).

Professional Development and Professional Life Stages

Researchers who were part of the VITAE study combined the six professional life phases into three groups: early career teachers (0-7 years), middle career teacher (8-23 years), and late career teachers (24+ years). The following are professional development opportunities that would provide assistance for teachers at various stages of their professional life.

Professional Development for Early Career Teachers

Early career teachers are benefitted in their professional development and growth through support of strong school leadership and collaborative school cultures. A positive working environment helps a new teacher build resilience, efficacy, and commitment. Through a positive culture, a new teacher can experience the achievement of his/her students and grow professionally (Gu & Day, 2013).

As beginning teachers feel a sense of community in their schools, they can build relationships with their students. Good relationships can build classroom community, which can in turn decrease poor student behavior. A collaborative school culture can assist a beginning teacher in feeling part of the team.

Professional development related to classroom knowledge is most frequently reported as having a positive impact on teachers at this stage in a teacher's career. This includes conferences outside of the school, school-based training, and working with and visiting teachers in other schools (Day & Gu, 2013). As beginning teachers enter the latter part of the beginning of their career, Day & Gu (2013) identify the need for classroom knowledge as less important and the necessity to have professional development focus more on professional and personal development as more important.

Professional Development for Mid-Career Teachers

Mid-career teachers continue to need leadership support and a continued sense of community as a staff. This is seen as having a critical positive effect upon their commitment and intellectual and emotional development (Gu & Day, 2013). School is a place where collegial relationships are built. Teachers in this stage of their career benefitted from engaging in professional development and the continued support from leadership and staff collegiality (Day & Gu, 2013).

Committed colleagues and student achievement are important at this mid-career stage, as managing a busy home and work life become more challenging. An American study of what keeps teachers going found that learning and developing in a learning community acts as an incentive to keep teachers going within the context

of education (Nieto, 2003a). A result of learning communities as incentives to keep teachers at this stage persevering is the continued emphasis on professional learning communities.

Late Career Teachers and Professional Development

Late career teachers were identified in the VITAE study as facing more challenges than those in earlier career stages in sustaining motivation for teaching. According to Day and Gu (2013), activities relating to current classroom teaching and intervention knowledge, as well as more generalized professional development are of greater importance when relating to professional development at this stage.

Most teachers can benefit from supportive relationships with their colleagues. The positive influence of colleagues can assist teachers in maintaining their original call to the profession and continue to be effective educators in the daily, unanticipated challenges of a school day. According to Day and Gu (2013), all teachers can benefit from an enhanced sense of self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, morale, and quality of support in the workplace. This is directly associated with teacher development and quality retention across career phases.

Allowing teachers to participate in more intellectual activities and reflect upon them might encourage more autonomy. According to a large-scale American study in the 1990's, the most satisfied teachers work in a more supportive, safe, autonomous environment than the least satisfied teachers (Day, 2004).

These teachers who experience autonomy are in classrooms that have students learning according to current best practices. There have been two factors that have contributed to job satisfaction among elementary school teachers. The

two factors are job comfort and job fulfillment. Traits of these factors include teacher satisfaction with conditions of their work and a sense of personal achievement that teachers attribute to their personal performance (Day, 2004). They look for chances to collaborate with co-workers in professional learning communities to further the successes of their students.

No matter what stage of career a teacher is in, she can benefit from having her individual needs met, becoming knowledgeable about who she is teaching and becoming knowledgeable about herself as a teacher (Day, 2004). Becoming knowledgeable about self is not just about teacher self, but also about classroom practitioners and members of the community. Professional development, when linked to the various stages of a teacher's career, can assist in fostering continuous improvement and help to develop teacher efficacy.

10 Personal and Professional Events that Influence an Educator to Seriously Consider Leaving the Profession

Research identifies various reasons teachers choose to leave the profession. Throughout this literature review, the following reasons have been identified that influence teachers to leave the profession:

1. High stakes testing has diminished a teacher's ability to practice autonomy in the classroom.

The teaching profession has changed its emphasis over the past fifty years as large-scale educational reform has become increasingly prescriptive in school districts. Teachers describe their classrooms as becoming more micromanaged by administrators and policy makers based on state and federal laws that mandate adequate yearly progress (AYP) for students. Current school reform that is based on such high levels of accountability may drive some of the most effective veteran teachers away from the profession (Nieto 2003).

School reform is not new to education, and has been ongoing in the United States over the last century and a half. Americans have looked to schools to equalize society and have translated their concerns into demands for constant educational reform (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). School reform began with Horace Mann in 1840 when he spearheaded the Common School Movement. Mann wanted to ensure that every child would receive a basic education funded by local taxes. His influence eventually moved to other states as they adopted the idea of universal schooling.

Lyndon B. Johnson, in his 1960's war on poverty, stated that the answer to all national problems was education. In 1983 Ronald Reagan saw the impending economic decline and set up the Nation at Risk reform in public schools. Over the years, the steps to educational reform have been to discover the problem, devise a remedy, adopt a new policy, and bring institutional change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Prior to 1997, there were few successful examples of successful reform policies and strategies (Fullan, 2009). In the late 1990's whole educational system reform focused on student achievement and began to emerge globally. Education began to transition from a system of a prescription of policies to one of informed judgment based on nation-wide policies and practices derived from research and inquiry. As emphasis of both uniform and informed prescription has changed over the last thirty years, teachers' intrinsic motivation and satisfaction has lessened (Fullan, 2003).

2. There is a heavy workload that the teacher has difficulty managing.

A tired teacher is not an effective teacher. Nor is that teacher allowed to focus on what is most important – teaching. Teachers on average are expected to spend some 20 percent of their time on non-teaching tasks that other adults could do just as well instead.

Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education,
United Kingdom, Oct. 2002

A heavy workload can be a main cause of job dissatisfaction among teachers (Day, 2008; Van Droogenbroeck, 2014).

3. There isn't constant feedback from colleagues or administration.

The principal has formal authority in the school, and the principal can have a great amount of influence over teachers and their self-efficacy. Some teachers resent that the principal observes them infrequently, focusing on the evaluation process instead of informal observation. Teachers feel at times that they know more about teaching than their principal (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

Even though a teacher spends most of her day with students, support teachers receive from colleagues can help to prevent burnout. Feelings of solidarity and empathy from colleagues can assist teachers in their daily lives (Van Droogenbroeck, 2014).

4. There has been a decline in student behavior.

Teachers in the VITAE study identified a perceived decline in student behavior. Teachers reported they had considered leaving the profession because of disruptive student behaviors (Day & Gu, 2013).

5. Most of the day, even outside of school, is devoted to the profession.

Teachers in the VITAE study identified that they dedicate much of their day, even outside of school hours, to school (Day & Gu, 2013). Buchanan (2009) found in his study that teachers who had left the profession, many respondents mentioned the burden of working on necessary projects outside of school hours as a problem. Once they left the teaching profession, respondents in Buchanan's study mentioned

that while their workload was still heavy during their work day, they could leave it all at work and go home.

6. The administration does not support what the teacher is doing in the classroom to instruct students.

Teachers, according to the VITAE study, identified a lack of support from administration (Day & Gu, 2013). Ingersoll (2001) saw that teachers were encouraged to stay in the profession when they experienced increased administrative support and increased decision-making.

7. The work schedule is not flexible.

Teachers identified the routine of the work day did not allow for flexibility when addressing their personal needs outside of the classroom (Fessler & Christensen, 1992).

8. Interest in beginning a new career.

Fessler & Christensen (1992) identified a stage in a teacher's career where they become disenchanted and consider beginning a new career outside of education.

9. The teacher's spouse is preparing to retire.

According to the Gender-Role Conformity Thesis, the employment status of a husband and wife is seen as a division of labor between housework and salary, and

both the timing of retirement and employment after retirement is seen as strategic when making household decisions (Moen, Kim, & Hofmeister, 2001).

10. The salary is not enough to support the teacher's family.

Research suggests that teachers who earn a higher salary stay in the profession longer, especially in the early years of their career (Kelley, 2004).

Summary

Why do veteran teachers seriously consider leaving the profession? Teacher shortages continue in the United States, and it is important for administrators to identify the top reasons to assist effective veteran educators to maintain the desire to stay in education. The VITAE study in England explained why teachers become disenchanted in the educational system, but there doesn't seem to be an understanding in the United States' context of why teachers consider leaving.

Recent literature on teacher retention during the early and latter years of a teacher's career shows that up to fifty percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Identifying reasons veteran US teachers exit the profession and finding ways to promote teacher retention will assist administrators in keeping the best and the brightest educators.

Various events can encourage highly competent teachers to stay in the profession. Strong mentoring programs are important in supporting new teachers in the early stages of their careers. Effective veteran teachers can help to support these teachers in a mentoring capacity during their first years in education. The need for effective veteran teachers as mentors makes it important for

administrators to identify reasons teachers may become disenchanted in education and seriously consider leaving the profession.

Various studies have identified career phases in a teacher's life, as well as professional and life events that contribute to veteran teachers seriously considering leaving the profession. Ten themes were identified from the body of research that teachers identified as reasons they had seriously considered leaving the profession.

The focus of the present study is to ascertain the top professional or life events that veteran teachers identify as reasons they have seriously considered leaving the profession. We don't know the top events that effect teachers in such a negative way that they consider leaving the profession. It is believed that identifying the top reasons, will provide opportunities for administrators to support their experienced teachers and improve their self-efficacy through various supports in the school and viable professional development opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methods used for gathering and analyzing the data on factors experienced teachers report as most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession are presented to answer the research question:

RQ1: What do veteran teachers and supervising administrators report as the factors that are most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession?

A related sub-question was also explored to identify how experienced teachers and supervising administrators describe critical factors that might increase the likelihood of leaving the profession.

This research examines ten of the reasons cited in literature that teachers consider when contemplating leaving the teaching profession. The research question posed in this study regarding the factors that are most influential when veteran teachers seriously consider leaving the profession was investigated quantitatively through surveys distributed to school faculties at regular staff meetings. The researcher was seeking reasons veteran teachers identify for considering leaving the profession. Administrators were also be given surveys to identify reasons administrators identify are significant in teachers' decisions to leave the profession.

Participants

The participants for this study were teachers (n=61) who have seriously considered leaving the profession in the last three years. Because the study relied on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers who had seriously considered leaving the profession, those were the only surveys used. All participants were elementary school teachers in a Midwestern state in the United States who taught preschool through 6th grade. Participants also included teachers who taught art, music, physical education, and library, as well as special education teachers.

Determining Reliability

Before the researcher began to collect data from teachers, the survey instrument was created and tested for reliability and content validity. Ten events educators cite as reasons for seriously considering leaving the profession as outlined in the research literature were chosen for the survey instrument. The researcher discussed the reasons teachers cite as leaving with six school administrators to determine if the events listed on the survey were accurate according to their perceptions on why teachers consider leaving the field. Administrators were made aware that the events in the survey were representative of frequently cited reasons in literature that teachers seriously consider when leaving the profession. The administrators unanimously agreed on the reasons cited as relevant and probable.

Reliability of the survey was determined by administering the survey to the same sample of teachers from a school that was not a part of the study on two different occasions. Educators who had taught more than seven years were asked to

complete the survey since that was the group the researcher had identified to study. A Pearson correlation between the two sets of scores was calculated. This test-retest method assumed that it was relevant to administer the survey to the same group of teachers twice over a period of seven days (Roscoe, 1975). The focus of determining reliability was based on the statistics of ranking the events on the survey. There was not an emphasis on the qualitative portion on the back of the survey when determining the reliability, as the researcher was more concerned with the correlation of the rankings between pre and post tests.

The desired result was based on the idea that the events measured were fairly stable between the times separating the rankings of the two administrations of the surveys. The implication through the test-retest reliability was that the second score was not greatly affected by double exposure to the survey.

Comparing the results of the first and second survey responses from each participant and finding a strong correlation between the two established the reliability and validity of the survey (Roscoe, 1975). The Pearson Correlation was determined to have an r-value of 0.80. The r-value illustrated a strong positive correlation.

After administering the survey, participants were asked if the instructions on the survey and statements were clear and understandable. The goal in discussing the survey instrument with the participants was to see if there were any awkward instructions or phrasings in the instrument. Participants stated that the survey was clear and understandable. One participant out of the sample stated that new

technology that students knew more about than the participant was a consideration when considering leaving the profession.

Distribution and Use of Instruments

The researcher chose six elementary schools in two relatively small school districts in the Midwest to collect data: two in school district A and four in school district B. The schools chosen for data collection had a distribution of teachers among the three career phases identified in the research literature reviewed in chapter two. Both districts were located in a semi-rural county adjacent to a metropolitan area in the Midwest.

Once the districts were selected, the researcher asked permission from the two superintendents to conduct the survey. Both superintendents wrote a letter on the researcher's behalf, allowing the survey to be distributed to the elementary schools in their districts. The researcher then contacted the six principals to schedule a time to attend a faculty meeting to administer the survey instrument. Coordination was originally made through email contact, and the researcher called the principals to offer to meet before the faculty meeting to share the survey instrument.

The researcher chose to administer the survey instrument in person to allow for a structured time for participants to complete the survey. The researcher wanted personal interaction with the participants at the faculty meeting to allow for face-to-face time to explain the survey. This allowed the opportunity to introduce the survey and invite participants to ask clarifying questions related to the study. Data was gathered via a pencil and paper survey of general education teachers

teaching preschool through sixth grade in all stages of the teaching career outlined in the research methodology above. The sample of teachers also included art, music, physical education, library, counseling, and special education.

Informed Consent

The researcher distributed an information statement to participants that followed the guidelines of the University Institutional Review Board, stating that participation was voluntary and, even if the participant agreed to participate, she could withdraw at any time without penalty. The information statement included information on how to contact the researcher and her supervisor.

Distribution of Survey

The study was explained to the participants and surveys were distributed. The researcher stayed for ten minutes to clarify any questions relating to the survey. In order to maintain confidentiality and ensure participants knew the school administrator would not be looking at the surveys, a locked box was left at the school for participants to return their surveys. The researcher returned to the school at the end of the next day to collect the surveys.

Administrators at each school were given an administrator survey instrument to determine what they thought the top events were that influence veteran teachers to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession. The administrator sample included the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches within the 6 elementary schools. Those surveys were also deposited in the locked box for collection by the researcher. The administrator surveys were titled

“Commitment and Retention Survey – Administrators” to differentiate from the teacher surveys.

Instrument

Participants completed a demographic section of the survey in order to collect information about the participant based on years in the education profession, age group, grade currently teaching, gender, and whether or not they had given serious consideration to leaving the teaching profession in the last three years. The question of whether or not they had given serious consideration to leaving the profession was important, as the researcher focused on the “yes” responses when analyzing the data.

Once the demographic section was completed, participants were asked to rank order ten events or conditions that have been identified to influence educators to leave the profession.

“Ten professional and personal events or conditions are listed below. You may have experienced some, while others you have not. All are reasons that have been identified to have influenced educators to leave the profession. Please rank the events below from **1** to **10**. Place a “**1**” next to the event that is the top reason you would consider leaving the profession, a “**2**” next to the event that is the next reason, and so on. Remember, no two events can have the same ranking. After that, show whether or not you have experienced that reason by circling **Yes** or **No**.”

Once participants completed the front of the survey, they were asked to turn it over and explain why they had ranked the top three events as their top reasons:

“Of the three top ranked events or conditions, please explain why they are most critical in your thoughts of leaving the profession.”

The qualitative data gathered was used to identify participants who had seriously considered leaving the profession in the last three years and identify the top three events experienced teachers identified as reasons for considering leaving the profession. The qualitative data gathered from administrators was used to identify reasons they presumed experienced teachers would give when considering leaving the profession. These responses from administrators were compared to those explanations given by experienced teachers for considering leaving the profession.

Timeline of Study

This study was conducted in the fall semester of the 2015-2016 school year in six elementary schools. The surveys were distributed at faculty meeting held either before school or after school. The timing and coordination of the presentation at the staff meeting was at the convenience of the administrator. Four elementary school administrators chose to have the survey distributed after school in front of the faculty, one administrator chose to have the survey distributed at a faculty meeting before school, and one chose to have the survey distributed to the staff as a small group activity in between smaller meetings. At all meetings, participants were able to opt out or choose not to turn the survey in. There was no roster used to ensure everyone turned one in.

Conducting the survey in the first semester of the school year allowed time for the researcher to survey all teachers and administrators involved in the study and to follow up as necessary based on the results. The researcher emphasized that

all rankings needed to be completed one to ten in order for the surveys to be used in the study.

Responses from the 158 participants from six elementary schools were examined first by the researcher and surveys that were missing information pertinent to the study were discarded. As the researcher looked at the returned surveys, those missing rankings from one to ten were discarded. Some participants only ranked three items; others used the same ranking more than once. Surveys missing the central question of whether or not the teacher had seriously considered leaving the profession were also eliminated.

Once the incomplete surveys were removed, 122 surveys remained. Table 3-1 shows the demographics of the remaining 122 participants. Of these 122 surveys, the researcher divided them according to whether or not the participant had seriously considered leaving the profession. Those surveys in which participants had not given serious consideration to leaving the profession were discarded.

Table 3-1

Demographics of Survey Participants

Demographics	
Total Participants	122
Gender	
Female	114
Male	8
0-7 Years Teaching	57
8-23 Years Teaching	54
24+ Years Teaching	11

As shown in Table 3-2, 61 surveys remained once the surveys of those teachers who identified not having given serious consideration to leaving the profession were removed. The 61 surveys that remained included teachers representative of all career stages who had seriously considered leaving the teaching profession in the last three years.

The researcher entered the data into SPSS. Each participant was assigned a survey number, and the row of data and coding in the SPSS program included the following: Survey ID number; group that best represented the teacher’s experience (1, 2, or 3); age group (1-11); subject or grade level taught (0-9); gender (0,1); and if the participant had seriously considered leaving the profession within the last three years (0,1). The section below the demographic part of the survey was coded in SPSS as follows: High stakes testing (Testing_1_1 with the corresponding ranking,

and Testing_1_2 with a code to determine if they had personally experienced the event or condition (0,1). Each set of survey data was entered one at a time. All ten events or conditions were entered in a similar way.

As shown in Table 3-2, 61 participants had seriously considered leaving the profession in the last three years. Of the 61 participants, 59 were female and two were male. Seven respondents out of 61 identified themselves in the third group of total years of education experience. Consequently, the seven respondents were added to the number of teachers who had taught between eight and twenty-three years for a more robust sample of veteran teachers. The researcher recoded the three categories of total years of education experience into two variables; those in the education profession between zero and seven years, and those teachers in the profession more than eight years.

Table 3-2

Teachers who have seriously considered leaving the profession

Demographics	Teachers	Percentage
Total Teachers	61	
Gender		
Female	59	
Male	2	
0-7 Years Teaching	22	36.1
8-23 Years Teaching	32	52.5
24+ Years Teaching	7	11.5

The researcher ran the mean rankings for each item in both of the newly coded educational experience categories to determine the top three professional or life events teachers ranked as those most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession. Because the research question was based on experienced teachers, the professional or life events identified by the teachers who had been in the profession more than eight years were evaluated as the phenomenon of interest.

Each survey contained a second page that asked participants to identify the reasons they ranked the top three reasons as they did on the quantitative portion of the instrument. The researcher recorded each comment and then translated each to a text document. Each event included three separate pages: Page one contained the comments of those who ranked the event as number one, page two contained the comments of those who ranked the event as number two, and page three contained the comments of those who ranked the event as number three. After the researcher set up the pages to record comments per the above thirty pages of data were created. Each individual page was divided into comments by teachers who had taught 0-7 years, teachers who had taught eight to twenty-three years, and teachers who had taught more than twenty-four years.

The researcher examined the comments recorded under each event and ranking to identify the three most important factors influencing teachers to consider leaving the profession. The researcher coded each response with the survey ID in case there needed to be confirmation of what a participant had recorded.

The researcher tallied each comment under each event and its ranking to determine the top reasons teachers had seriously considered leaving the profession.

Responses were coded by event and ranking to find the themes among teachers who had identified the individual events as those that would influence them to seriously consider leaving the profession. As the researcher coded, she was looking for themes to understand why participants had responded in the way they did.

Administrator Surveys

Surveys from administrators were analyzed to identify the top three reasons they thought influenced teachers to consider leaving the profession. Teachers were grouped according to career phase, but administrators were kept in one group, as the researcher sought to determine their perceptions on why teachers leave the profession and considered their years in education to be irrelevant to the focus of the study. As the researcher looked at each administrator survey, it was noted that all eleven administrators who completed surveys identified themselves in the eight to twenty-three years of educational experience category. Items were ranked according to administrator responses.

Qualitative responses were recorded and coded to determine themes that administrators identified, similar to the teacher rankings. The rankings of the teachers were compared to the rankings of the administrators to determine if similar themes existed.

Assumptions

There were three assumptions that undergirded this study. First, all participants were full time teachers in an elementary school. These participants included general education teachers who taught grades preschool through sixth;

specials teachers who taught art, music, library, and physical education; and special education teachers who taught in inclusion classrooms and in self contained classrooms. Other certified positions were included, such as occupational therapist and school psychologist.

Second, the administrators who participated in the survey had some background knowledge based on teaching in the classroom at one time in their careers. It was assumed that this knowledge would help them understand as they completed the surveys regarding why they thought educators left the profession.

Third, the teachers surveyed all had a baseline of knowledge teaching in an elementary school and were aware of the various events that could cause a teacher to seriously consider leaving the profession. It was assumed that teachers would fall into one of the three stages outlined in the survey: zero to seven years, eight to twenty-three years, or twenty-four or more years.

Limitations

This researcher considered that a survey that ranked events that could possibly influence a teacher's decision to seriously leave the profession was appropriate; however, there were four limitations that could influence the findings.

First, this study was conducted in two school districts, limiting the scope on which the research could be conducted. Because of the smaller sample size in a relatively small community, teachers needed to know that their responses would be held in the strictest confidence.

Second, the survey was distributed in the first semester of the school year. This resulted in including first year teachers completing their first semester of

teaching. These teachers had more limited experience compared to others who responded to the survey.

Third, the survey instrument was designed by the researcher and locally tested for reliability and validity. Further, surveys were turned in by teachers after the researcher had left the faculty meeting. Some of the surveys were not complete, and therefore could not be used. Had the researcher stayed the entire time, surveys might have been looked over for completeness before being turned in to the locked box. These surveys may have included pertinent data to the present study.

Although these potential limitations existed, the researcher took the following measures to avoid biasing the data: (a) teachers turned in surveys to a secure box, insuring confidentiality of responses, (b) as the researched focused on teachers who were experienced, teachers in the first semester of teaching would provide answers that would not be used in the findings of the study, (c) testing the instrument with participants prior to the study, (d) giving clear directions to teachers on what they needed to complete to make the survey instrument usable when looking at the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors likely to influence veteran teachers to seriously considering leaving the profession. The findings of this study are outlined in this chapter and are divided into three sections.

The first section describes the demographics of the survey sample. This section describes the sample and population of the research pertaining to the research questions.

The second section addresses the research regarding RQ1: What do veteran teachers and supervising administrators report as factors most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession? This section identifies the top three factors that influence veteran teachers the most when they seriously considering leaving the teaching profession. The section also identifies the top three factors that administrators believe influence teachers when they (teachers) seriously consider leaving the profession. The top three factors for both teachers and administrators were identified by the mean rankings of each group.

The third section addresses the related sub-question that sought to identify how experienced teachers and supervising administrators described critical factors that might increase the likelihood of leaving the profession. This third section explores common themes that existed across participants in each distinct group - teachers and administrators - to provide a more complete representation of why

both groups identified particular events as reasons experienced teachers had seriously considered leaving the profession.

Demographics

Table 4-1 contains the demographics of the sample population. 158 surveys were collected from six elementary schools. Of the 158 surveys collected, thirty-six were not used because of missing information regarding thoughts of seriously leaving the teaching profession. The thirty-six surveys were not used because they did not answer the question central to the study, "Within the last three years, have you given serious consideration to leaving the teaching profession?"

There was some further divergence in answers. Some participants selected factors they would consider when considering leaving the profession by numbering them 1, 5, and 10 instead of 1-10. Others did not rank the events, and left them blank. These responses and omissions led to the disqualification of the survey from further consideration. As stated above, of the total 158 respondents, thirty-six were disqualified, leaving 122 complete sets of responses in the sample for analysis.

Some participants ranked their surveys with the top three factors influencing a thought to leave the profession, and omitted numbers four through ten. These surveys were kept in the sample as the researcher sought to know the top three factors that teachers identified when seriously considering leaving the profession. While the ranking of all ten was a part of the survey, the researcher was most interested in the top three factors.

Of the 122 completed surveys, 114 of the participants were female and 8 were male. Teachers in the first seven years of their career numbered 57, while

teachers within 8 to 23 years of teaching numbered 54. Teachers who had taught more than 24 years numbered 11.

Table 4-1

Sample Demographics

Demographics	
Total Participants	122
Gender	
Female	114
Male	8
0-7 Years Teaching	57
8-23 Years Teaching	54
24+ Years Teaching	11

Of the 122 surveys collected, sixty-one participants, fifty percent, reported that they had not seriously considered leaving the profession at some point within the last three years. Those that responded they had not seriously considered leaving the profession were omitted, as they were not relevant to the research question.

Table 4-2 describes the sample of teachers who had seriously considered leaving the profession within the past three years. Sixty-one participants reported they had seriously considered leaving the profession in the last three years. Of the sixty-one participants who had seriously considered leaving the profession, fifty-nine were female and two were male. Teachers in the first seven years of their

career numbered twenty-two, or 36.1 percent, while teachers within eight to twenty-three years of teaching numbered thirty-two, or 52.5 percent. Teachers who had taught more than twenty-four years numbered seven, or 11.5 percent.

Table 4-2

Teachers who have seriously considered leaving the profession

	Teachers	Percentage
Gender		
Female	59	97
Male	2	3
0-7 Years Teaching		
0-7 Years Teaching	22	36.1
8-23 Years Teaching		
8-23 Years Teaching	32	52.5
24+ Years Teaching		
24+ Years Teaching	7	11.5
Total Teachers	61	100

Looking at the number of teachers in each category, the researcher decided to create two groups when running statistical analyses. Combining the participants in the eight to twenty-three years of teaching category and in the twenty-four and more years of teaching category increased the sample size of veteran teachers to thirty-nine.

Table 4-3 illustrates the two redefined sample categories as those teachers in their first years of teaching up to their seventh year, numbering twenty-two, or 36.1 percent, and those teachers who have taught more than eight years, numbering

thirty-nine, or 63.9 percent. Redefining the categories allowed for a larger and more representative sampling of both new and experienced teachers.

Table 4-3

Two career categories of teachers who have seriously considered leaving teaching

Stage of Career	Teachers	Percentage
0-7 Years	22	36.1
8 + Years	39	63.9
Total Teachers	61	100

The second section of this chapter identifies the top three factors that veteran teachers and supervising administrators identify as reasons veteran teachers consider when thinking about leaving the profession. This section answers the following research question:

RQ1: What do veteran teachers and supervising administrators report as the factors that are most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession?

As shown in Table 4-4, responses were compared using the mean rankings of each sample sub-group, namely teachers who had been in education for more than eight years and administrator responses regarding reasons they think these teachers consider leaving their teaching career. Participants rank-ordered the events from one to ten on their surveys. A rank of one reflected an event most likely to influence that teacher to consider leaving the profession and a ranking of ten reflected an event least likely to influence that teacher's decision to leave the

profession. Of the reasons ranked, teachers reported a decline in student behavior since they began teaching as the top reason they had considered leaving the profession. Administrators also ranked the decline in student behavior as the top event teachers would identify as considering leaving the profession.

Table 4-4

Comparisons of Responses from Teachers in 8+ Year Group and Administrators

Professional or Personal Event	8+ Years	Administrator
1. There has been a decline in student behavior compared to when I began teaching.	2.67	2.91
2. I have a heavy workload that I have difficulty managing.	3.87	4.64
3. I devote most of my day, even outside of school, to my profession.	4.21	3.82
4. High Stakes Testing has diminished my ability to practice autonomy in my classroom.	4.36	5.27
5. My salary is not enough to support my family.	5.56	4.27
6. The administration does not support what I am doing in the classroom to instruct my students.	5.67	5.64
7. My work schedule is not as flexible as I would like it to be.	6.28	6.45
8. I don't get constant feedback from my colleagues or administration.	6.46	7.36
9. I am interested in beginning a new career.	6.77	7.64
10. My spouse is preparing to retire.	9.13	7.00

There was agreement between veteran teachers and administrators on two of the top three factors that influence a teacher's decision to seriously consider leaving the profession. Teachers identified the following as the top reasons they would consider leaving the profession: there has been a decline in student behavior compared to when I began teaching; I have a heavy workload that I have difficulty managing; and I devote most of my day, even outside of school, to my profession. These factors largely mirrored findings from the administrators.

Administrators ranked the following as the top three reasons they think influence veteran teachers to seriously considering leaving the profession: There has been a decline in student behavior compared to when I began teaching; I devote most of my day, even outside of school, to my profession; and my salary is not enough to support my family.

The two groups agreed on two of the three top reasons teachers report that have influenced them to seriously consider leaving the profession. While veteran teachers identified a heavy workload as the third ranked reason they considered for leaving, administrators ranked it fourth. Administrators identified salary as the third top reason that they believed influenced veteran teachers to seriously consider leaving, but the reason does not fall in the teachers' top three reasons. Teachers identified salary as ranked number five.

It is interesting to note that the top three reasons that administrators chose were focused more on external factors that are beyond the administrators' control. While managing student behaviors is central to an administrator, the administrator does not have direct control over how a student behaves daily in the classroom. Of

the teachers' responses, two of the three focused on workload, identifying both a heavy workload that they have difficulty managing and devoting most of the day to the profession, even outside of school as top reasons they would consider leaving the profession.

Both teachers and principals ranked beginning a new career as the number ten and nine events, respectively. While some teachers mentioned they were interested in starting a new career, it had the second to lowest mean ranking for the teacher group. Teachers ranked "my spouse is preparing to retire" as the lowest mean ranking of 9.13. Administrators, on the other hand, ranked it a 7.00, or ranked number 8.

As rankings were compared, the researcher observed that the top four reasons teachers identified as being significant when seriously considering leaving the profession related to the students in their classrooms. There appeared to be a logical break in the data between the event ranked fourth – high stakes testing has diminished my ability to practice autonomy in my classroom – and the fifth event – my salary is not enough to support my family. The researcher notes that the top reasons experienced teachers consider leaving the profession are directly related to the students they work with every day.

Administrators identified "My salary is not enough to support my family" as the third most influential reason experienced teachers consider leaving the profession, while veteran teachers ranked it number 5. This response can be interpreted that veteran teachers have more student-centered concerns as opposed to self-concerns such as salary.

Teachers in the sample identified student behaviors, devoting most of the school day to the profession, and workload as most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession. The students teachers interact with every day in the classroom directly influence these factors. In this sense, the top-three reasons teachers identified are linked to student behavior. Teachers spend most of their day with students, and identify that the broad environment of their classroom strongly influences their thinking to consider leaving the profession.

Teachers identified these three reasons as most likely to influence them to leave the profession. It is interesting to note that all three factors identified are directly linked to their students. As salary was ranked number five, it appears that the more external factor of salary, while important, was not a top factor most likely to make them seriously consider leaving. The survey data suggest that it is the daily internal challenges involved with student interaction—rather than external factors such as pay or policies—that most influence teachers' decisions to remain in the profession.

A related sub-question was also explored to identify how experienced teachers and supervising administrators describe critical factors that might increase the likelihood of leaving the profession. These qualitative results were interesting when comparing comments to the mean rankings, as the comments regarding the events most influential when considering leaving the profession were largely parallel to the top reasons teachers ranked in the quantitative data.

The researcher collected all participant comments from surveys. Each event and each ranking was recorded on an individual page. The researcher then looked at all the surveys and highlighted those comments from teachers who had seriously considered leaving the profession. The comments were then coded to determine if there were themes throughout the responses that paralleled the rankings that were chosen.

The researcher included the qualitative aspect of this study to provide the opportunity for teachers to explain their top three ranked events for leaving the profession. The researcher also asked administrators to state why they thought the reasons they ranked as the top three were most influential to a teacher when considering leaving the profession. The qualitative data further clarified the results found in the quantitative analysis.

Several trends emerged from the qualitative data that related to the top three events ranked by teachers who had been teaching more than eight years. Within the top three events, the researcher sought to determine if common themes for a deeper understanding of why these teachers had considered leaving the profession were present. The researcher compared the teachers' qualitative responses to those of the administrators.

Top Three Reasons Experienced Teachers Have Seriously Considered Leaving the Profession in the Last Three Years

The following section is organized by the top three events most commented on by survey participants as reasons they have considered leaving the profession: a decline in student behavior, heavy workload that is difficult to manage, and devoting most of the day, even outside of school, to the profession. Each event is further broken down into themes the researcher identified when coding the qualitative results.

1. There Has Been a Decline in Student Behavior Compared to When I Began Teaching

Twenty-eight respondents commented on student behaviors declining since they began teaching. Themes emerged concerning the lack of administrative support with student behavior, lack of parent support, and loss of class time because of student behavior.

Lack of Administrative Support with Student Behavior

Many of the respondents cited that they felt the administration did not support them in the classroom with appropriate discipline and consequences.

According to one respondent:

“Poor discipline makes me feel less effective at my job. Students feel empowered to act poorly because the possible consequences don’t matter to them.”

Three different respondents commented on a perception that the school administrators don't do enough when giving consequences to a student for misbehavior:

"Behavior from a few students make it difficult to teach. There is not always help available when a student is out of control."

"There seems to be less accountability and attention from students. PBIS is great but administration seems powerless to discipline, (they) just reward bad behavior."

"Students are not held accountable for their behaviors – there is always an excuse of poor home life. This is a true problem for kids but they still need to be accountable. They will be later in life."

Lack of Parent Support

Experienced teachers responded that a lack of parent support also contributed to a decline in student behaviors. One respondent commented:

"It is not a reflection on the administration; however, students come to school with so much 'baggage' that they deal with it through disrespect, acting out, not doing work, and there is less and less parent concern. These kids are ours seven hours a day and we need to 'handle' it. Parents can't or won't work with the school."

By the very nature of schools, teachers spend the bulk of the day with students, and it is imperative that parents are involved in their child's education to know what has gone on during the day. Other teachers mentioned it was more difficult to deal with student behaviors when there was little or no support from parents.

Loss of Class Time Due to Significant Behaviors

Of the respondents who ranked a decline in student behaviors as a reason they would seriously consider leaving the teaching profession, some mentioned that the loss of class time due to student misbehavior can be problematic and can make the day exhausting. One teacher who had taught more than 24 years stated:

“I love to teach, but some behaviors I am seeing now are beyond my teaching education. (Behaviors are) very time consuming and unnerving.”

Two other teachers mentioned:

“Extreme student behaviors that are left unmanaged take a toll on teachers and take the joy out of coming to work!”

“Often times great chunks of time (are) lost dealing with misbehavior. Students bring baggage to school that makes teaching them difficult.”

Student behaviors can be challenging, and the themes within the comments made by experienced teachers who cite behavior as a reason they would consider leaving the profession illustrate that they feel unsupported by administration pertaining to discipline, feel a lack of parental support, and taking time out of the day to discipline students that should be used for teaching.

Administrators also ranked the decline in student behaviors as the top reason they perceive teachers seriously consider leaving the profession.

Administrator comments reflected those made by teachers. One administrator stated:

“Teachers often cite the expectation of the school to provide the responsibility and values that used to be taught in the home and community as a whole. How can teachers prepare students for a world that is not supporting of modeling the values, responsibility, work ethic needed to be successful at school?”

Another administrator commented:

“The amount of extreme behavior has increased. The general educator does not have capabilities to deal with (extreme behaviors)”

Administrators reflected in their comments that they felt home life stressors affected students’ ability to learn in the classrooms and influenced a teachers’ feelings that they were not getting important teaching done in the classroom. This directly links to the theme by teachers that they are losing instructional time in the classroom due to student behaviors.

2. I have a heavy workload that I have difficulty managing

Twenty experienced teachers identified the heavy workload of being a teacher as ranked among their top three events causing them to consider leaving teaching. Themes emerged that included the amount of time at home required to complete work for the profession and more requirements outside of teaching as required by the school district.

Amount of time spent outside of the workday

Nine teachers made comments related to spending time outside of the school day, taking time away from home and family life. According to one respondent:

“At times over the past few years the workload has been extreme – to the point where I cannot complete paperwork and contacts to parents without working at home.”

Other details that emerged from comments made relating to the workload included spending at least one day on the weekend on classroom related work and how the workload takes time away from the family.

More requirements outside of teaching as required by the school district

Ten participants made comments relating to the requirements outside of teaching as required by the school district. Common comments included the administration not taking workload into account of responsibilities in the school and being asked to document more data than previously required. One respondent who had taught more than twenty-four years commented:

“With budget cuts and testing, educators have been talked to do more, document more, and prove more. Good planning takes time and we have cut planning time. My position has been changed drastically without conversation or notification of what I can let go of to take on the new.”

Administrator comments reflected similar themes relating to the teachers’ heavy workload. Comments reflected a significant rise in stress level due to heavy workload, taking time out of home life. Comments also reflected that there are many things to grade and other responsibilities relating to teaching.

“(There is) a lot of work outside of the school day. The expectation to differentiate, analyze data, individualize instruction, and develop resources to match the new Common Core Standards.”

3. I devote most of the day, even outside of the school day, to the profession

The third event most commented on by teachers related to devoting most of the day, even outside of the school day, to the profession. Many comments related

directly to the previous event regarding the heavy workload of teachers. One teacher responded:

“It’s like two full time jobs. The actual classroom/student time and then all the paperwork and planning.”

Twenty participants made comments regarding the heavy workload. Most mentioned something about working constantly, even on the weekends. Five respondents specifically commented on the lack of family time due to the amount of work taken home from school.

The third event most commented on by administrators relating to why teachers would seriously consider leaving the profession related to the teacher’s salary. Two of the themes that emerged related to supporting a family and the ability to make more money in the private sector.

Five administrators identified the lack of money made as a teacher as a reason an experienced teacher considers leaving the profession. Comments included a low salary making it a struggle to support a family on a teacher’s income. Two administrators commented on the reason teachers leave is they don’t get paid enough, making it difficult to stay in the profession when there is more money to be made in other professions. Three of the comments specifically mentioned that outside companies recruit teachers and offer more salary than a teacher earns in the classroom. These companies, according to one respondent, want experienced teachers to assist in training their own employees.

Summary

The major findings of this study are summarized below and relate to the findings of the top rankings identified by teachers on why they have seriously considered leaving the profession. The findings on administrator perceptions of why teachers seriously consider leaving the profession are also summarized below.

For veteran teachers, the most significant events that influence them to seriously consider leaving the profession are directly related to the students they work with every day. Veteran teachers identified the decline in student behaviors as most influential when considering leaving. Administrators also ranked the decline in student behaviors as the top salient event for teachers to consider leaving. Both mean rankings for student behavior were highest for teachers and administrators.

Veteran teachers ranked their top four events as deriving from the students with whom they work. These events included a decline in student behaviors, a heavy workload they have difficulty managing, devoting most of the day to the profession, and high stakes testing diminishing the ability to practice autonomy in the classroom. All four reasons were directly impacted by students.

Administrators had an accurate perception of the stressor of student behaviors on teachers in the classroom, as they also ranked it as the number one reason teachers seriously consider leaving the profession. Three of the top four rankings by administrators related directly to students. The exception among the events identified by administrators was their third most identified event as experienced teachers leaving the profession because the salary is not enough to

support a family. Teachers ranked this event as the fifth most important event that would cause them to seriously consider leaving the profession.

The qualitative findings provide additional evidence that the top quantitative rankings amongst teachers (and administrators) for leaving teaching were largely classroom environmental factors plus those affecting their home life due to heavy workload duties.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following research question has framed and guided this study:

RQ1: What do experienced teachers and supervising administrators report as the factors that are most influential when seriously considering leaving the profession?

A related sub-question was also explored to identify how experienced teachers and supervising administrators describe critical factors that might increase the likelihood of leaving the profession.

This study sought to identify the most influential personal and professional events identified by veteran teachers as reasons they have seriously considered leaving the teaching profession. The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data in Chapter Four confirms themes in recent research studies that identify events that cause veteran teachers to seriously consider leaving teaching.

In this chapter, overall conclusions are outlined and general recommendations for teachers for engaging in an analysis of self within the school are offered. General recommendations for administrators when planning professional development opportunities are offered. Limitations of the study are identified and recommendations for future research are proposed.

Effective veteran teachers are critical to our school systems. These teachers are educators who can mentor teachers new to the profession and can model teaching strategies and effective classroom management tools. It is important to identify reasons why veteran teachers seriously consider leaving before they have

reached retirement age. This research determined the personal and professional life events most identified by veteran teachers that they have considered when seriously thinking of leaving the profession. Identifying these most critical events are important and can assist teachers with their own self-reflections and administrators when planning professional development opportunities and to help prevent teacher burnout.

Both teachers and school administrators can certainly benefit from this research. It is critical for educational leaders to remain grounded in identifying reasons teachers identify that cause them to become disenchanted with the teaching profession. While certain external factors, such as prescribed curriculum by the state and salary determined by finance formulas cannot be directly influenced by building level administrators, they can influence events within the school such as difficult student behaviors and heavy workloads.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

As stated in Chapter 1, retaining effective, quality teachers in the educational institutions across our country is vital to the success of students and crucial to the teaching profession. Teacher retention has become a challenge in public education as there are shortages of qualified teachers entering the profession, teachers transferring to other schools, and teachers leaving the profession altogether. Teachers leaving the profession have identified lack of support from administration, difficult student behaviors, and low salaries as reasons they have left the profession.

This study identified the professional and personal events outlined in the literature review that had the most influence on veteran teachers' decisions to leave

the profession. Ten professional and personal events were identified and outlined in Chapter 2. The researcher sought to identify the top reasons cited by veteran teachers when seriously considering leaving the profession. The analysis of the data outlined in Chapter 4 identified three student-centered reasons veteran teachers identified as considerations when seriously contemplating leaving the profession: A decline in student behavior compared to when they began teaching; a heavy workload that they have difficulty managing; and devoting most of the day, even outside of school, to the profession.

Administrators identified two of the three events that experienced teachers in this research study identified: a decline in student behavior since they began teaching and devoting most of the day, even outside of school, to the profession. Administrators ranked teacher salary as the third most influential reason they perceived teachers might consider leaving the profession. While administrators ranked salary as the third most influential event, veteran teachers ranked it as fifth.

The findings of this study are important because both teachers and school administrators can benefit from an analysis of the results. School administrators are integral to keeping effective, veteran teachers in schools. These teachers are individuals who can assist in mentoring new teachers, resulting in the professional development and mentorship of a new generation of teachers. Identifying the main reasons veteran teachers consider leaving the profession is important for administrators to be aware.

These findings are most important for teachers based on the assumption that teachers' progressions through professional development last throughout their

careers. Teacher development includes a constant analysis of self in the context of the classroom and the school. As teachers develop over time, it is important for them to be aware of their relative strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and to have a voice in the school.

The main reasons teachers considered leaving the profession, identified in this study, were student-centered. The main reason veteran teachers identified as motivation to seriously considering leaving the profession was a decline in student behavior. Administrators can work with their faculties to create a student behavior plan that ensures teachers there is a school-wide system in place to assist with difficult student behaviors. This school-wide system can add an assurance to teachers that administrators will support them when dealing with difficult student behaviors in the classroom.

An awareness by administrators of teachers' perceptions of a heavy workload and a devotion of most of the day, even outside of school, to the profession can be beneficial when assigning teachers to committees and planning professional development. There needs to be a division of labor within a school to ensure one teacher is not on all school committees. Professional development can be planned by administrators to provide opportunities to meet in teams to discuss student data and appropriate interventions. Professional development can also provide teachers time to work on disaggregating student data and working in groups to discern the most appropriate ways to enrich or remediate for students.

Teachers identified the top three most influential events as those directly related to the students they educate. Teachers have a significant influence on the

students in their classrooms, and it is important for them to consistently be given the opportunity to self-assess. By the very nature of teaching in a self-contained classroom, it is difficult for a teacher to include other colleagues when reflecting on teaching. An increasing workload for teachers makes it difficult to find the time to both observe other teachers in action and to self-reflect. Working with school administrators to schedule times to observe and reflect with peers will assist teachers in reflecting on their own teaching and continuous development.

Conclusion

Student behaviors, a heavy workload, and time devoted to the profession are the cluster of factors that are most important to a teacher's decision to leave the profession. As these are all directly related to the students they educate, it would be beneficial for teachers to be given time to self-reflect within the context of the school to guide continuous professional development. Reflecting on their own work as a teacher, particularly with colleagues, allows teachers to participate in educational conversations and strengthens teachers' voices within the school. These conversations assist in encouraging less isolation in the classroom and more collegial conversations to problem-solve student behaviors and share the workload in the school.

This cluster of factors is important for school administrators to be aware of because administrators need to be able to support these teachers, as many of these veteran teachers are strong teachers whose experience can be tapped into to assist beginning teachers in a mentoring capacity. These supports can be through school-wide systems relating to student behaviors, or assistance in scheduling to allow

teachers time to observe other classrooms and reflect on their own teaching with other educators. Allowing teachers to influence their impact within the context of the school can help to shape both their personal development as a teacher and the development of systems within the school. These suggestions can assist teachers in their own efficacy and encourage them to continue in the teaching field.

Limitations of the Study

While the survey instrument was carefully constructed, implemented, and data thoroughly analyzed, it is still important to address limitations to the study. There were three potential limitations identified regarding this research study.

First, the study's sample of participants was limited to two school districts, limiting the scope of the research. While the sample size was large enough to collect data pertinent to the study, a more robust sample size consisting of more than two school districts would yield greater results.

Second, the survey was distributed during the first semester of the school year. This resulted in including first year teachers completing their first semester of teaching. These teachers had more limited experience compared to others who responded to the survey. Future research comparing new teachers to veteran teachers would produce results that would aid the researcher in determining if factors most influential in teachers seriously considering leaving the teaching profession were different between new and veteran teachers. Conducting the survey during the second semester would allow for a more accurate representation of newer teachers' perceptions.

Third, the survey instrument was distributed in person to participants during their faculty meetings. While the researcher found it prudent to present the surveys in person to yield a higher rate of return, the researcher didn't remain in the meeting until all participants had a chance to return their surveys. As a result, some surveys were missing information pertinent to the study. The researcher has concluded that if she was present when surveys were returned, she would have a chance to look over the survey to ensure completeness. Because some of the surveys were not complete, they could not be used in the study. These surveys may have included pertinent data to the present study.

Discussion

The review of literature in Chapter 2 incorporated various research studies that identified reasons veteran teachers identified when they seriously considered leaving the teaching profession. These various research studies identified stages in teachers' professional careers and personal and professional events that contributed to reasons teachers considered leaving.

The researcher found that, regarding current theories, the events teachers identified as most influential when considering leaving the profession did not fit solely into one theorist's research. Oja's (1990) research on the different stages of development pertinent to teachers in alignment with adult stages of development was most in line with the researcher's findings. The three events identified in the study that most influenced teachers to seriously consider leaving the profession were all centered around students. These events included student behaviors, a heavy workload, and time devoted to the profession.

Oja (1990) described stages of the teacher career cycle in conjunction with adult stages of development. She identified four stages of adult development throughout a teacher's career cycle: self-protective, conformist, conscientious, and autonomous. She found teachers with greater experience and higher stages of adult development appeared more effective in classrooms than their counterparts in the lower stages of adult development. According to Oja (1990), teachers at the early stages of adult development felt negative about teaching or had a diminished commitment to students.

As teachers continued throughout the career cycle and along the continuum of adult development, they moved from more internal factors that dictated their professional lives such as the necessity to be liked by students to more external factors such as active problem solving for student success. These external factors identified by Oja (1990) moved more toward mutual interdependence with colleagues and resulted in teachers looking at issues through multiple points of view. As teachers matured and grew in experience, their professional concerns were more about the students they educated and less about their own personal gain.

Veteran teachers who participated in this study identified student-related concerns as most influential when considering leaving the profession. The events ranked lowest in consideration for leaving teaching related to a spouse retiring, wanting to begin a new career, and not getting constant feedback from colleagues or administration.

The events ranked lowest were more self-centered events, and would be pertinent to a teacher in the first two stages identified by Oja (1990). The top

personal and professional events ranked by teachers reflected reasons that would be crucial to teachers in the later stages of adult development, as these are the stages where teachers can become frustrated when they cannot solve all students' problems and value a mutual interdependence with colleagues. The researcher concludes that administrators can align these reasons with Oja's framework and therefore work diligently with veteran teachers to assist them with student-centered issues to help maintain their self-efficacy.

The researcher contends that with new concerns regarding student behaviors in present times and continued augmentation to the teacher's workload, further research to identify an updated theory for teacher development is germane to the body of literature. Updating theories for teacher development in the age of improved technology and events that directly impact students and their behaviors will be beneficial to assist effective and experienced teachers in staying in the profession.

Veteran teachers identified student factors, including behaviors, increasing workload, and devoting most of their day (even outside of the duty day), as reasons they have considered leaving the profession. Administrators in this study were observed to have an accurate view of why teachers consider leaving. It is crucial for administrators to be able to support these teachers, as many of them are strong teachers whose experience can be tapped into to assist beginning teachers in a mentoring capacity.

Directions for Further Research

Further research on reasons veteran teachers identify as events that influence them to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession would be valuable to the body of research and the education community as effective veteran teachers are key to mentoring new teachers to the profession. This study specifically addressed reasons veteran teachers at the elementary level identified as those that have influenced them to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession. Based on the findings of this study, future research on a larger scale of teachers that encompasses all grade levels, preschool through twelfth grade, in the United States would allow a deeper focus on the reasons veteran teachers identify for considering leaving the profession.

While the study addressed the research question, the researcher feels a more in-depth study comparing the top reasons teachers in their first years identify as reasons for seriously considering leaving the profession with those of veteran teachers would be beneficial to administrators when planning professional development opportunities for the entire faculty. It is both important and necessary to continue to identify ways to continuously support those teachers in the profession who are effective and view the profession as a vocation. These are the teachers who are dedicated to student growth and can have a lasting impact on the students they educate.

Another area of further research related to this study is identifying channels of communication between faculty and administration on a consistent basis to encourage an exchange of ideas. Teacher development happens over time, and

opening channels of communication can assist administrators in acknowledging the professional and personal events that are affecting teachers. Developing teachers does not focus solely on recruitment of effective teachers, but continues in the form of retention during all phases of a teacher's career.

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Appendix A
Commitment and Retention Survey
Teachers

COMMITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY

Ten professional and personal events or conditions are listed below. You may have experienced some, while others you have not. All are reasons that have been identified to have influenced educators to leave the profession. Please rank the events below from **1** to **10**. Place a **“1”** next to the event that is the **top reason** you would consider leaving the profession, a **“2”** next to the event that is the next reason, and so on. Remember, no two events can have the same ranking. After that, show whether or not you have experienced that reason by circling **Yes** or **No**.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Which group corresponds best to your total years of teaching experience? 0-7 years 8-23 years 24 + years

What is your age group? (circle one) 21-25; 26-30; 31-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61-65; 66-70; Over 70

Grade Level/Subject Currently Teaching _____

Gender (circle one) Male Female

Within the last three years, have you given serious consideration to leaving the teaching profession? Yes No

Event/Condition	Ranking (1 to 10)	Have you personally experienced this event/condition?	
1. High stakes testing has diminished my ability to practice autonomy in my classroom.		Yes	No
2. I have a heavy workload that I have difficulty managing.		Yes	No
3. I don't get constant feedback from my colleagues or administration.		Yes	No
4. There has been a decline in student behavior compared to when I began teaching.		Yes	No
5. I devote most of my day, even outside of school, to my profession.		Yes	No
6. The administration does not support what I am doing in the classroom to instruct my students.		Yes	No
7. My work schedule is not as flexible as I would like it to be.		Yes	No
8. I am interested in beginning a new career.		Yes	No
9. My spouse is preparing to retire.		Yes	No
10. My salary is not enough to support my family.		Yes	No

11. Of the three top ranked events or conditions, please explain why they are most critical in your thoughts of leaving the profession.

Ranked #1 _____

Ranked #2 _____

Ranked #3 _____

Appendix B
Commitment and Retention Survey
Administrators

COMMITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY - ADMINISTRATORS

Ten professional and personal events or conditions are listed below. You may have had experience with some teachers leaving the profession due to these reasons, while others you have not. All are reasons that have been identified to have influenced educators to leave the profession. Please think about teachers you know who have left the profession and rank the events below from **1** to **10**. Place a **“1”** next to the event that is the **top reason** you have seen teachers consider leaving the profession, a **“2”** next to the event that is the next reason, and so on. Remember, no two events can have the same ranking. After that, show whether or not you have experienced that reason by circling **Yes** or **No**.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Which group corresponds best to your total years of education experience? 0-7 years 8-23 years 24+ years

What is your age group? (circle one) 21-25; 26-30; 31-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61-65; 66-70; Over 70

Grade Level/Subject Taught _____

Gender (circle one) Male Female

Event/Condition	Ranking (1 to 10)	Have you personally experienced this event/condition?	
1. High stakes testing has diminished my ability to practice autonomy in my classroom.		Yes	No
2. I have a heavy workload that I have difficulty managing.		Yes	No
3. I don't get constant feedback from my colleagues or administration.		Yes	No
4. There has been a decline in student behavior compared to when I began teaching.		Yes	No
5. I devote most of my day, even outside of school, to my profession.		Yes	No
6. The administration does not support what I am doing in the classroom to instruct my students.		Yes	No
7. My work schedule is not as flexible as I would like it to be.		Yes	No
8. I am interested in beginning a new career.		Yes	No
9. My spouse is preparing to retire.		Yes	No
10. My salary is not enough to support my family.		Yes	No

11. Of the three top ranked events or conditions, please explain why you feel they are most critical in a teacher's thoughts of leaving the profession.

Ranked #1 _____

Ranked #2 _____

Ranked #3 _____
