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A Comparison of the Perceptions Between Novice and Veteran Teachers About the Teaching
Profession in Elementary and Middle Schools in Sevier County, Tennessee

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Julie Oliver

December 2005

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Dr. Nancy McMurray

Dr. Elizabeth Ralston

Dr. Jasmine Renner

Keywords: Beginning teachers, Novice teachers, First-career teachers, Second-career teachers

ABSTRACT

A Comparison of the Perceptions Between Novice and Veteran Teachers About the Teaching Profession in Elementary and Middle Schools in Sevier County, Tennessee

by

Julie Oliver

Teachers all over the country are leaving the profession at an alarming rate and by understanding the attitudes and perceptions of both first- and second-career teachers as well as novice and veteran teachers on various areas of teaching, we can begin to identify better and more specific ways to mentor and support all teachers regardless of their age, stage, and life experiences when they enter the profession.

The population of the study was limited to 677 kindergarten- through eighth-grade teachers in Sevier County, Tennessee.

The study revealed that whether a teacher is novice, veteran, first-career, or second-career, there is no difference in their perceptions concerning the teaching career, no difference in their perceptions regarding the various aspects and challenges of teaching, and no difference in their perceptions of how teachers are perceived by colleagues. One difference was found, indicating that novice and veteran teachers have a different perception of their mentoring experiences, with novice teachers rating their mentoring experiences as more positive than veteran teachers.

The majority of teachers participating in the study was happy with their chosen career and would encourage others to enter the field. Findings indicated they shared ideas with colleagues and were willing to share in return. Most said that they felt they made a difference in their students'

lives. Student behavior and time were issues of concern to the teachers in the study. Some teachers pointed out that they sometimes were not able to teach because of a student's behavior and that recent problems in society and at home have made this issue worse. Some said the paperwork associated with teaching was overwhelming, and they had difficulty completing the necessary tasks outside of instruction within a normal school day. In spite of the problems, the majority of educators said they would do it all over again.

DEDICATION

This work is lovingly dedicated to my wonderful family.

Words cannot express how I feel in my heart when I think of you.

Bill, you have been my best friend and the love of my life for more than 20 years. The Lord has allowed us to grow up together and my prayer is He will allow us to grow old together as well. You are my soul mate, and I would not be me without you. Your support and understanding through this entire process has been undeniable. My dream of becoming Dr. Julie Oliver is possible because of you.

Chelsea and Makenzie, I pray that through this process you have not only seen your mom realize a dream, but you have also seen that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. I hope that I have given you one example of how to chase your dreams and catch them. You both are such blessings to me, and I thank God every day He saw fit to allow me to be your mom.

I also dedicate this work to my “family” in the cohort program. You have kept me sane when it did not seem possible, encouraged me when I needed it, and given me a reality check when it was due. Angela, David, James, and Matt, I am blessed to call each one of you my friend.

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Dr. Jasmine Renner

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The composition of first-time teachers as a group is changing. No longer is it considered a norm for new teachers to be fresh out of college with only their schooling experiences on which to rely. Adults from other areas of expertise are beginning to reevaluate their career paths; many are choosing education and bringing with them a plethora of life experiences in the process. Educators are now coming into the profession from all walks of life, in all manners of life's stages and ages, and things are looking promising in the field of education. Or, are they? According to several researchers, nearly 1 out of 10 new teachers quit without finishing their first year (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999), 15% of new teachers leave at the end of their first year (NCES, 2000), 2 out of 10 new teachers leave within the first two years (NCES, 1999), 3 out of 10 new teachers leave within their first three years (Darling-Hammond, 1997; NCTAF, 1996), and approximately 5 out of 10 of new teachers leave within the first five years of teaching (Huling-Austin, 1992; Odell, 1990).

Frequent teacher turnover increases the need for continual recruitment, induction, and replacement of teachers, thus, creating a cycle that seriously affects school districts. First, the **high** attrition rate is paralleling the escalating cost of education and the struggle for funding. Resources directed to replace and develop teachers continually take away from programs and materials needed for schools and their students. Second, the teacher-turnover rate among newer teachers comes at a time when there is greater emphasis on raising students' achievement. Researchers have documented the relationship between teachers' experience and their effectiveness. Berliner (2000) pointed out,

Our scholarship has progressed so that we can now estimate the time it takes to get smart about teaching . . . [it takes] about five years to proceed from the novice stage of

development, to the advanced beginning stage, to the competent stage of development. (p. 360)

Lopez (as cited in Berliner), a researcher from Texas, focused on 6,000 teachers and their students' test scores and established that teachers needed approximately seven years of experience to help students gain in standardized tests that are often the current measure of students' achievement. According to Berliner, this meant,

When policies result in high rates of teachers leaving the profession or a district, when student enrollment growth rates are high (i.e. whenever new teachers are required in large numbers), achievement test performance will be depressed. Apparently, classroom teaching is too complex a job to be learned very rapidly. (p. 361)

When teachers leave the profession early in their careers, valuable material resources and the invaluable experience of professional development leaves with them.

Statement of the Problems

The first problem this study addressed was to determine similarities and differences between first- and second-career teachers regarding their attitudes, perceptions, and expectations about the teaching profession. The second problem this study addressed was to determine similarities and differences between novice and veteran teachers regarding their attitudes, perceptions, and expectations about the teaching profession. Education is, indeed, experiencing hardship. With the attrition rate of educators so alarmingly high, what can be done to stem the exodus? No longer can we rely on the steady influx of first-career teachers. The face of education is changing and schools must be ready to embrace the change. While challenges faced by beginning teachers are similar everywhere, we need to recognize that first- and second-career teachers have differing needs for support during their critical first year of teaching. We need to be ready to do what needs to be done to provide that support. By understanding the attitudes and perceptions of both first- and second-career teachers, we can begin to identify better ways to mentor and support all teachers regardless of the age and stage they enter the profession.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify the similarities and differences in attitudes and perceptions regarding various elements of teaching for first- and second-career as well as novice and veteran teachers. Therefore, my research questions included the following:

1. What similarities and differences exist between first- and second-career teachers in their perception about the teaching profession?
2. What similarities and differences exist between novice and veteran teachers in their perceptions about the teaching profession?
3. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?
4. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?
5. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?
6. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?
7. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?
8. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?

Hypotheses

From the research questions, the following hypotheses were developed:

Ho1: There is no difference between first- and second-career teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I am happy with my chosen career.
- b. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- c. My college experience prepared me to teach.
- d. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- e. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- f. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- g. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- h. I make a positive difference in my students’ lives.

Ho2: There is no difference between novice and veteran teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I am happy with my chosen career.
- b. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- c. My college experience prepared me to teach.
- d. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- e. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- f. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- g. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- h. I make a positive difference in my students’ lives.

Ho3: There is no perceived difference in classroom management between first-and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.

- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

Ho4: There is no perceived difference in classroom management between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.
- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

Ho5: There is no perceived difference in discipline between first- and second-career teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.
- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

Ho6: There is no perceived difference in discipline between novice and veteran teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.

- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

Ho7: There is no perceived difference in parent communication between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.
- b. I communicate well with my students' parents.
- c. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.
- d. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- e. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- f. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

Ho8: There is no perceived difference in parent communication between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.
- b. I communicate well with my students' parents.
- c. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.
- d. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- e. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- f. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

Ho9: There is no perceived difference in mentoring between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

Ho10: There is no perceived difference in mentoring novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

Ho11: There is no perceived difference in how first- and second-career teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas
- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.
- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.
- g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

Ho12: There is no perceived difference in how novice and veteran teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas
- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.
- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.
- g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

Significance of the Study

The reason for conducting this study was to gain a better understanding of the needs of all new public school teachers. The face of education is changing and schools and school systems need to keep up with those changes. Teachers all over the country are leaving the profession at an alarming rate; by understanding the attitudes and perceptions of both first- and second-career teachers as well as novice and veteran teachers on various areas of teaching, we can begin to identify better and more specific ways to mentor and support teachers regardless of the age, stage, and life experiences they possess when they enter the profession.

Definitions of Terms

1. *First-Career Teachers* are coming directly from an undergraduate or graduate school teacher-training program without having held a significant job in the interim. Summer jobs are not noted as significant.
2. *Second-Career Teachers* are those individuals having held previous careers in another profession, including those who have stayed home to raise children before pursuing a teaching career.
3. *Attrition Rate*, as used in this study, refers to the rate of gradual, natural reduction in membership or personnel as through retirement, resignation, or death.
4. *Novice Teacher* is a term used to refer to teachers in their first three years of teaching, regardless of whether they are in their first or second careers.
5. *Veteran Teacher* is a term used to refer to teachers who have completed their third year of teaching or beyond regardless of whether they are in their first or second career.
6. *Classroom Management* is a term used to describe the daily running of a classroom.
7. *Discipline* is a term used to describe maintaining appropriate student behavior that makes it possible to teach and learn without disruption.

8. *Parent Communication* is the term used to describe the contact between parent and teacher and/or parent and administrator.
9. *Formal Mentoring* is the term used to describe the district-prescribed support a novice teacher receives during the first three years of teaching.
10. *Informal Mentoring* is the term used to describe the voluntary support the novice teacher receives from veteran colleagues.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The target population of the study was limited to 677 kindergarten- through eighth-grade teachers in Sevier County, Tennessee. The actual number of respondents was 381, for a response rate of 56.3%. The assumption was made that new teachers face similar problems regardless of geographical location. However, this study is not generalizable to populations outside of Sevier County and the state of Tennessee.

Overview of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 included an introduction, statement of the problem, definitions, research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature and includes the following sections: The Teaching Profession's Need for New Teachers: High Rates of New Teacher Attrition, The Need for New Teacher Support, and Meeting New Teachers' Needs; New Teachers' Entry Into Teaching: Unrealistic Expectations, Reality Shock, Two Jobs: Teaching Effectively and Learning to Teach, and Preparation for Learning to Teach; New Teachers' Responsibilities: Planning, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities; and Support for New, Second-Career Teachers. Chapter 3 details the research methodology. Information is provided on research design, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 includes the findings

or results of the study. Chapter 5 provides the conclusions and recommendations for further research and to improve practice.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Teaching Profession's Need for New Teachers

In the year 2000, approximately two million new kindergarten- through 12th-grade teachers were needed in public school classrooms in the United States (Hussar, 1999; Southworth, 2000). According to a 2004 report from the Southern Regional Education Board, Tennessee will need 14,000 new teachers in the next three years, 4,000 in high school alone (Bradbury, 2004). Several factors including an anticipated increase in student enrollments, education reform efforts requiring reductions in the numbers of students per classroom, and an increase in the numbers of teachers who are expected to retire within the next decade created this high demand (Broughman & Rollefson, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Educators from the state of Tennessee are attempting to produce second-career teachers to fill that demand. An innovative program called *Teach Tennessee* is being offered by the Tennessee Department of Education (2005). This program gives people who have prior education, training, and experience in a field they would like to teach, the ability to enter a classroom quickly without going through a traditional teachers' program first. Participants go through much scrutiny and training before they start teaching, but they do have a mentor and a customized plan for wrapping up any necessary college courses while they are in the classroom and working with students. All eligible candidates must have a bachelor's degree, at least 24 college hours in the field they want to teach, and five or more years of related experience. In addition, they must pass screening tests and a criminal background check. The state Education Department provides two weeks of training in the summer and helps each accepted candidate develop a customized plan for completing any other training needed to become a fully certified teacher within approximately three years. School systems that opt to participate in the program

are responsible for providing additional help, mentors, and oversight until the candidates have completed the program. Schools will also have the option of deciding if they will start the teachers at the bottom of their salary schedule or give them credit for part or all of their professional experience (Tennessee Department of Education).

High Rates of New Teacher Attrition

Even though the need for new teachers is great, beginning teachers are often not welcomed by other educators into the profession. Often, new teachers do not receive adequate amounts of support, such as new-teacher induction programs, to help them better cope with the challenges of learning to teach (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997). Beginning teachers are routinely expected to take a regular teaching load, as if they were 20-year veteran teachers (Huling-Austin, 1992). There is rarely a "gearing up" period for new teachers and it is rare to find on-the-job apprenticeships that help new teachers adjust more gradually to having to take responsibility for a full class load (Gold, 1996; Halford, 1998). In addition to not being allowed to adjust gradually to teaching a full class load, new teachers are often given the worst of everything. They can be given extra class preparations, difficult students other teachers do not want, or extra responsibilities such as playground, lunchroom, or dismissal duties (Bosch & Kersey, 1994; Dollase, 1992; Megay- Nespoli, 1993; Ryan, 1992; Shuman, 1989). Veteran teachers, already faced with many challenges from their own jobs, are seldom helpful to new teachers (Dussault, Deaudelin, Royer, & Loiselle, 1997; Houston & Felder, 1982). Additionally, new teachers often receive insufficient professional development, such as induction support during their initial year of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Sclan). Instead, novice teachers are often thrown into a "sink or swim" situation, meaning that they are frequently given no real support to help them adjust to their new positions as teachers; this is metaphorically comparable to asking a person to learn to swim competently simply by leaping into the deep end of a swimming pool (Lawson, 1992; Morin, 1997). Consequently,

beginning teachers abandon the classroom at high rates (Gold, 1996; Gordon & Maxey, 2000). Of those who graduate from colleges or universities certified to teach in any given year, an estimated 28% of these newly-qualified teachers do not even apply for teaching jobs (Choy et al., 1993). Researchers have reported the following findings about new teachers who begin teaching in any given year:

1. 9.3% quit without finishing their first year (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999);
2. 15% leave at the end of their first year (NCES, 2000);
3. 20% leave within the first two years (NCES, 1999);
4. 33% leave within their first three years (Darling-Hammond, 1997; NCTAF, 1996) and;
5. approximately 50 % leave within the first five years (Huling-Austin, 1992; Odell, 1990).

As a result, although new teachers are in high demand, the difficulties they face when entering the teaching profession are so stressful that many do not continue in their teaching careers (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). Of those who did leave the profession, when asked to compare their current position with that of teaching, more than half reported that the manageability of their workload, opportunity for profession advancement, and general work conditions are better in their current work position (NCES, 2004). To thrive during their induction into teaching, new teachers need support (Gold, 1996).

Need for New Teacher Support

One of the most common reasons noted for teachers leaving the profession is the lack of professional support (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Gold & Roth, 1993). Since the 1980s, there has been keen interest in and emphasis upon providing support for novice kindergarten- through 12th-grade teachers. As stated by Gold (1996), "Providing personal and professional support has become a key issue regarding the retention of dedicated and talented new professionals" (p. 561).

Support in the early years of teaching was considered vitally important by several researchers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gold; Gordon & Maxey, 2000). The first three to five years may not only determine if a teacher stays in teaching but may also affect the kind of teacher he or she will become (DeBolt, 1992). The first year, in particular, is the most crucial period for a teacher's development and a new teacher's first-year teaching experience becomes "imprinted" (Gold, p. 548) in a manner that affects his or her later expectations and teaching (DeBolt, 1992; Gold). Numerous researchers have found that the single most important factor influencing teachers' retention is the quality of the teachers' first full-time teaching experience (Chapman, 1983,1984; Chapman & Green, 1986; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). In order to "survive" successfully their first year of teaching, new teachers often need help (Johnson, Birkeland, & Kardos, 2001). Recently, as a principle means of helping new teachers, many state boards of education and/or school districts have instituted new teacher induction programs (Gold).

Meeting New Teachers' Needs

There are reports of induction programs helping to decrease rates of teacher attrition as well as induction programs that help new teachers improve their practices or move through developmental stages more rapidly (Bemis, 1999; Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Kutch, 1994; Snow, 2000) though the content, duration, and format of these induction programs often vary widely from district to district and even from year to year within the same district (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gold, 1996). Induction programs can be described as being either formal or informal. Formal types typically have administrative approval and sometimes administrative support in the form of staffing and organizational or program structure (Furtwengler, 1995) and may require that mentors report to the school administration their opinions about the new teachers' abilities (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). While informal induction programs also typically have administrative approval, they tend to not have to report on the new teachers' abilities and tend to operate without additional administrative funding, staffing, or structural support (Gold).

New Teachers' Entry Into Teaching

The challenges of the first year of teaching are difficult for beginning teachers (Dollase, 1992; Kane, 1991; Megay-Nespoli, 1993; Ryan, 1992; Sachar, 1991). One reason for this is that novice teachers may experience a conflict between what they expect to happen in the classroom and their actual experiences in the classroom (Rust, 1994). For example, teachers-to-be often begin their first year of teaching holding tight to two of the most commonly held beliefs about teaching; teaching is not really that hard, and learning to teach is something they accomplished in their college experience (Huling-Austin, 1992; Murphy & Moir, 1994).

Unrealistic Expectations

Students majoring in education often enter college programs with high levels of self-confidence about teaching (Walker, 1992). These high levels of self-confidence can be described as preservice teachers' strong personal beliefs about their abilities to learn and teach, high expectations for their students, feelings of personal responsibility for their students' learning, a positive attitude about teaching, and strong beliefs about "their abilities to positively influence students' learning" (Ashton, 1984, p. 29). This level of confidence reported by preservice teachers may be due in part to their having spent the majority of their formative years in school serving what Lortie (1975) called an "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 59) meaning that after years of observing their own kindergarten- through 12th-grade teachers, these preservice teachers likely consider the teaching profession to be one that they know and understand well (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). Lampert and Ball (1998) explained further:

Because of their many years of schooling, teacher candidates come with extensive exposure to teaching and the practice of teaching. They have watched their teachers over the years and constructed ideas about practice from their own perspective as students. They have observed what teachers do and are prepared to teach as their teachers taught. (pp. 24-25)

Unfortunately, and contrary to these future teachers' expectations, teaching is a particularly demanding profession, that, as Feiman-Nemser (2001) explained, could be learned "only on the

job" (p. 18) and although some teacher preparation programs are currently addressing this issue, Feiman-Nemser acknowledged, "No college course can teach a new teacher how to blend knowledge of particular students and knowledge of particular content in decisions about what to do in specific situations" (p. 18). Bartell (1995) made a similar observation, suggesting, "No matter what initial preparation they receive, [new] teachers are never fully prepared for classroom realities and for responsibilities associated with meeting the needs of a rapidly growing, increasingly diverse student population" (pp. 28-29).

Huling-Austin (1992) observed that new teachers' "persistent and unrealistic optimism" about their readiness for entering the classroom meant that, for the most part, "Novice teachers leave preservice programs and enter the profession believing that 'teaching is not all that difficult'" (p. 174). As an example of this, a majority of the preservice teachers who were surveyed in a study by Weinstein (1988) reported that they believed they would experience less difficulty accomplishing a list of 33 separate teaching-related tasks than would any other "average first-year teacher" (as cited in Huling-Austin, p. 174).

In reality, novice teachers' experiences in their first teaching assignments are often very different from what they were expecting based on their college experiences (Huling-Austin, 1992; Rust, 1994). One notable difference was the huge psychological shift from being a mostly passive observer to that of actually being the lone teacher fully accountable and in charge of a classroom of his or her own (Koestier & Wubbels, 1995). In their summary of literature relating to the challenges that were faced by new teachers, Gordon and Maxey (2000) identified six general categories of "environmental difficulties" (p. 2) that new teachers often encountered in their first year of teaching. These included: (a) difficult work assignments, (b) unclear expectations, (c) inadequate resources, (d) isolation, (e) role conflict, and (f) reality shock.

Difficult Work Assignments

Once new teachers begin their teaching assignments, they are expected to hit the ground running. The fact that they are new to the profession is mostly ignored and they often “start with more responsibilities than veteran teachers and are expected to perform all of their duties with the same expertise as experienced professionals” (Gordon & Maxey, 2000, p. 2). Despite recommendations to the contrary, new teachers are often assigned to the worst (i.e., most challenging) schools in a school district (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) or they may be given a too-heavy teaching load in the school to which they have been assigned (Alt, Kwon, & Henke, 1999; Gold, 1996; Gordon & Maxey). Unfortunately, these practices are contradictory to a new teacher’s best interest. Beginning teachers “should not be given multiple teaching assignments” (Huling-Austin, 1992, p. 174) because they learn about teaching more quickly if they are given the opportunity, during their induction into teaching, to teach the same content multiple times (Livingston & Borko, 1989).

Because few school districts provide opportunities for new teachers to "ease" their way into teaching (Halford, 1998), new teachers face many challenges in their first year of teaching. For example, new teachers arriving at their assigned schools may find that they have been given an especially heavy class preparation load, very demanding classes, or the most troublesome or difficult students whom veteran teachers wish to avoid having in their own classes (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinlan, 2001; Halford, 1998). This practice of overloading new recruits has been euphemistically described as "inverse beginner responsibility" (ASCD, 2000, p. 1; Bemis, 1999, p. 13). Further challenges new teachers may face include teaching in a field or area in which they are not certified or in which they "appear qualified on paper but actually have little specific preparation such as a language arts teacher assigned to teach remedial reading or a life-science teacher assigned to teach earth science" (Huling-Austin, 1992, p. 174). Weasmer and Woods (1999) pointed out that new teachers were often given additional responsibilities such as bus, lunchroom, or recess duties or assigned to extracurricular

activities such as school clubs or other demanding but nonacademic activities that veteran teachers wish to avoid.

Unclear Expectations

New teachers often have commented that they do not know what is expected of them; this was a complaint found to be "most common among those who left teaching early" (Gordon & Maxey, 2000, p. 3). Often they were not clearly informed about "formal rules and procedures" or "informal routines and customs" that related to their particular schools, causing them to struggle to try to interpret them (Gordon & Maxey, p. 3). According to these researchers, new teachers may also encounter "conflicting expectations of administrators, other teachers, students, and parents" (p. 3) all adding to the unknown underlying currents present in every building.

Inadequate Resources

As noted by Gordon and Maxey (2000), having inadequate resources was often a challenge faced by many educators, whether new or veteran. The lack of adequate or sufficient resources may include insufficient or nonexistent supplies, instructional materials, or classroom equipment (Gordon & Maxey). As a consequence, at the end of the school year when a veteran teacher either leaves or retires, other teachers in the school may go to the recently vacated classroom and help themselves to the remaining district-issued equipment, teachers' manuals, maps, posters, and other teaching supplies that veteran teachers often stockpile over the years (Glickman, 1984; Gratch, 1998). In another common practice, a new teacher may be assigned a less than desirable classroom situation. In some school districts, the new teacher is an "itinerant" or has to travel; this means that the teacher must move every class period to a new classroom, carrying with him or her all the teaching materials needed for conducting classes (Huling-Austin, 1992).

Isolation

The isolation of the classroom is often daunting to new teachers (Rogers & Babinski, 1999). One aspect of this isolation is psychological. It is often only after beginning a career of their own that new teachers realize the amount of help and support they received along the way from various people, including their cooperating teacher during their student teaching experience as well as their support team from their college or university and including but not limited to their education classes, their student-teaching supervisor, their advisors, their professors, and their peers (Collinson, 1994; Krupp, Smith, & Wolfe, 1994; Rogers & Babinski, 1999). Because of the time constraints of teaching, beginning teachers often have few opportunities to dialogue with other teachers (Gold, 1996). DeSanctis and Blumberg (1979) reported in their study that the average length of any one conversation with other teachers about instruction-related matters in a typical teacher's day was estimated as lasting no longer than two minutes.

A second aspect of new teacher isolation is physical. The moment teachers step into their own classrooms they are physically separated from other teachers (Gold, 1996; Little, 1990). Unfortunately, beginning teachers are sometimes physically separated even further from their colleagues because in some schools, beginning teachers are routinely assigned to the "most physically isolated classrooms" (Gordon & Maxey, 2000, p. 3) such as portable classrooms on the edge of a school campus.

They may also experience a third type of isolation as newcomers to a school, that of social isolation. According to Gordon and Maxey (2000), some experienced teachers, unfortunately, do not befriend or offer help to beginning teachers, even when beginning teachers are "clearly experiencing severe difficulties" (p. 3). These researchers noted that veteran teachers often considered that the new teachers must simply "go through their rites of passage alone, just as they did in their first years," or other teachers may fear that any of their efforts to help new teachers might be "viewed as interference," or that the "principal alone is responsible for assisting new teachers" (p. 4). Furthermore, new teachers might even "contribute to their

own isolation when they hesitate to ask for help" because they may consider the asking "an admission of failure and incompetence" (p. 4). Indeed, in some schools, asking for help is seen as an admission of incompetence and is frowned upon (Gratch, 1998). This could serve to further intensify new teachers' feelings of being unwelcome in the school environment. In a study conducted by Newberry (as cited in Gordon & Maxey), it was found that "Beginning teachers went to great lengths to cover up serious problems with student discipline" (p. 4) in order to avoid this very thing. Although there are, indeed, many veteran teachers who would gladly help a beginning teacher, these teachers are very busy themselves and their time is at a premium because of the time demands of their own groups of students.

Role Conflicts

Role conflict problems involve a clash for first-career teachers particularly those who are "between the roles of teacher and young adults" (Gordon & Maxey, 2000, p. 4). Some researchers have called these problems that first-career teachers face as they mature into adulthood while simultaneously coping with their first professional jobs "stage," "phase," or "age" issues (Sprinthall, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996, p. 669). Others have described these challenges as "life cycle" issues (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, p. 63). Gordon and Maxey described these as "role conflict" problems and explained them as follows:

The new teacher may be living away from home or the safety of college for the first time and may have just moved to a new community. He may be opening bank or charge accounts, renting and furnishing an apartment, or buying a car for the first time. He may be beginning a marriage or starting a family. A non-teaching spouse may be unable to relate to the teacher's concerns about what is happening at school or understand why he spends so much more time and energy on schoolwork than on the family. (p. 4)

Reality Shock

In his classic work on the concerns of new teachers, Veenman (1984) coined the phrase "reality shock," which he defined as "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher

training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (p. 143). Veenman's term, reality shock, is now commonly used to describe the conflict between new teachers' idealistic expectations developed before classroom experiences and the real-world situations they found themselves in during their first teaching assignments (Gold, 1996). Gordon and Maxey (2000) described new teachers' experiences of reality shock as follows:

It is caused by the beginning teacher's realizations about the world of teaching and her lack of preparation for many of the demands and difficulties of that world. Many beginners embark on their first teaching assignments with highly idealized perceptions of teaching: They tend to envision themselves spending the entire day fostering their students' academic growth. . . . The discrepancy between the beginning teacher's vision of teaching and the real world of teaching can cause serious disillusionment . . . [and this] "transition shock" can lead to a state of paralysis that renders teachers unable to transfer to the classroom the skills they learned during teacher education. (p. 5)

Gold (1996) concluded in her review of literature on the needs of new teachers, "The greatest problems encountered by beginning teachers were overwhelming feelings of disillusionment and believing that they were unable to cope with the multitudes of pressures encountered each day" (p. 556). Few new teachers begin to cope with these challenges without help (Rust, 1994).

Two Jobs: Teaching Effectively and Learning to Teach

According to Wildman, Niles, Milagro, and McLaughlin (1989), beginning teachers have not one, but two jobs: "teaching effectively and learning to teach" (p. 471). Concluding their three-year study of new teachers' experiences with observations about how novice teachers cope with these two challenges and approaches that might best meet new teachers' needs, these researchers had three overall recommendations:

1. Teachers' socialization cannot be rushed. It takes time for new teachers to become accustomed to their own roles as teachers as well as to be socialized into the ways and mores of the school environment in which they teach.

2. Beginners need to have a reasonable chance to succeed. The new teachers in the study struggled with many of the "environmental" difficulties commonly encountered by many new teachers, such as overly difficult teaching assignments and disruptive students.
3. Beginners need to be understood by those who can influence and support their emerging careers. (pp. 491-492)

Wildman et al. further recommended:

Although it is common practice to assign new teachers to difficult schools and classes, a close look at the effects of this practice leads us to suggest that it is shortsighted and not in the best interests of teacher, students, and school. In at least two of the cases we examined, simply moving one to three students from a new teacher to a more experienced professional would have made a world of difference. Under stress caused by disruptive students, unmotivated classes, or militant parents, the beginner's attention is diverted from teaching and learning to teach, to simple survival. (p. 492)

In addition, Wildman et al. reported they were surprised to find that the research team members were often the only ones to know, in detail, teachers' beliefs, expectations, and other salient thoughts during their first three years of teaching. The researchers added, "The knowledge we acquired simply from listening gave us perspective on their development that would have been extremely helpful to these beginners' colleagues, principals, and to local policymakers" (p. 492). As Wildman et al. explained, each of these two jobs of new teachers--teaching and learning to teach--is difficult; taken together they are overwhelming.

As reported by Feiman-Nemser (2001), new teachers had experienced a learning-to-teach process during their entry into teaching whether they are ready for it or not. There is rarely a "gearing up" period for new teachers, and it is equally rare to find on-the-job apprenticeships that help new teachers adjust more gradually to having to take responsibility for a full class load (Gold, 1996; Halford, 1998). Novice teachers are frequently given no real support and are instead asked to jump into the sea of education without being given the chance to learn how to swim (Lawson, 1992; Morin, 1997). By understanding more about this process and knowing

that they need support during their early years of teaching, novice teachers can seek the kinds of support they need sooner, even if it is not available to them in their particular schools (Wilkinson, 1994).

Preparation for Learning to Teach

Identification of a novice teacher's problems and knowledge of those who have the ability to affect them are dealt with in Gordon and Maxey's (2000) categorization of primary problems new teachers face that are "environmental in nature" and are "grounded in the culture of the teaching profession and in the conditions of the school as a workplace" (p. 2).

The discovery that beginning teachers learn about teaching during their first year on the job is supported by findings of a meta-analysis of 93 research-based studies on learning to teach by Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon in 1998. These reviewers agreed with Carter (1990), "How one frames the learning-to-teach question depends a great deal on how one conceives of what is to be learned and how that learning might take place" (p. 307). The research studies reviewed by Wideen et al. revealed that "beginning teachers' acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge at the university could not be applied to practice" for the greater portion of their practicum experiences (p. 154). The research studies that Wideen et al. reviewed revealed that this experience was usually too limited to allow student teachers to obtain an ample amount of direct application of their knowledge and beliefs about teaching that would prompt them to initiate a truly process-based approach to learning to teach. Wideen et al. recommended, "Teacher education programs should focus on developing self-awareness in a collaborative situation that will allow student teachers to negotiate and reconstruct their experience" (p. 154). In five of the studies that involved students' teaching experiences, "Efforts were made to undertake the student teaching experience from a collaborative perspective" (Wideen et al., p. 155). These studies generally noted more positive results in which the education students reported being able to understand better the challenges they would encounter as teachers, seeing their learning to teach

as more of a process, and thus being better prepared to view continuous reflection and collaboration with other teachers as a part of the whole process. Only a small group of research studies reviewed by Wideen et al. involved bridging the transition between preservice and inservice learning. The reviewers noted that there were only seven studies of this type published between 1990 and 1998, thus, reinforcing the comments of other researchers such as Levin and Ammon (1992) that few studies had been published that followed new teachers from their teacher preparation programs into their classrooms. The meager number of such studies also reinforced Huling-Austin's (1992) complaint that many people, including novice teachers, seemed to believe that learning about teaching ended with graduation. In the Wideen et al. review, however, studies about a new teacher's learning were seen to "confirm the widely held view that the first year of teaching is a culture shock for beginning teachers, especially those who are poorly prepared for it" (p. 158). These findings were interpreted by the researchers as follows:

What [teacher preparation] students learn in their preservice classes often clashes with [their] preconceived notions about teaching and what they see happening in schools. Most found teaching more difficult than they previously thought it would be. Their struggles with classroom management challenged many of their beliefs and caused anger, which was hard to balance with their humanistic concerns. The need for control became very apparent to the beginning teacher, often at the expense of alternative ways of teaching. (p. 158)

Wideen et al. summed up findings in five of these seven longitudinal studies as showing that "Beginning teachers actually learn how to teach when they enter the classroom during their first year" (p. 158). This was found to be an opinion shared by Gordon and Maxey (2000), Feiman-Nemser (2001), and Gold (1996).

Sergiovanni (1996) pointed out that in order to assure ongoing teachers' growth, teacher development should continue beyond the first year. The researcher listed several components that administrators should practice in order to ensure this growth:

1. encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice;

2. acknowledge that teachers develop at different rates and that at any given time, are more ready to learn some things than others;
3. acknowledge that teachers have different talents and interests;
4. give high priority to conversation and dialogue among teachers;
5. provide for collaborative learning among teachers;
6. emphasize caring relationships and felt interdependencies;
7. call upon teachers to respond morally to their work; and
8. view teachers as supervisors of learning communities. (p. 142)

New Teachers' Responsibilities

There are many areas in which new teachers need to focus; some are covered in teacher preparation programs and others are not. Pedagogy and management are two important areas for beginning teachers to master. Wong (1994) identified the necessary elements for learning to occur as: (a) having positive expectations for student success, (b) being extremely good at classroom management, and (c) knowing how to design lessons for mastery.

Danielson (1996) further identified those aspects of teaching that have been documented through study and research as what a teacher should know, be able to do, and be responsible for as the following four domains: (a) planning and preparation, (b) classroom environment, (c) instruction, and (d) professional responsibilities. Danielson further broke the domains down into components within those domains as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Danielson's Domains of Teaching

Planning & Preparation	The Classroom Environment	Instruction	Professional Responsibilities
<u>Component 1 (a)</u>	<u>Component 2 (a)</u>	<u>Component 3 (a)</u>	<u>Component 4 (a)</u>
Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy (a) Knowledge of content (b) Knowledge of prerequisite relationships (c) Knowledge of content-related pedagogy	Creating an environment of respect and rapport (a) Teacher interaction with students (b) Student interaction	Communicating clearly and accurately (a) Directions and procedures (b) Oral and written language	Professional responsibilities (a) Accuracy (b) Use in future teaching
<u>Component 1 (b)</u>	<u>Component 2 (b)</u>	<u>Component 3 (b)</u>	<u>Component 4 (b)</u>
Demonstrating knowledge of students (a) Knowledge of characteristics of age group (b) Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning (c) Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge	Establishing a culture for learning (a) Importance of the content (b) Student pride in work (c) Expectations for learning and achievement	Using questioning and discussion techniques (a) Quality of questions (b) Discussion techniques (c) Student participation	Maintaining accurate records (a) Student completion of assignments (b) Student progress in learning (c) Noninstructional records
<u>Component 1 (c)</u>	<u>Component 2 (c)</u>	<u>Component 3 (c)</u>	<u>Component 4 (c)</u>
Selecting instructional goals (a) Value (b) Clarity (c) Suitability for diverse students (d) Balance	Managing classroom procedures (a) Management of instructional groups (b) Management of transitions (c) Management of materials and supplies (d) Performance of noninstructional duties (e) Supervision of volunteers and para-professionals	Engaging students in learning (a) Representation of content (b) Activities and assignments (c) Grouping of students (d) Instructional materials and resources (e) Structure and pacing	Communicating with families (a) Information about the instructional program (b) Information about individual students (c) Engagement of families in the instructional program

Table 1 (continued)

Planning & Preparation	The Classroom Environment	Instruction	Professional Responsibilities
<u>Component 1 (d)</u> Demonstrating knowledge of resources (a) Resources for teaching (b) Resources for students	<u>Component 2 (d)</u> Managing student behavior (a) Expectations (b) Monitoring of student behavior (c) Response to student misbehavior	<u>Component 3 (d)</u> Providing feedback to students (a) Quality, accurate, substantive, constructive, and specific (b) Timeliness	<u>Component 4 (d)</u> Contributing to the school and district (a) Relationships with colleagues (b) Service to the school (c) Participation in school and district projects
<u>Component 1 (e)</u> Designing coherent instruction (a) Learning activities (b) Instructional materials and resources	<u>Component 2 (e)</u> Organizing physical space (a) Safety and arrangement of furniture (b) Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources	<u>Component 3 (e)</u> Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness (a) Lesson adjustment (b) Response to students	<u>Component 4 (e)</u> Growing and developing professionally (a) Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill (b) Service to the professional
<u>Component 1 (f)</u> Assessing student learning (a) Congruence with instructional goals (b) Criteria and standards (c) Use for planning			<u>Component 4 (f)</u> Showing professionalism (a) Service to students (b) Advocacy (c) Decision making

In addition to the areas of pedagogy and management, teachers strive to be likable and to present instructional material in a way that will motivate learners. Fine (1995) described the role of a teacher's personality:

The teacher's personality is vital to making school a good experience. When a radio program conducted a poll in which thousands of children were asked to write about the teacher who had been most helpful to them, letter after letter indicated that it was the qualities of the teacher's character that meant more to the student than the subject matter that was taught. The best teachers were given high ratings in cooperation, democratic spirit, kindness, consideration for the individual pupil, patience, wide interests, personal appearance, fairness, sense of humor, interest in students' problems, and disposition. An interesting note: At the very end of the list was skill in presenting the subject matter. (p. 17)

There is more than one kind of beginning teacher. In a study of the different types of novice teachers in addition to those first-career teachers entering fresh from college, Brock and Grady (1997) also included (a) mature beginners, (b) minority groups, (c) those reentering teaching, (d) those returning to the workforce, (e) experienced teachers in new school settings, and (f) second-career teachers. Among these varying types of educators, second-career teachers might be seen as having an advantage. They have life experiences, in-depth knowledge about another profession, and the self-confidence that comes with experience. With more maturity than young first-career teachers, they seem to already possess many skills deemed necessary to tackle their new assignments and are, therefore, judged as not needing the same level of support as first-career teachers.

Whether they are first-career or second-career teachers; however, all teachers are novices when it comes to their first year of teaching and they all need support. Gordon and Maxey (2000) stated, "If the environmental difficulties and specific needs of beginning teachers are not addressed, negative emotional, physical, attitudinal, and behavioral problems may result" (p. 6). The elements of a good support system need to be tailored to the specific needs of the novice teacher. Furthermore, first-career teachers require different kinds of support from the administration than do second-career teachers.

Support for New Second-Career Teachers

Understanding Second-Career Teachers

The needs of older beginning teachers who have already worked in a previous career may differ from those of young, recent college graduates. As noted by Wunsch (1994), "During the middle-adult stage of life, many adults reassess their lifestyles, including their career choices, to evaluate and decide how to spend the rest of their lives" (p. 20). Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) reminded that the mid-career individual has had a substantial career and life history; even if they were starting a new teaching career, these experienced

second-career teachers were apt to know more about themselves and their career goals than were first-career teachers, resulting in a display of confidence not typically found in a first-career teacher. Kram (1985) noted that certain questions emerge when people begin a general reassessment of their lives, including how they compare with peers and how much energy they want to invest in a new career.

The way a second-career teacher who is reassessing his or her career choice approaches the first year of teaching differs from that of the first-career teacher just beginning his or her first career; it then follows that differing kinds of support would be necessary in order to meet the distinct needs of these two very different groups. The second-career teacher's learning needs may differ from those of the first-career teacher, as evidenced in the analysis of adult learning. As cited in Love and Love (1995):

The intellectual, social, and emotional elements of learning combine to enhance understanding for the more mature learner. The importance of the connection and interplay between affect and the social--and the difficulty in separating them--is represented in human development research by the long tradition of psychosocial theories of development. (p. 20)

Activities that match one's interest and learning style are usually involved in adult learning. Unlike the college student taking the required courses to become a teacher, the adult professional considering a career change likely does so by considering his or her personal needs, interests, and learning styles. Researchers are beginning to understand more about how adults learn throughout their lives and how we can serve their learning needs. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1993), four common components of adult learning include:

1. self-direction or autonomy,
2. breadth and depth of life experiences as content or triggers to learning,
3. reflection or self-conscious monitoring of changes taking place, and
4. action or another expression of the learning that has occurred. (p. 12)

Because adults tend to be self-directed learners, instruction should allow adult learners to discover things for themselves by providing guidance and help when mistakes are made

(Knowles, 1984). This same philosophy can be used in guiding a second-career teacher. In order to make connections and decisions during the first year of teaching, second-career teachers could draw on past life experiences that might not be available to first-career teachers. By having these experiences to draw on, these novice teachers might be less likely to take information at face value and could appear more reflective in the decision-making process.

People who possess intrapersonal intelligence, an awareness of self that is common to experienced professionals, are more apt to use this reflection for personal gain. According to Gardner (1983), "A person with good intrapersonal intelligence has a viable and effective model of himself or herself" (p. 37). Second-career teachers share the same need to belong to a community of learners as do first-career teachers; however, because of factors such as age when entering into the profession and previous life experiences, they may require some variation in support and guidance.

Summary

There is indeed a need for new teachers. Because of a high rate of attrition due to retirements, life changes, or general dissatisfaction with teaching in general, a demand for teachers is being created. No longer are only young, new faces fresh from college and blank of life's experience answering the call. Many older individuals are beginning to analyze the path of their life and are deciding they want to teach. Regardless of the age of an individual entering the teaching profession, all teachers face the same challenges. Entry into the teaching profession can be difficult and filled with unforeseen challenges. Teachers often begin teaching with unrealistic expectations about teaching, are placed in the most difficult work assignments, are unclear about others expectations of them, have inadequate resources to teach their current assignment, experience a sense of isolation in a new environment, and experience role conflicts and reality shock. They must work to learn two new jobs; teaching effectively and learning to teach, all the while being expected to expertly handle discipline, classroom management, parent

communication, and other assigned duties such as bus duty and ball game duty. Many new teachers, regardless if they are first- or second-career ones, are asked to sink or swim from the first day of school to the last.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to identify the similarities and differences in attitudes and perceptions regarding various elements of teaching for first- and second-career non-tenured teachers. Chapter 3 presents an introduction, research design, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Four research questions were developed to act as a guide in completing this study:

Research Questions

1. What similarities and differences exist between first- and second-career teachers in their perception about the teaching profession?
2. What similarities and differences exist between novice and veteran teachers in their perceptions about the teaching profession?
3. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?
4. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?
5. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?

6. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?
7. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?
8. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?

This quantitative study was designed to use descriptive and inferential research methods. The research methods were designed to involve the collection of data through a questionnaire administered to the chosen population of first- and second-career teachers to answer questions pertaining to their attitudes and perceptions regarding their teaching careers. Four research questions were developed to act as a guide in completing the study. From the research questions, several hypotheses were developed.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no difference between first- and second-career teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

I am happy with my chosen career.

- a. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- b. My college experience prepared me to teach.
- c. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- d. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- e. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- f. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- g. I make a positive difference in my students’ lives.

Ho2: There is no difference between novice and veteran teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I am happy with my chosen career.
- b. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- c. My college experience prepared me to teach.
- d. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- e. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- f. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- g. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- h. I make a positive difference in my students’ lives.

Ho3: There is no perceived difference in classroom management between first-and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.
- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

Ho4: There is no perceived difference in classroom management between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.
- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

Ho5: There is no perceived difference in discipline between first- and second-career teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.
- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

Ho6: There is no perceived difference in discipline between novice and veteran teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.
- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

Ho7: There is no perceived difference in parent communication between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.

- a. I communicate well with my students' parents.
- b. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.
- c. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- d. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- e. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

Ho8: There is no perceived difference in parent communication between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.
- b. I communicate well with my students' parents.
- c. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.
- d. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- e. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- f. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

Ho9: There is no perceived difference in mentoring between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

Ho10: There is no perceived difference in mentoring novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

Ho11: There is no perceived difference in how first- and second-career teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas
- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.

- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.
- g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

Ho12: There is no perceived difference in how novice and veteran teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas
- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.
- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.
- g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

Population

The population of this study consisted of 677 kindergarten- through eighth-grade teachers in Sevier County in East Tennessee. Written permission to conduct the study was granted by the school system director and school principals (see Appendices B & C). A letter of explanation for the teachers was included with the survey (see Appendix D). Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to each of the selected schools and the school secretaries were then asked to distribute them to the faculty for completion. A stamped envelope was attached to the survey for its return by mail.

Instrumentation

In the absence of an existing instrument to identify attitudes and perceptions of first- and second-career and novice and veteran teachers, I developed a questionnaire (see Appendix A). A pool of items containing self-reporting statements regarding first- and second-career teachers'

attitudes and perceptions was developed using information from relevant literature. A five-point Likert-type response instrument containing 43 questions was developed from the item pool attained. Because of the need to address a multitude of issues of importance and concern to first- and second-career teachers, the final portion of the questionnaire included an open-ended question pertaining to additional issues facing educators. A panel of experienced educators critiqued the questionnaire to identify any weaknesses and to offer suggestions concerning the instrument's content validity. These educators were selected because of their familiarity with issues and challenges facing today's educators. Modifications were made to the questionnaire following the review by the panel. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with 10 respondents in order to assure that the questionnaire was reliable. The respondents for the pilot test were current educators who were not participants in the final study. Changes were made as a result of the pilot test. The information collected from the pilot test was not part of this study. The questionnaire was revised and finalized into a form approved by the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University.

Data Collection

Schools were initially identified based upon their location. The county's school director was contacted by phone to explain the procedures and request permission to conduct the study. Next, an introductory letter and permission form was sent to the school system director requesting permission to conduct the study (see Appendix B). An introductory letter and permission form to conduct the survey was sent to the school principals (see Appendix C). After permission was obtained from the school system director and principals, each participant in the study was given a questionnaire with an introductory letter of explanation attached (see Appendix A & D). Completed questionnaires were mailed to the researcher using the provided stamp addressed envelopes. All participants were assured of confidentiality. Unauthorized persons did not have access to this information. The confidentiality of the respondents was fully protected.

Data Analysis Procedures

The findings of the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program that is designed to analyze and display data (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The data were initially analyzed using cross tabulation tables to identify demographic information. In addition, *t*-test statistics were used to examine the relationships and differences among the variables identified in the survey and to address the research questions. Frequency tables were used to identify the characteristics of the participants in this study. To analyze the relationships examined in the research questions, *t* tests of two independent means were used. Because all data in the questionnaire were categorical, data analysis for each of the 43 survey questions was conducted using descriptive statistics (number and percentage) and *t* test analysis. The analyses were conducted at an alpha level of .05

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Teachers all over the country are leaving the profession at an alarming rate and by understanding the attitudes and perceptions of non-tenured first- and second-career teachers on various areas of teaching, educators can begin to identify better and more specific ways to mentor and support both first-and second-career teachers regardless of their age, stage, and life experiences when they enter the profession. The reason for conducting this study was to gain a better understanding of the needs of all new teachers.

The population in this study included 677 kindergarten through eighth grade and specialty area teachers in Sevier County, Tennessee. Sixteen schools within the county were contacted to gain permission from the principals to conduct the survey. All 16 responded with permission. Initially, 677 surveys were distributed. From these, 381 surveys were returned for a response rate of 56.3%. This chapter contains an analysis of sample data collected from 381 teachers from 16 schools.

Eight research questions were constructed to guide the investigation. The data were used to test 12 null hypotheses. Computer data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Demographic characteristics of the population are given including years teaching, tenure, gender, and first or second career teacher. Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the population.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of the Population

Characteristic	<i>F</i>	%
Years Teaching		
1 year	16	4.2
2 years	15	3.9
3 years	23	6.0
4 years	12	3.2
5 years	29	7.6
6 to 10 years	91	23.9
11 to 15 years	54	14.2
16 to 20 years	46	12.1
21+ years	<u>95</u>	<u>24.9</u>
Total	381	100.0
Tenure		
Yes	320	84.0
No	<u>61</u>	<u>16.0</u>
Total	381	100.0
Tenure as of This School Year		
Yes	36	9.5
No	<u>345</u>	<u>90.5</u>
Total	381	100.0
Gender		
Female	332	87.1
Male	<u>49</u>	<u>12.9</u>
Total	381	100.0
Teaching as a First or Second Career		
First Career	286	75.1
Second Career	<u>95</u>	<u>24.9</u>
Total	381	100.0

In addition to basic demographic information, the questionnaire was designed to gather information pertaining to attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching profession. The frequency of responses to the survey questions is presented in Appendix E.

Based on survey responses, 95.8% of teachers were happy with their chosen career and 79.3% would choose teaching as a career again. Of the teachers surveyed, 93% noted that they could depend on their colleagues for help and support and in return, 98.1% said that colleagues could depend on them. Additionally, 69.8% of educators also reported that they felt respected by other professionals.

This survey did, however, indicate areas of concerns for educators. Of the educators, 52.2% reported they were not formally mentored in their first year of teaching and of those that were mentored, 42% did not meet with their mentor at least one time a week. Another area of concern was time. Of the educators surveyed, 57% reported not having enough time in the day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction and 75.1% reported that teaching would be easier without additional school or county paperwork. Furthermore, 21% of respondents reported they planned to leave the teaching profession in the next five years.

The assumptions were made that the Likert-type scale data were interval and that a normal distribution of those data existed in the large population being analyzed. With these assumptions in place, a parametric test was used. The findings of the study were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program that is designed to analyze and display data (Gall et al., 1996). A *t* test for independent samples was used to examine the relationships and differences among the variables identified in the survey and to address each of the four research questions. Because all data but the last question in the questionnaire were categorical, data analysis for each of the 42 questions was conducted using descriptive statistics (number and percentage) using a *t* test for independent samples for analysis. All analyses were conducted at an alpha level of .05. Descriptive statistics were also used to

evaluate comments made by some of the participants on the 43rd question. This analysis was done in a qualitative manner.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions 1 and 2 addressed attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching profession. Survey questions 4, 18, 19, 25, 32, 40, 41, and 42 were used in the data analysis. These eight questions focused primarily on if teachers were happy with their chosen career, if they felt teaching was a “good fit” for them, if they would choose teaching as a career again, if they felt respected by other professionals, if they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession, if they felt adequately prepared to teach, and if they felt they made a positive difference in the lives of their students. Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes and perceptions on a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 meaning they strongly agreed with the question, 4 meaning they agreed with the question, 3 meaning they had no opinion concerning the question, 2 meaning they disagreed with the question, and 1 meaning they strongly disagreed with the question.

Research Question #1

What similarities and differences exist between first- and second-career teachers in their perception about the teaching profession?

Hypothesis #1. There is no difference between first- and second-career teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I am happy with my chosen career.
- b. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- c. My college experience prepared me to teach.

- d. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- e. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- f. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- g. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- h. I make a positive difference in my students' lives.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in attitudes between non-tenured first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3

First- and Second-Career Teachers: Attitudes About Teaching

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	286	3.80	.447	.254	.800
Second Career	95	3.79	.445		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis 1. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 379$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 3, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.800) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Research Question #2

What similarities and differences exist between novice and veteran teachers in their perceptions about the teaching profession?

Hypothesis #2. : There is no difference between novice and veteran teachers regarding their perceptions about the teaching profession regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I am happy with my chosen career.
- b. Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.
- c. My college experience prepared me to teach.
- d. I would choose teaching as a career again.
- e. As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.
- f. I plan to leave teaching in the next five years.
- g. I would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.
- h. I make a positive difference in my students’ lives.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in attitudes between novice and veteran teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 4

Table 4
Novice and Veteran Teachers: Attitudes About Teaching

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Novice Teachers	61	3.82	.402	.538	.591
Veteran Teachers	320	3.79	.454		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis 2. Based on the degrees of freedom (*df* = 379) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown

in Table 5, the t value is less than the critical value of t . Therefore, because the t value was less than the critical value, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the p value (.591) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

In addition, some respondents who felt strongly about their attitudes towards teaching chose to elaborate further on some of these areas by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. In regard to whether respondents were happy with their chosen career and felt that teaching was a “good fit” for them, 10 teachers responded with these positive comments:

I love these children. The good definitely outweighs the bad.

It's very tough, but extremely rewarding. I enjoy teaching!

I love teaching, but it is extremely difficult. I wouldn't want to do anything else!

You are either cut out for it or not. If not--do not attempt! It's wonderful and I love it--look forward to getting up each day!

Being able to be with children and help them do their best makes it all worthwhile.

I love teaching and helping to mold and develop the whole child.

Rewarding career choice!

I feel my job as a teacher is a blessing. I love my job!

Teaching can give you unimaginable rewards and I wouldn't do anything else. It is very trying sometimes but the rewards outweigh those times.

I enjoy teaching and coaching very much.

Some of the negative responses about teaching included:

Teaching is an exhausting profession. Teachers are not paid enough.

I am aggravated with the teaching career because everything is so centered around *one* test and they change the requirements every year.

All the emphasis on test scores has taken some of the fun and creativity out of teaching. We lose many fine prospects due to lower starting pay, lack of respect.

Although I feel respected by other professionals because I am a teacher, I do not feel they view my career choice as a professional one, worthy of comparable pay to their own.

When asked if they felt respected by other professionals, two respondents commented:

Although I feel respected by other professionals because I am a teacher, I do not feel they view my career choice as a professional one, worthy of comparable pay to their own.

I love teaching! More people would become (or stay) teachers if the pay was higher and if community members as a whole had more respect and understanding for our profession!

When respondents were asked if they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession, comments ranged from positive to cautionary to negative. The positive comments included:

I like to think I have had a positive effect on my students and I hope they will consider teaching as a career.

My husband has recently returned to UT to pursue a second career in education (middle school level). He has a business degree and 15+ years of experience in that field. He felt that he needed to give to the community--not do his job just for the financial means. He has seen the joy and blessing that I have experienced and he hopes to enjoy the same in his second career.

Teaching is and should be a personal choice to want to share with young people. A teacher's intentions are evident to children.

It is a very rewarding occupation and every day is not only a new day but a different and exciting day.

It is not about the money; it's about my contribution to society.

I feel my ability to teach is a gift from God.

The cautionary comments included:

It takes a devoted and patient person to be an effective teacher. I would not encourage just anyone to become a teacher; it takes someone who has a love for kids.

When someone asks if teaching is easy, I tell them it is difficult. I don't leave anything out if someone asks if they should go into the teaching profession. Parents are the hardest part of teaching.

You will only get out of teaching what you put into it.

I would recommend teaching if salary reflected a teacher's investment in it.

I wouldn't encourage everyone to enter teaching. It takes a specific type of person to teach. If a teacher is not that type, both the teacher and students will be miserable.

I would tell [those entering the teaching profession] about all the things that they didn't learn in school--lice checks, mounds of paperwork, unreachable parents, tired students, students who haven't eaten breakfast, etc.

Any person considering teaching would be given ample information from me regarding parent issues, administration pressures, and the "ugly" side of education along with its positive effects. College courses just don't address that enough.

Among the negative comments, one included:

I do not encourage people to go into the teaching profession because of the pay and the "safety" factor. I cannot imagine doing anything else because I love my job but I even discouraged my own daughter not to be a teacher.

When asked if he or she felt adequately prepared to teach, one respondent gave the following comment:

I feel what prepared me the most for teaching was my full year of internship! I was there from the first day of school until the last day. I felt very confident due to this!

When asked if they felt they made a positive difference in the lives of their students, respondents gave the following comments:

I cannot imagine many professions that are more physically and mentally exhausting. Yet, I continue year after year because I know I make a difference in my students' lives. I feel I teach more to a test (TCAP) than I teach actual skills. I feel I am able to impact my students academically as well as emotionally.

Research questions #3 and #4 addressed perceptions of the classroom challenges of classroom management including issues such as lesson planning, accomplishing necessary tasks that are outside of instruction, and paperwork noted as hypotheses #3 and #4. This question also addressed student discipline issues such as rules and consequences, students' behavior, parents' role in behavior, discipline problems handled without assistance in the classroom, administrative support in discipline issues, noted as hypotheses #5 and #6 and communication with parents, noted as hypotheses #7 and #8. Survey questions 7, 14, 21, 33, and 37 addressed classroom management; questions 9, 16, 23, 24, 30, 34, and 39 addressed student discipline; and questions 8, 10, 11, 15, 22, and 29 addressed parent communication. Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes and perceptions on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 meaning they strongly agreed with the question, 4 meaning they agreed with the question, 3 meaning they had no opinion concerning the question, 2 meaning they disagreed with the question, and 1 meaning they strongly disagreed with the question.

Research Question #3

What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?

Research Question #4

What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?

Hypothesis #3. There is no perceived difference in classroom management between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.
- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in classroom management between first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 5.

Table 5

First- and Second-Career Teachers: Classroom Management

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	248	3.79	.415	.557	.578
Second Career	72	3.77	.411		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis 3. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 318$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown

in Table 5, the t value is less than the critical value of t . Therefore, because the t value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the p value (.578) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Hypothesis #4. There is no perceived difference in classroom management between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I always turn in office paperwork on time.
- b. My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.
- c. I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
- d. Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.
- e. I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area.

Table 6

Novice and Veteran Teachers: Classroom Management

Subtest	N	M	SD	t	p
Novice Teachers	61	3.71	.444	1.46	.146
Veteran Teachers	320	3.79	.414		

A t test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #4. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 379$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical t factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown

in Table 6, the t value is less than the critical value of t . Therefore, because the t value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the p value (.146) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

In addition, some respondents who said they felt strongly about classroom management issues chose to elaborate further on some of these areas by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. Of the teachers who responded to the classroom challenges of lesson planning, most said they felt they did not have enough time to adequately plan during the school day. Comments included:

We need more time to plan.

I feel more planning time would be beneficial during the school day. It is sometimes hard to balance my time between home and school.

It [teaching] is more complex and harder than I ever dreamed. I spend many hours at home planning, grading and gathering materials for my class.

Intermediate grades have too much content to cover and not enough planning time for it.

A sense of frustration and dissatisfaction was evident among the teachers who responded to the time needed for accomplishing necessary tasks that are outside of instruction. Statements by participants included:

Office/secretarial work and added responsibilities outside the classroom such as landscaping, sending required postcards to students, and car duty have led me to be dissatisfied with my career as well as disregard of teachers' complaints/ideas/concerns by administration.

Sometimes I feel that we have so many "different" requirements to teach thrown at me there is just not enough time to teach any of them well. We need to refocus on what really matters.

In 29 years of teaching [things have been] continually added to job expectations and nothing has been removed!

The teaching profession requires a dedication and commitment unlike many others. The job does not cease at 3:00 or 3:30 when students leave for the day because time must be spent preparing lessons/activities, grading papers, and completing various tasks outside of instruction. Teaching is a rewarding and demanding profession.

There's not enough time in the day for all that we do! Teaching is the most rewarding and the most punishing career all wrapped up in one neat package.

Of the teachers who responded to the challenge of paperwork, most said they felt that it was too much and competed with instructional time. Among the comments were:

The paperwork that has to be done due to fear of lawsuits is ridiculous.

Paperwork (county, state, local school system) takes away from instructional time. Most educators I've worked with will tell you that. Just let teachers "teach" and scores will improve. What a novel idea!

There are too many repetitive reports: weekly, mid-term, six-weeks, reading cards, math cards.

Hypothesis #5: There is no perceived difference in discipline between first- and second-career teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.
- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in discipline between first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 7.

Table 7

First- and Second-Career Teachers: Discipline

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	285	3.93	.375	.300	.764
Second Career	95	3.94	.397		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #5. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 378$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 7, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.764) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Hypothesis #6. There is no perceived difference in discipline between novice and veteran teachers regarding the following statements:

- a. I handle the discipline of students effectively.
- b. I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.
- c. I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior.
- d. My students feel they can ask me questions.
- e. I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.
- f. The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.
- g. I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in discipline between novice and veteran teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 8.

Table 8

Novice and Veteran Teachers: Discipline

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Novice Teachers	61	3.92	.398	.242	.809
Veteran Teachers	320	3.93	.378		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #6. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 378$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 8, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.809) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

In addition, some respondents who felt strongly about discipline issues chose to elaborate further on some of these areas by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. Of the teachers who responded to the challenges of student discipline, the comments reflected the belief that teaching and discipline today are more difficult. Comments included:

Teaching has become difficult due to discipline problems.

Discipline is becoming increasingly difficult, and the pressure for high test scores negatively affects teacher creativity and increases stress for all concerned.

I have to admit that issues are more serious and the job is more difficult than it was 30 years ago. Specifically, I never was concerned about safety, and discipline issues are complicated by drugs, alcohol, teenage sex, and other things.

Respondents also commented that consequences were too mild and ineffective, saying:

Our hands are tied too much when it comes to discipline. Consequences are too mild.

There are some resource students that disrupt instruction without any real consequences and student behavior sometimes disrupts instructional time.

Teaching is definitely more difficult this year due to behavior problems.

I have a select student who I feel monopolizes my time and thus, distracts from teaching. I handle the situation; however, time is greatly spent on discipline as opposed to instruction- 30% discipline 70% instruction.

Teaching has become very stressful and even frightening at times. My students threaten to hurt others, wish we were all dead, and their parents come to school looking for other students who have “bullied” their children. It is difficult to teach when we are so busy being police officers.

Furthermore, some respondents reported they did not feel some parents were supported of their efforts to discipline. One participant responded:

I don't like parents that come in over how I discipline my students and undermine me.

Basically, all we can do is take recess away, and we get complaints about that! Teachers desperately need parent support in behavior problems!

Much of the lack of discipline was seen as a reflection of home life. Comments included:

Students who are out of control at home present problems.
 Parents and student home life are the biggest obstacles to overcome.
 Instead of "quality teaching time," I'm expected to solve *all* problems that should be taken care of at home!"

Hypothesis #7. There is no perceived difference in parent communication between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.
- b. I communicate well with my students' parents.
- c. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.
- d. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- e. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- f. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in communication between first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 9.

Table 9
First- and Second-Career Teachers: Communication

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	286	3.83	.539	.664	.507
Second Career	95	3.88	.524		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #7. Based on the degrees of freedom (*df* = 379) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown

in Table 9, the t value is less than the critical value of t . Therefore, because the t value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the p value (.507) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Hypothesis #8. There is no perceived difference in parent communication between novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children’s progress.
- b. I communicate well with my students’ parents.
- c. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students’ parents.
- d. When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.
- e. Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.
- f. Overall, parents make my job more difficult.

t -test analyses were used to determine the difference in communication between novice and veteran teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 10.

Table 10

Novice and Veteran Teachers: Communication

Subtest	N	M	SD	t	p
Novice Teachers	61	3.78	.577	.994	.321
Veteran Teachers	320	3.86	.527		

A t test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #8. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 379$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical t factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown

in Table 10, the t value is less than the critical value of t . Therefore, because the t value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the p value (.321) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

In addition, some respondents who felt strongly about communication chose to elaborate further on this area by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. Of those commenting, respondents saw parent involvement as a needed area of improvement.

Comments included:

Parent involvement is a subject our school is trying to improve...

I would like to improve school/home relationships.

Some participants indicated that parents were difficult to work with. Comments

included:

Parents are more difficult to work with certain years than others.

A very few parents are horrible and try to blame their plight on you. Those few take up a lot of time.

I do feel that in many instances parents make our jobs extremely difficult.

The most discouraging aspect of teaching is the lack of concern or interest from parents.

Others indicated that relationships take time, with one participant saying:

“...time to develop strong parent-teacher, teacher-student, and student-student relationships has made my teaching career more meaningful.”

However, it was also noted that communication is a two-way issue, with one participant stating:

Schools do not provide a welcoming atmosphere for parental involvement: (i.e. office staff, teachers, or administrators) due to increased time needed to deal with problems. Similar to a classroom-much energy and attention are on the problems and the positive is often neglected.

These areas of education are indeed challenging for any educator. Nevertheless, it can be done, according to one participant who observed:

In the beginning, I felt overwhelmed with the demands of teaching (discipline, parents, paperwork, etc.) but with experience and maturity I'm more able to take things in stride, handle my own discipline, and deal with noninstructional demands.

Research Questions #5 and #6 addressed both formal and informal mentoring. Survey questions 5, 26, 35, and 38 were used for analysis. These questions focused primarily on

whether or not respondents had a positive or negative mentoring experience. Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes and perceptions on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 meaning they strongly agreed with the question, 4 meaning they agreed with the question, 3 meaning they had no opinion concerning the question, 2 meaning they disagreed with the question, and 1 meaning they strongly disagreed with the question.

Research Question #5

What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?

Hypothesis #9. There is no perceived difference in mentoring between first- and second-career teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in mentoring between first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 11.

Table 11

First- and Second-Career Teachers: Mentoring

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	286	2.84	1.21	1.26	.209
Second Career	94	3.02	1.25		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #9. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 378$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 11, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.209) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Research Question #6

What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?

Hypothesis #10. There is no perceived difference in mentoring novice and veteran teachers regarding each of the following statements:

- a. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.
- b. My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.
- c. My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.
- d. I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in mentoring between novice and veteran teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 12.

Table 12

Novice and Veteran Teachers: Mentoring

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Novice Teachers	61	3.33	1.21	3.15	.002
Veteran Teachers	320	2.80	1.20		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #10. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 378$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 12, the *t* value is more than the critical value of *t*. Because the *t* value was more than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was not retained. In addition, the *p* value (.002) was less than the predetermined alpha of 0.05. Therefore, since the *t* value was greater than the critical value and the *p* value was less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected and I concluded that there is a difference in mentoring based on tenure.

In addition, some respondents who felt strongly about their mentoring experience and chose to elaborate further on this area by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. Of the teachers who responded positively to formal mentoring, an involvement in the University of Tennessee’s five-year program was noted, with two respondents saying:

At U.T. Knoxville, I was prepared to teach alone my 1st year because of the yearlong mentoring-teaching program.

I attended UTK and did the yearlong internship program/master's program. Therefore, I had a great mentoring system in place my first year. I know that year of experience has been invaluable to me.

Informal mentoring was also noted positively with respondents stating:

I had a very informal relationship with my mentor because I am an older teacher, not because she was not available for me.

When I first start teaching, I didn't have a formal mentor teacher although there were certain teachers I used as mentors through the years.

Several respondents had negative comments about their mentoring experience. For some, mentoring was not available. Others stated:

Formal mentoring was not available 36 years ago, although my grade colleagues were helpful.

I didn't have a mentor teacher in North Carolina when I started teaching. The mentor program is a great idea.

When I started teaching during the early 80s in South Carolina, there was no mentoring in place. I think things are different for new teachers now.

Others had no mentor at all. Their comments included:

I had an unusual situation since I had been an assistant before teaching. The principal at the time did not feel a need for a mentor teacher as I had been in the classroom for almost 10 years prior to becoming a teacher.

I did not receive a mentor until my first year in Sevier County Schools. This was after five years in two different county systems. For others, their mentor was not helpful.

The school I began teaching in after graduation provided a mentor in name only. The school did not follow up to see if mentoring was taking place or not.

My mentor has been more of a burden than a help! I hope the program gets redefined in the next few years!

Even though my mentor was basically a waste, I was well prepared, through hard work, from my student teaching experience through my college.

A large percentage [of teachers] leave without ever having an effective mentor teacher.

Still others had no formal mentor but had colleagues who informally mentored them. Their comments included:

I did not have a formal mentor my first year and I believe every teacher should have help from an experienced veteran teacher.

Others had no help at all, saying:

My student teaching and first year teaching was of no help to me. I was basically thrown to the wolves but I eventually figured out what and how to do it in a middle school classroom. I wish I would have been more prepared and had a positive mentor.

I definitely feel that if my college experience, or if I had a mentor teacher my first year, could have prepared me better, then I would not have had such a horrible experience during my first year of teaching. I think that most colleges today do not prepare you well enough for the first year.

Research Questions #7 and #8 addressed teacher's perceptions of how they felt they are viewed by their colleagues, both fellow teachers and administration. Survey questions 6, 12, 13, 17, 20, 27, and 31 were used for analysis. These questions focused mainly on relationships; did they feel that others thought they could count on them, and communication; did they feel that they were listened to and supported by others. Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes and perceptions on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 meaning they strongly agreed with the question, 4 meaning they agreed with the question, 3 meaning they had no opinion concerning the question, 2 meaning they disagreed with the question, and 1 meaning they strongly disagreed with the question.

Research Question #7

What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?

Hypothesis #11. There is no perceived difference in how first- and second-career teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas
- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.
- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.

g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in colleagues' perceptions of them between first- and second-career teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 13.

Table 13

First- and Second-Career Teachers: Viewed by Colleagues

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
First Career	286	4.33	.504	.370	.711
Second Career	95	4.36	.561		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis # 11. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 379$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 13, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.711) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

Research Question #8

What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?

Hypothesis #12. There is no perceived difference in how novice and veteran teachers are viewed by their colleagues regarding each of the following statements:

- a. My colleagues and I share ideas

- b. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom.
- c. My colleagues can depend on me to help them.
- d. My principal and I discuss concerns.
- e. My colleagues offer help when asked.
- f. My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.
- g. I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.

t-test analyses were used to determine the difference in colleagues' perceptions of them between novice and veteran teachers. Findings are reflected in Table 14.

Table 14

Novice and Veteran Teachers: Viewed by Colleagues

Subtest	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Novice Teachers	61	4.38	.392	.620	.535
Veteran Teachers	320	4.33	.539		

A *t* test for independent samples was used for hypothesis #12. Based on the degrees of freedom ($df = 379$) and alpha of 0.05, the critical *t* factor is 1.996 for a two-tailed test. As shown in Table 14, the *t* value is less than the critical value of *t*. Therefore, because the *t* value was less than the critical value of 1.996, the null hypothesis was retained. In addition, the *p* value (.535) was greater than the predetermined alpha of 0.05.

In addition, some respondents who felt strongly about how they are perceived by colleagues chose to elaborate further on some of these areas by answering the optional open-response question at the end of the survey. Of the teachers who responded to this issue, most

said they felt that teachers were supportive of one another and could count on them for help but noted that administration did not respect and support teachers. Their comments included:

I resent the lack of respect that teachers sometimes get from central office.

At my school, the principal is always looking for you to make a mistake instead of being supporter to his staff.

Administrators too quickly forget what it was like to be a classroom teacher.

Administrators need to be more available. They also need to take the time to talk with you when you need them. My principal will walk away slowly as you are talking to her. She needs to give her teachers more of an opportunity to talk to her when something arises. It makes you feel like she doesn't have time to listen to what you have to say.

Summary

This chapter included an analysis of data. In Chapter 5, the findings are summarized and interpreted from the analysis and conclusions are made. In addition, recommendations for further research and to improve practice are given.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the similarities and differences in attitudes and perceptions regarding various elements of teaching for first- and second-career and novice and veteran teachers. The study consisted of a population of 677 kindergarten through eighth grade and specialty area teachers in 16 schools in Sevier County. Although the population consisted of 677 teachers, only 381 teachers returned the survey, resulting in a 56.3% response rate. Data were examined from these survey results.

The teacher questionnaire surveyed demographic information as well as attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching career. The questionnaire primarily incorporated a Likert-type format and contained one optional short-answer question. Six hundred seventy-seven teachers were asked to complete the survey and return it to the researcher.

The findings of the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program that is designed to analyze and display data (Gall et al., 1996). A *t* test for independent samples was used to examine the relationships and differences among the variables identified in the survey and to address each of the four research questions. The assumption was made that Likert-type scale data is interval and that a normal distribution of data existed in the large population being analyzed. With these assumptions in place, a parametric test was used. Because all data but the last question in the questionnaire were categorical, data analysis for each of the 42 questions was conducted using descriptive statistics (number and percentage) and a *t* test for independent samples. The analyses were conducted at an alpha level of .05. Respondents were asked to rate their attitudes and perceptions on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 meaning they strongly agreed with the question, 4 meaning they agreed with the question, 3 meaning they had no opinion concerning the question, 2 meaning they disagreed with

the question, and 1 meaning they strongly disagreed with the question. In addition, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate comments made by some of the participants to question 43, which was an optional short-answer question designed to allow respondents to express any additional opinion regarding the survey topics. These responses were analyzed with qualitative statistics.

Findings

Although 677 teachers were invited to participate in this study, only 381 returned the survey. The participation and the questionnaire return rate for this study was acceptable at 56.3%. A frequency analysis of the demographic information indicated that of the 381 respondents, 61 respondents reported being non-tenured teachers; of those, 52 were females and 9 were males. Of those 61 respondents, 38 reported teaching as a first career and 23 reported teaching as a second career. Of the 38 non-tenured first career teachers, 33 were females and 5 were males. Of the 23 reported non-tenured second-career teachers, 19 were females and 4 were males. Of the respondents, 320 reported being tenured teachers; 280 were female and 40 were male. Of those 320 respondents, 248 reported teaching as a first career, 224 females and 24 males, and 72 reported teaching as a second career, 56 females and 16 males. Including both tenure and non-tenure teachers, there were 286 first-career and 95 second-career teachers who responded to the survey.

Additional findings are summarized as responses to the basic research questions.

Research Questions #1 and #2

1. What similarities and differences exist between first- and second-career teachers in their perception about the teaching profession?
2. What similarities and differences exist between novice and veteran teachers in their perceptions about the teaching profession?

These research questions addressed attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching profession. Survey questions 4, 18, 19, 25, 32, 40, 41, and 42 were used in the data analysis. These eight questions focused primarily on if teachers were happy with their chosen career, if they felt teaching was a “good fit” for them, if they would choose teaching as a career again, if they felt respected by other professionals, if they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession, if they felt adequately prepared to teach, and if they felt they made a positive difference in the lives of their students.

Analysis using a *t* test for independent samples indicated that there were no perceived differences between how first- and second-career teachers viewed the teaching profession. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was no perceived difference between novice and veteran teachers viewed the teaching profession.

Frequency distribution revealed that when all respondents were asked if they were happy with their chosen career, 95.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 2.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 1.3% reported having no opinion. When asked if teaching was a “good fit” for them, 94.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 2.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 3.1% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents felt prepared to teach, 53.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 29.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 16.5% reported having no opinion. When asked if they would choose teaching as a career again, 79.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 8.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12.1% reported having no opinion. When asked if, as an educator, they felt respected by other professionals, 69.8 % agreed or strongly agreed, 15.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 14.7% reported having no opinion. When asked if they planned to leave teaching in the next five years, 21% agreed or strongly agreed, 67.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11.8% reported having no opinion. When asked if they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession, 61.9% agreed or strongly agreed, 14.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 23.4% reported having no opinion. When asked if they make a positive

difference in the lives of their students', 95.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 0.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 3.9% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments by some respondents in the study indicated that they felt that overall teaching was a hard but rewarding career. It was stated by some that even though teachers are not paid enough, TCAPS have taken the fun out of teaching, and educators do not always feel respected and understood for what they do on a daily basis, most educators would encourage others to teach. Along with that encouragement to teach, came some words of caution. These cautionary words included safety issues, low salary, paperwork, uncooperative and unsupportive parents, and issues with administration. Most importantly, even though teaching is a physically and mentally exhausting profession, these respondents stated that teachers tend to continue year after year because they know that they make a difference in the lives of young people.

Research Questions #3 and #4

3. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?
4. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding the various aspects and challenges of the classroom (i.e. classroom management, discipline, parent communication) in a similar or different light?

This question was broken down into three specific areas for analysis: classroom management, discipline, and communication. Classroom management includes issues such as lesson planning, accomplishing necessary tasks that are outside of instruction, and paperwork. Student discipline includes issues such as rules and consequences, students' behavior, parents' role in behavior, discipline problems handled without assistance in the classroom, and administrative support in discipline issues. Communication includes mainly communication

with parents. Survey questions 7, 14, 21, 33, and 37 addressed classroom management, questions 9, 16, 23, 24, 30, 34, and 39 addressed student discipline, and questions 8, 10, 11, 15, 22, and 29 addressed parent communication. Each area's findings are summarized as follows:

Classroom Management. Analysis using a *t* test for independent samples indicated that there were no perceived differences between first-career teachers and second-career teachers viewed the challenges of classroom management. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was no perceived difference between novice and veteran teachers viewed the challenges of classroom management.

Frequency distribution indicated that when all respondents were asked if they always turned paperwork in on time, 88.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 6.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 0.3% reported having no opinion. When asked if their lesson plans reflected ample planning, 92.9% agreed or strongly agreed, 2.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 0.5% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents felt they have time during the school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction, 34.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 57.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 8.4% reported having no opinion. When asked if office paperwork sometimes interrupts instructional time, 68.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 20.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11.5% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents have the resources needed to teach their grade level or subject area, 52.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 42.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 5.2% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments made by some respondents of the survey indicated that respondents noted that although their lesson plans did reflect ample planning, it was because often times it was done at home. Other comments included that a teacher's day does not end at 3:30 when the students leave, but continues into home life and it was often difficult to balance the two. Others said they needed to refocus on what really matters--the students. Others said

there were too many forms to fill out that often times seemed to be repetitive. One respondent reported burnout because of so many additional pressures beyond the scope of teaching students.

Discipline. *t*-test analysis indicated that there were no perceived differences between how first-career teachers and second-career teachers viewed discipline. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was no perceived difference between how novice and veteran teachers viewed discipline.

Frequency distribution indicated that when all respondents were asked if they handle the discipline of students effectively, 93.7% agreed or strongly agreed, 2.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 4.2% reported having no opinion. When asked if formal discipline rules and/or consequences are displayed in their classroom, 79.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 13.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 6.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if they were not able to teach this year due to students' behavior, 10.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 81.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 7.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if they felt they had one student this year they could not handle, 26.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 67.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 5.8% reported having no opinion. When asked if the administration helped them solve discipline problems, 72.7% agreed or strongly agreed, 16.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 10.8% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents handled the majority of discipline problems within their own classroom, 98.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 1.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 0.3% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments by some respondents of the survey indicated that they noted discipline today was more difficult than it used to be. Factors that were mentioned by respondents included issues with safety, drugs and alcohol, teenage sex, and home life. Additionally, it was stated by some respondents that consequences in school were too mild but that they felt as if their hands were tied to do anything more severe.

Communication. *t*-test analysis indicated that there were no perceived differences between how first-career teachers and second-career teachers viewed communication. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was no perceived difference between novice and veteran teachers viewed communication.

Frequency distribution indicated that when all respondents were asked if, at their request, parents come to discuss their children's progress, 75.8% agreed or strongly agreed, 12.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 0.8 % reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents felt they communicated well with their students' parents, 93.1% agreed or strongly agreed, 1.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 0.3% reported having no opinion. When asked if they felt they have a positive relationship with their students' parents, 91.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 1.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 7.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if parents volunteered to help in their classroom and/or on field trips, 74.0% agreed or strongly agreed, 10.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 15.5% reported having no opinion. When asked if, overall, respondents felt parents made their job more difficult, 25.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 46.2 % disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 28.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if overall, respondents felt parents were not interested in what happened in their classroom, 18.7% agreed or strongly agreed, 63.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 18.1% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments by some respondents of the survey indicated that some respondents noted that this was an area in need of improvement. While some parents are extremely difficult, not all of them are. It was also pointed out that relationships take time to develop. Furthermore, one respondent indicated that it was not always the parents' fault as schools do not always foster an atmosphere open to parent involvement.

Research Questions #5 and #6

5. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?
6. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they were mentored within the school and school system for success in their careers?

These research questions addressed both formal and informal mentoring. Survey questions 5, 26, 35, and 38 were used for analysis. These four questions focused primarily on whether or not respondents had a positive or negative mentoring experience.

A *t* test for independent samples indicated that there were no perceived differences between how first-career teachers and second-career teachers viewed their mentoring experiences. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was a perceived difference between how novice and veteran teachers viewed their mentoring experiences.

Frequency distribution indicated that when all respondents were asked if they were formally mentored in their first year of teaching, 41.5% agreed or strongly agreed, 50.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 7.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents felt that their mentoring experience was not helpful in their first year of teaching, 23.6% agreed or strongly agreed, 45.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 31.0% reported having no opinion. When asked if their mentor met with them at least once a week during their first year of teaching, 27.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 52.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 20.7% reported having no opinion. When asked if respondents had no formal mentoring their first full year of teaching, 52.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 42.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 5.2% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments by some respondents of the survey concerning mentoring indicated that overall, those who had formal mentoring reported it as a positive experience. For

those who reported that they had no formal mentoring in place, veteran colleagues were often willing to lend a hand and help with various issues. However, not all respondents reported having a positive mentoring experience. One respondent reported his or her mentor as being more of a burden than a help and another reflected his or her mentor was a mentor in name only.

Research Questions #7 and #8

7. What similarities and differences do first- and second-career teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?
8. What similarities and differences do novice and veteran teachers report regarding how they are viewed by their colleagues?

These research questions addressed teachers' perception of how they felt they were viewed by their colleagues, both fellow teachers and administration. These seven questions focused mainly on relationships: did they feel that others thought they could count on them and communication: did they feel that they were listened to and supported by others.

A *t* test for independent samples indicated that there were no perceived differences between how first-career teachers and second-career teachers are viewed by their colleagues. *t*-test analysis also revealed there was no perceived difference between how novice and veteran teachers are viewed by their colleagues.

Frequency distribution indicated that when all respondents were asked if they shared ideas with colleagues, 90.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 3.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 6.0% reported having no opinion. When asked if they have a colleague they can depend on for advice/help with problems in their classroom, 93.0% agreed or strongly agreed, 4.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 2.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if, in turn their colleagues felt they could depend on them for help, 98.1 % agreed or strongly agreed, 0.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 1.6% reported having no opinion. When asked if they felt

that they could discuss concerns with their principal, 84.5% agreed or strongly agreed, 6.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 8.7% reported having no opinion.

When asked if they felt they could openly discuss concerns with their colleagues or supervisors, 82.2% agreed or strongly agreed, 8.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 9.4% reported having no opinion.

Optional additional comments by some respondents of the survey indicated that, of the teachers who responded to this issue, most said that teachers were supportive of one another and they could count on them for help but noted that some in administration did not respect and support teachers.

Conclusions

Whether a teacher is first career or second career, novice or veteran, there was no difference in attitudes and perceptions concerning the teaching career, no difference in attitudes and perceptions regarding the various aspects and challenges of teaching, and no difference in the attitudes and perceptions of how teachers are perceived by colleagues. There was no difference in attitudes and perceptions concerning mentoring and mentoring experiences in first- and second-career teachers, but a difference was found between novice and veteran teachings in their mentoring experiences.

The majority of teachers participating in the study was happy with their chosen career and said they would encourage others to enter the field. Findings indicated they share ideas with colleagues and are willing to share in return. Most said that they felt they made a difference in their students' lives. Student behavior and time were issues of concern to the teachers in the study. Some teachers pointed out that they sometimes were not able to teach because of a student's behavior and noted that problems in society and at home have made this issue worse. Some said the paperwork associated with teaching was overwhelming, and they had difficulty

completing the necessary tasks outside of instruction inside of a normal school day. In spite of the problems, the majority of educators said they would do it all over again.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the researcher's review of literature and findings in this study, several recommendations are proposed to encourage further research in this field:

1. Additional research needs to be conducted to identify the best ways to implement formal mentoring programs within a school or school system.
2. Additional research needs to be conducted to determine ways of promoting better home and school communication.
3. Additional research needs to be conducted to identify alternative ways of dealing with educational paperwork.
4. Replication of the study in another environment is needed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.
5. Replication of the study is needed with a focus on secondary teachers.
6. Additional research should be conducted concerning the reasons teachers have left the profession.

Recommendations to Improve Practice

Based on the researcher's findings in this study, several recommendations are proposed to improve current practices:

1. Improve current mentoring programs to incorporate a full year of formal mentoring for each new teacher.
2. Explore and implement ways to reduce the amount of extraneous paperwork required of teachers that is outside the necessary classroom grading and assessment.

3. Explore and implement ways to increase the planning time teachers have during the school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.
4. Provide a system-wide resource person whose primary responsibility is to assist both first- and second-career non-tenured teachers with the daily challenges faced in the teaching profession.
5. Explore and implement ways to enable teachers to feel safer in their schools and classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Teachers

The purpose of this survey is to discover your attitudes and perceptions regarding your choice of teaching as a career. Please answer the following demographic questions. All answers to the survey questions will be kept strictly confidential.

Please Complete:

1. Including the current school year, how many years have you been teaching? ____
Do you have tenure? Yes No
If yes, did you become tenured as of this school year? Yes No
2. Are you male or female? Male Female
3. Is teaching your first career? Yes No

Please respond to the following items using this scale:

5 = strongly agree	4 = agree	3 = no opinion	2 = disagree	1 = strongly disagree
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4. I am happy with my chosen career.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My colleagues and I share ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I always turn in office paperwork on time.	5	4	3	2	1
8. At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I handle the discipline of students effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I communicate well with my students' parents.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom	5	4	3	2	1

	my classroom					
13.	My colleagues can depend on me to help them.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	My principal and I discuss concerns.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Teaching as a career is a “good fit” for me.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	My college experience prepared me to teach.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	My colleagues offer help when asked.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Overall, parents make my job more difficult.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	I am not able to teach this year due to my students’ behavior.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	My students feel they can ask me questions.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	I would choose teaching as a career again.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	Teaching would be easier without additional school or county paperwork.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals.	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time.	5	4	3	2	1
34.	The administration helps me solve my discipline problems.	5	4	3	2	1
35.	My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
36.	I communicate well with my principal.	5	4	3	2	1

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. | I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 38. | I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 39. | I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 40. | I plan to leave teaching in the next five years. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 41. | I would encourage others to enter into the teaching profession. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 42. | I make a positive difference in my students' lives. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

43. Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding your feelings towards teaching or additional comments about any part of the survey?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Director of Schools

Dr. XXXXX XXXXX,

Director of Schools
XXXXXX County
XXXXXXX, TN XXXXX

Dear Dr. XXXXX,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University currently involved in the dissertation phase of the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral cohort program. My dissertation is entitled, *A Comparison of Attitudes and Perceptions Between Non-tenured First- and Second-Career Teachers Towards the Teaching Profession*. The purpose of this study is to better understand the needs of all new teachers. I would like your permission to distribute my questionnaire to all K-8 classroom and special area teachers in XXXXX County.

In preparation for this study, I plan to contact each principal to request permission to conduct my study. The distribution of the questionnaire and the collection of data will be conducted in a manner to limit the disruption of the normal school activities. The teachers participating in this study will be given a questionnaire to complete. After completion of the questionnaire, teacher will mail their completed surveys to me in the envelope provided with the survey. Participation in this study would be based on their free will.

If you have any questions pertaining to this study, please feel free to contact my doctoral advisor, Dr. Terry Tollefson, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, or me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Oliver
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

I _____ give Julie A. Oliver permission to conduct her study entitled, *A Comparison of the Perceptions Between Novice and Veteran Teachers About the Teaching Profession in Elementary and Middle Schools in Sevier County, Tennessee*
(please print name)

_____/_____
Signature of Director / Date

APPENDIX C

Letter to School Principals

XXXXXX XXXXXX
Principal
XXXXXX School

Dear XXXXXX,

My name is Julie Oliver and I teach in the XXXXXX County School System at XXXXXX Primary. I am currently involved in the research phase of my dissertation in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral cohort program through East Tennessee State University.

I would like your permission to distribute the attached survey to teachers in your school. With your permission, the surveys will be brought to your school to be placed in your teachers' mailboxes. The surveys will have an addressed stamped envelope attached to them for their return to me. There will be minimal disruption to your school or school day during this process. Teachers' participation in this survey is strictly voluntary.

If you choose to grant me permission to survey your teachers, please reply to this email stating your permission and the number of classroom and specialty area teachers you currently have at your school. This will allow me to deliver the appropriate number of surveys. If you do not choose to grant me permission, please email me that decision as well.

If you would like to know the results of this study, I will be happy to send them to you when the study is complete. Just send me an email at julieoliver@sevier.org expressing your interest and I will respond to you via email upon the conclusion of the study. If you have any questions regarding the survey, feel free to contact me at the above email address.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Julie Oliver

APPENDIX D

Letter to Teachers

Julie Oliver

ETSU Doctoral Student

Dear Educators,

My name is Julie Oliver and I teach in the XXXX County School System at XXXX Primary. I am currently involved in the research phase of my dissertation in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral cohort program through East Tennessee State University.

I know this is a busy time of year for everyone with all of the end of the year details to attend to, but I would really appreciate it if you would take a minute or two to complete the attached survey. I have tried to make this as easy as possible, so I have also attached an addressed stamped envelope so it can be dropped in the mail when it has been completed. *If possible, please complete and return this survey within the next two or three days.* Your answers will remain strictly confidential. Please do not put your name anywhere on the survey or envelope.

If you would like to know the results of this study, I will be happy to send them to you when the study is complete. Just send me an email at julieoliver@sevier.org expressing your interest and I will respond to you via email upon the conclusion of the study. If you have any questions regarding the survey, feel free to contact me at the above email address.

Again, thank you for taking your time to complete the survey.

Sincerely,

Julie Oliver

Doctoral Student

East Tennessee State University

APPENDIX E

Frequency Table: Response to Survey Questions

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
I am happy with my chosen career	198	52.0	167	43.8	5	1.3	10	2.6	1	0.3
I was formally mentored in my first year of teaching	78	20.5	80	21.0	29	7.6	90	23.6	104	27.3
My colleagues and I share ideas	150	39.4	194	50.9	23	6.0	10	2.6	4	1.1
I always turn in office paperwork on time	169	44.3	169	44.3	20	5.3	22	5.8	1	0.3
At my request, parents come to me to discuss their children's progress	71	18.6	218	57.2	45	11.8	44	11.6	3	0.8
I handle the discipline of students effectively	132	34.6	225	59.1	16	4.2	7	1.8	1	0.3
I communicate well with my students' parents	132	34.6	223	58.5	20	5.3	5	1.3	1	0.3
I feel I have a positive relationship with my students' parents	143	37.5	205	53.8	29	7.6	3	0.8	1	0.3

Appendix E (continued)

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
I have a colleague I can depend on for advice/help with problems in my classroom	250	65.7	104	27.3	10	2.6	12	3.1	5	1.3
My colleagues can depend on me to help them.	256	67.2	118	30.9	6	1.6	0	0.0	1	0.3
My lesson plans reflect ample planning for daily instruction	152	39.9	202	53.0	17	4.5	8	2.1	2	0.5
When asked, parents volunteer to help in my classroom and/or field trips	117	30.7	165	43.3	59	15.5	32	8.4	8	2.1
I have formal discipline rules/consequences displayed in my classroom	201	52.8	103	27.0	25	6.6	38	10.0	14	3.6
My principal and I discuss concerns	154	40.4	168	44.1	33	8.7	18	4.7	8	2.1
Teaching as a career is a "good fit" for me	216	56.7	145	38.1	12	3.1	7	1.8	1	0.3

Appendix E (continued)

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
My college experience prepared me to teach	62	16.3	143	37.5	63	16.5	88	23.1	25	6.6
My colleagues offer help when asked	193	50.6	167	43.8	14	3.7	6	1.6	1	0.3
I have time during my school day to accomplish needed classroom tasks outside of instruction	29	7.6	103	27.0	32	8.4	146	38.3	71	18.7
Overall, parents make my job more difficult	19	5.0	77	20.2	109	28.6	142	37.3	34	8.9
I am not able to teach this year due to my students' behavior	8	2.1	33	8.7	29	7.6	185	48.6	126	33.0
My students feel they can ask me questions	166	43.6	206	54.0	8	2.1	1	0.3	0	0.0
I would choose teaching as a career again	166	43.6	136	35.7	46	12.1	18	4.7	15	3.9
My mentoring experience was not helpful in my first year of teaching	39	10.2	51	13.4	118	31.0	88	23.1	85	22.3

Appendix E (continued)

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
My colleagues are not helpful when I have a problem	9	2.4	9	2.4	18	4.7	155	40.7	190	49.8
Teaching would be easier without additional school or county paperwork	131	34.4	155	40.7	65	17.1	26	6.8	4	1.0
Overall, parents are not interested in what happens in my classroom	9	2.4	62	16.3	69	18.1	195	51.1	46	12.1
I have at least one student this year I feel I cannot handle	41	10.8	59	15.5	22	5.8	156	40.9	103	27.0
I feel I can talk openly with my colleagues or supervisors about my concerns	124	32.6	189	49.6	36	9.4	21	5.5	11	2.9
As an educator, I feel respected by other professionals	65	17.1	201	52.7	56	14.7	46	12.1	13	3.4
Office paperwork sometimes interrupts my instructional time	79	20.7	181	47.5	44	11.5	65	17.1	12	3.2

Appendix E (continued)

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
The administration helps me solve my discipline problems	75	19.7	202	53.0	41	10.8	45	11.8	18	4.7
My mentor met with me at least once a week during my first year of teaching	47	12.3	57	15.0	79	20.7	71	18.7	127	33.3
I communicate well with my principal	136	35.7	163	42.8	41	10.8	31	8.1	10	2.6
I have the resources I need to teach my grade level/subject area	88	23.1	197	51.7	26	6.8	56	14.7	14	3.7
I had no formal mentoring my first full year of teaching	119	31.2	80	21.0	20	5.2	69	18.1	93	24.5
I handle the majority of discipline problems within my own classroom	223	58.4	153	40.2	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.8
I plan to leave teaching in the next five years	46	12.1	34	8.9	45	11.8	109	28.6	147	38.6

Appendix E (continued)

Survey Questions	Strongly agree <i>f</i>	Strongly agree %	Agree <i>f</i>	Agree %	No opinion <i>f</i>	No opinion %	Disagree <i>f</i>	Disagree %	Strongly disagree <i>f</i>	Strongly disagree %
I would encourage others to enter into the teaching profession	82	21.5	154	40.4	89	23.4	37	9.7	19	5.0
I make a positive difference in my students' lives	170	44.6	195	51.2	15	3.9	1	0.3	0	0.0

VITA

JULIE OLIVER

Personal Data: Date of Birth: January 15, 1967
 Place of Birth: Columbus, Georgia
 Marital Status: Married

Education: Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee;
 BS in Elementary Education;
 1987:

 Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee;
 MS in Curriculum and Instruction;
 1997

 Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee
 Administration and Supervision Endorsment;
 2003

 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
 Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.;
 2005

Professional
Experience: Nashville Metropolitan School System, Nashville, Tennessee;
 Classroom teacher;
 1988 – 1993

 Sevier County School System, Sevierville, Tennessee;
 Classroom teacher;
 1993 to present

Honors &
Awards Outstanding Elementary Education Graduate, Belmont University,
 1987