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A Study of the Perceptions of Novice and Veteran Elementary Teachers' Levels of
Stress and Attitudes Toward Their Profession

A dissertation
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by
Melissa Charlene Stukes
August 2015

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Keywords: Stress, Novice Teacher, Veteran Teacher

ABSTRACT

A Study of the Perceptions of Novice and Veteran Elementary Teachers Levels of Stress and Attitudes Toward Their Profession

by

Melissa Charlene Stukes

This study was designed to evaluate the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers' level of stress and their attitudes toward their profession. Stress may be caused by many different factors. Work related stress is common amongst many people in the work force. In education stress is endured, in some cases on a daily basis. There are many demands put on teachers to ensure student learning. These demands can cause an overwhelming amount of stress for teachers. This stress can have a positive or negative impact on teachers' attitude toward their profession.

The qualitative research method is the method that was used in this study. Qualitative research provides an opportunity for the researcher to have an individual interaction with participants. Interviews and focus groups were used to collect data. Twelve elementary teachers in Northeast Tennessee were interviewed. Of the 12 teachers who were interviewed, novice and veteran elementary teachers in Kindergarten through fourth grades participated in this study.

During data analysis, 9 themes were identified. These themes were (a) resources, (b) testing, (c) lack of time, (d) changes in curriculum, (e) relationships with coworkers, (f)

internet sources and technology, (g) school community and culture, (h) personal life, and (i) job satisfaction.

Based on the research the following conclusions were presented. Some of the most common stressors among teachers are evaluations, paperwork, testing, and students' academic and behavioral needs. Positive relationships with other teachers and staff members within a school are important throughout the school year. Support from school and district administrators is very much needed and appreciated in order to retain teachers. Providing support and encouragement for teachers could be beneficial to schools and school districts. Recommendations from this study's findings may assist school districts and administrators in retaining teachers and supporting them in their profession.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents James Stukes and Nancy Stukes Green, stepfather David Green, maternal and paternal grandparents, Aunt Lillie, and Uncle Norman, who all are now in heaven. The encouragement, love, and support that you gave me during your time on earth still lives inside of me.

Always In My Heart

*Today, tomorrow, and always
You are always in my heart
That is something that even death
Could never tear apart*

*I am learning to live without you
It doesn't come with ease
And even though you are physically gone
It's you I still hope I please*

*As I graduate with this degree
I know it makes you proud
And if you were at graduation
You would yell extremely loud*

*Who knows what else I will become in this life
No doubt, I have strength to endure
I look forward to what the future holds
The sky is the limit for sure*

*Whatever the future may hold for me
I know you will be a part
Because I carry you with me every step of the way
For you are always in my heart*

Written by Melissa Stukes

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Many people have encouraged me throughout this entire process. Thank you God for giving me life, health, and most importantly strength to complete this program. All praise goes to you. I have the best siblings a girl could ask for. My friends and family are my blessings. They have been very supportive and without their love and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this process.

Thank you to all of my mentors and friends in the Johnson City School system. Our school system's leaders and employees have been very supportive of me during this process. I could not have done this without your support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Esquith (2014):

Today was an ordinary Friday afternoon. While the students were eating lunch, I walked down the hallway of my elementary school's main building. I stopped by the office to check my mail. I had to hurry because my students eat lunch in about two minutes so they can dash back to class for a guitar lesson. It's something they love to learn about.

As I sorted through my mail, I saw a fellow teacher glumly enter into the office. It looked like she was having a bad day, so I tried to cheer her up. "Happy Friday," I said with a nice smile. "I hate Fridays," she responded. "It just means that Monday is that much sooner" (p.20).

Our education quality enhances or detracts our ability to compete internationally. A well-educated population is what keeps our system of government going. A quality education is what has produced the high quality of life some Americans enjoy. Our educational level and quality is a prime ingredient of our national and individual self-respect (Petress, 2007).

According to Labaree (2011), teaching is one of the most difficult of professions. Teachers and other staff members face increasingly complex demands in the workplace (Kaspereen, 2012). It seems to have become even more difficult over the past few years as standardized testing expectations have increased in quantity and expected outcomes. Esquith (2014) indicated that bureaucrats, even well-meaning ones, have tried to correct things by imposing so many tests, rules, and regulations that dedicated teaching professionals are losing their passion for teaching.

Bunting (2011) indicated that teaching has gradually become less about teachers and their students but more about the directives and mandates coming from beyond the classroom. She further implicated that teachers report feeling disconnected from their lives and their roles as teachers. According to Labree (2011) teachers are an easy target and as a group, teachers are too visible to not be scrutinized and too numerous to be elite. Labree suggested that it is tough being in a profession where it is extremely difficult to practice your job effectively and also where other people consider your profession a walk on the beach. Labree also suggested the idea that everyone is an expert on education except the educator. In other words, people who are not educators are making decisions about what is being taught in schools and how teaching is done: decisions that should be left to experts.

Esch (2010) noted teachers are told who to teach, what to teach, how to teach, when certain topics must be taught, and where it will be done. Esch reported that sometimes teachers are provided with commercially scripted instruction from which they teach, and this type of methodology conflicts with personal or professional philosophies of education that results in an ethical quandary-to teach well or to teach for uniformity. Attempts to reach all students through a highly structured, packed curriculum can extinguish the enthusiasm of even the most motivated, creative, dynamic, and innovative teachers (Brickman, 2011). According to Brickman there is a great discrepancy that lies between the teacher's traits that are valued during the hiring process and the teacher's dynamics that are present in the school after the teacher has been hired.

Palmer-Evans (2010) indicated stress unravels the core belief that one can teach effectively. Managing a full class, preparing lessons, and conducting ongoing evaluations are only a few duties on an ever-expanding list that can keep an educator in a constant state of nervous tension (Clausen & Petruka, 2009). After reviewing a large number of case studies, Clausen and Petruka concluded that stress does play a significant role in determining a teacher's actions and happiness. Clausen and Petruka also concluded that individuals seem to have problems when their own needs begin to conflict with the demands of the environment.

Teacher responsibilities across the contracted work day are predominately dedicated to supervision of students and learning in the classroom. Labaree (2011) outlined some of the additional responsibilities teachers face daily. These responsibilities include grade level meetings, IEP meetings, conferences with parents and other teachers, instructional planning, and assessing students' learning. People who choose to become teachers do so because they want to make a difference (Smith, 2009). Maxfield (2009) noted that teachers who are in or approaching burnout suffer depleted energy, lowered resistance to illness, decreased effectiveness on his or her job, and increased absenteeism.

Elden (2011) reported that many teachers take time out of their personal schedules to complete tasks they could not complete during the school day. Teachers take work home with them and complete it during times they could be spending with their families. Some teachers stay up after their family has gone to bed to complete work and others may get up early or complete work on the weekends or days off. Elden also cautioned

that sacrificing your personal life to the classroom may seem like a sign of dedication, but it is more likely to lead to teacher burnout and a poor attitude.

Students in most school districts have about 8-10 weeks off for summer vacation. During summer vacation teachers may be attending workshops or conferences to learn more ways to improve their teaching. Most school districts require their teachers to complete a number of in-service hours throughout the school year. Teachers are responsible for far more than teaching students. Teachers are also responsible for molding student minds. Education involves more than acquiring knowledge. We take students and turn them into productive workers, law-abiding citizens, and ambitious achievers (Labaree, 2011).

“Difficult work assignments, inadequate resources, isolation, unclear expectations, role conflict, and reality shock are some of the main reasons for the horrendous attrition rates” (Anhorn, 2008 p. 15). Levin (2008) added that good teaching is hard work and involves different aspects. Good teaching not only involves engagement with the subject matter to be taught but even more an intense engagement with all of the students in the class. The students in the class should not only be shaped as learners but as whole persons because their personhood affects so much of their learning.

Smith (2009) also discussed the dedication of teachers. He indicated that teachers develop a sense of sensitivity and caring about students' needs as well as an ethical commitment to helping young people succeed in and beyond the classroom. Smith further indicates that most teachers want to do their best, but the continual pressure and demands put upon them increases their stress levels. Such levels can contribute to poor health. Stress causes a variety of health problems on an individual, including

physical and psychological problems such as heart disease, stroke, gastrointestinal diseases, emotional disorders, respiratory problems, family conflicts, depression, sexual dysfunction, appetite disorders, sleep disturbances, and burnout (Michailidis & Georgiou, 2005). Stress may also cause some behavioral problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, violence, and accident proneness. Botwink (2007) suggested that it is easy for teachers to become overstressed dropouts and leave the profession.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to identify perceptions of stress in novice and veteran teachers. According to Levin (2008) good teaching is important and finding or keeping quality educators should be a preoccupation of every school, district, and government that is involved in education. Levin also noted that retaining good teachers requires giving teachers interesting work, good working conditions, challenging work, and respect. The purpose of this study is to identify stresses teachers experience, the sources of that stress, and how they are impacted by stress.

Research Questions

Creswell (2012) defined research questions as questions that narrow the purpose statement to specific questions that the researchers will seek to answer. Research questions are usually developed by the researcher before identifying the methods of study. The research questions proposed for this study are:

1. What stresses do novice and veteran elementary teachers experience?
2. What are the sources of this stress?

3. How does stress impact teachers' perceptions of their job performance?

Significance of the Study

According to Williams (2011) increased turnover of novice teachers is especially disturbing because they, like their students, are our future. Some novice teachers do not stay in the profession longer than 5 years. Within the first 3 years of teaching, 29% of beginning teachers are projected to leave the profession; by the end of the fifth year, 39% leave the teaching field (Plash & Piotrowski, 2006). Most of the demands on teachers are out of their control. Demands are being delegated from the federal, state, and district levels to teachers. These demands cause a variety of stressors for many teachers.

Definitions of Terms

There are some commonly used terms included in this study. The following definitions of those terms are used for the purposes of this study:

1. Novice teacher-A novice teacher is a teacher that has taught for 5 or less years.
2. Stress-Stress is derived from the Latin word *stringere*, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or affliction (Cartwright & Cooper 1997).
3. Veteran teacher-A veteran teacher is a teacher that has taught for more than 5 years.

Statement of Research Bias and Limitations. Having 10 years of classroom experience, I have my own biases on teacher stress. I have had experiences where I witnessed other teachers with whom I worked stress and worry about things that I did not stress and worry about. Having these experiences struck my curiosity about teacher related stress. I currently serve as an Elementary Principal within a school system in Northeast Tennessee. Personally, I try not to let things bother me and endure stress. If I do experience stress, I tend to handle it in ways that will not have a negative effect on me emotionally, physically, or socially. However, over the years I have witnessed many fellow educators experience stress and the negative affects it had on them.

In order to answer the research questions, I conducted interviews with 12 novice and veteran elementary teachers. Prior to conducting the interviews, I obtained approval from IRB, the Director of Schools, and Principals. I conducted interviews and focus groups with novice and veteran elementary teachers within a local school system. These teachers worked at a Title-I Elementary School or a Non-Title I Elementary School.

Overview of the Study. This chapter introduces this study and provides research questions guiding the study. Chapter 2 is a review of literature. Chapter 3 identifies the participants in the study and describes the process by which data were gathered. Chapter 4 provides summaries of the research findings. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the results of the research findings and recommendations for administrators to help alleviate stress among teachers.

Summary. The purpose of this Chapter is to introduce the study. More and more teachers are leaving the profession each year. Identifying teachers' stressors could help school and district level administrators help teachers reduce stressors. A reduction of stressors could also help school and district level administrators reduce teacher retention rates. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature for this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress

Stress is derived from the Latin word *stringere*, meaning to draw tight, and it was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or affliction (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997). Cartwright and Cooper noted that because of its universal occurrence stress is not viewed in terms of its presence or absence, rather, according to its intensity and the effect it has on individuals. Some effects of stress can be both physical and psychological (Michailidis & Georgiou, 2005). Cartwright and Cooper also noted that stress has been also seen to play a role in diseases related to a person's lifestyle, where the degree to which a person eats, drinks alcohol, smokes, and exercises can play a role.

Causes of stress are known as stressors (Michailidis & Georgiou, 2005). A person's personality traits can help determine how a person responds to stressors. Personality traits are very important in determining levels of stress in an individual. Something that causes one person to be stressed out can be a relaxation aid for another person. Stressors can be emotional or physical and they can also be generated externally or internally. Stressors can be situations, people, events, or demands that the individual perceives to be the source of the stress. Michailidis and Georgiou further indicate that the most common stressor is change. Some examples are a change in career, illness, injury, or the loss of a loved one.

According to Levinson (2010) stress can come in two different forms. Stress can be acute (sudden and short term) or chronic (long term). Acute stress can be caused by

an actual, perceived, or sometimes even an imaginary threat and is triggered by stressors such as noise, crowds, or arguments. Chronic stress can be caused by continuing, worrisome, or even traumatic situations such as a high-pressure job or domestic relationship problems. The effects of stress are palpable and the effects are believed to be implicated in disorders such as heart disease, circulatory disease, diabetes, and arthritis.

What is Occupational Stress?

Occupational stress is stress related to the workplace. There are a variety of sources of occupational stress. One source of occupational stress is a person's role in the organization itself. When a person's role in an organization is clearly defined and understood and when the expectations that are placed on the individual are also clear and achievable, stress can be kept to minimum levels (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997). It is hard to perform on the job when you are uncertain of what is expected of you.

According to Michailidis and Georgiou (2005) stress can be created in situations where there are not clear job descriptions, a high degree of uncertainty about job security or career prospects is present, or if an obvious chain of command is absent.

Misunderstandings can also lead to a person developing levels of stress on the job.

Hart (2005) noted that stress is becoming more common in the workplace. Work related stress can affect your attitude about your job and in some cases it can affect your job performance. Stress affects individuals who work in a variety of professions. However, according to Jepson and Forrest (2006) high levels of occupational stress have a strong effect on a teacher's job performance, career decisions, mental health, physical health, and overall job satisfaction.

Job Burnout

Job burnout is an impairment of being motivated to work, resulting in a growing inability to boost interests and abilities (Potter, 1996). Some of the warning signals of a person who has developed job burnout are emotional outbursts, lower performance standards, and a “Why should I even bother” attitude. If these warning signals continue to grow and get worse, the person may begin to dread going to work.

Burnout is caused by the long-term experience of emotionally damaging situations (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). According to Nagy (2006) some possible signs of teacher burnout may include:

- Irritability with students
- Avoiding responsibilities (paperwork, meetings)
- Working harder and getting less done
- Feeling discouraged and indifferent
- Showing resistance to change
- Feeling a sense of failure when everything is fine
- Higher than normal absenteeism

One type of burnout is called compassion fatigue. Krop (2013) noted that compassion fatigue is a form of burnout. Compassion fatigue is characterized by extreme emotional, mental, and spiritual exhaustion. It is an occupational hazard in the caring professions where people hold themselves to a high level of integrity and service in their work. Krop also noted that showing compassion is a regular part of teaching. Therefore, compassionate teachers can go into overdrive in their zeal to make an impact in their students' lives.

One symptom of job burnout is having negative emotions. According to Potter (1996) for any living and working person occasional feelings of frustration, depression, anger, dissatisfaction, and anxiety are normal feelings. However, people who are experiencing job burnout develop more and more of these negative emotions until they become chronic. Another symptom of job burnout is a decline in performance. Potter added that people may become bored and unable to be excited about their job or certain projects during the burnout process.

Other symptoms of job burnout are health and interpersonal problems. As a person's emotional state of mind begins to deteriorate, the person's physical state can begin to decline as well. Some minor ailments such as colds, headaches, backaches, and insomnia become more and more frequent (Potter, 1996). A person experiencing job burnout may develop fatigue and become more and more tired. When a person's emotional state of mind begins to deteriorate, interactions with others can become more difficult. This lack of interaction can take place at work or at home. In burnout relationships can become increasingly depersonalized and people can become chronically pessimistic (Maxfield, 2009).

Stress Management

Coping with stress is multidimensional and depends on situational factors and the appraisal of the situation by the individual who is under stress (Michailidis & Georgiou, 2005). People use different ways to try and cope with stress. Some people ignore high stress levels and choose not to do anything about it. Other people try to keep their minds busy by thinking of matters that are relaxing.

One way to survive in the workplace is not to get rid of stress but to deepen your ability to handle stress (Loehr, 1997). Although levels of stress can become overwhelming, there are some ways to help manage stress. The first action teachers can take to manage their stress levels is to acknowledge the factors that cause their stress (Nagel & Brown, 2003). Once the factors that lead to stress have been identified, the teacher can then concentrate on ways to help alleviate those factors.

One way people can help manage their stress is to develop good relationships with family and coworkers. Potter (1996) indicated that having close friends and good relationships with family members and coworkers reaffirm your competence and self-worth. Coworkers, family, and friends can help a person handle situations that are difficult and having a close and good relationship with these people will also enable them to encourage the person under stress to tackle new challenges and make and accomplish goals.

Task management is another way to help manage stress. Loehr (1997) noted that reaching our highest potential in high-stress arenas means systemically using rituals or tasks with activities that actually work. Some tasks are more difficult and some tasks you enjoy more than others. By using the tasks you enjoy and tasks you are more likely to complete right away for motivation to complete tasks you do not like as well and have a tendency to put off you can be off to a good start to task management (Potter, 1996). Breaking more difficult tasks into smaller parts can make these tasks easier to complete. Completing tasks one by one will help build a person's self-confidence in ability to complete tasks more efficiently. Goulston (2005) indicated that a lack of confidence can impact job performance and lead to higher levels of stress.

Being able to think positively could make a big difference in the amounts of stress a person may be under. Loehr (1997) suggested that mental training leads to mental toughness, which in turn leads to increased feelings of personal control, strength, confidence, and positive energy high in stress arenas. Negative thinking can lead to negative outcomes, but being more positive trains the mind to be tougher and the levels of stress could decrease. People may think negatively about some situations and that may cause them to undergo unnecessary stress. If people think powerless thoughts and envisions himself or herself as losing, he or she will feel powerless, anxious, frustrated, angry, or even depressed (Potter, 1996).

According to Krop (2013) compassion is empathy that goes along with the desire to relieve another person's suffering. Krop further indicated that teachers can be drained by personal overwork or by the response to the demands of an educational system that overworks and under-supports teachers. Students learn when teachers care, but when the passionate teachers burn out from compassion fatigue, no one comes out as a winner. The teacher's engagement is diminished, the students' learning is compromised, and the school's environment suffers.

Teachers and Stress

The stress that teachers endure can have a negative effect on them in many ways. The top five ways teacher stress is manifested are:

1. Physical exhaustion
2. Loss of enthusiasm about teaching and idealism
3. Feeling overwhelmed and having doubts about their abilities

4. Medical issues such as frequent headaches, stomach pains, or high blood pressure; and
5. Negative effects on personal relationships (Richards, 2011)

These are just a few effects teachers can experience as a result of being under stress. Stress can affect everyone differently, but most teachers feel some of these negative effects of being stressed from work.

Richards (2011) reported that high levels of stress are common for teachers. Teachers develop stress from the demands placed on them each day. In 2011 a national survey was given by Richards to 1,200 teachers addressing three areas. Those three areas were: the sources of teacher stress, the manifestations of stress, and coping strategies they found most successful.

According to teachers in Richards's (2011) study the top five sources of school-related stress are:

1. Feeling overcommitted at work with too many duties and responsibilities
2. Teaching needy students without enough support
3. Little time to relax
4. Teaching students who do not seem motivated to learn; and
5. Feeling constant pressure of being held accountable

According to teachers that in Richards's (2011) study the top five ways teacher stress is manifested are:

1. Feeling overwhelmed and doubting their abilities
2. Loss of enthusiasm and idealism for teaching
3. Physical exhaustion

4. Medical issues such as frequent headaches, high blood pressure, and stomach pains
5. Negative effects on personal relationships

Some teachers in Richards's (2011) study identified the following positive strategies to cope with stress:

1. Exercise
2. Making time for friends, hobbies, or massages
3. Having a sense of humor and positive attitude
4. Getting adequate amounts of sleep

Haskvitz (2009) indicated that some signs of teacher stress can include being tired, overwhelmed, frustrated, irritable, and bringing problems from work home. Chang (2009) wrote an article to review the literature on teacher burnout, teachers' emotions, and to examine the role of teachers' appraisal of emotional exhaustion. Chang noted that the emotional connection, work, and labor required for a teacher are significant compared to other professions.

Based on a survey conducted by Tye and O'Brien (2002), some factors that may cause teachers to leave the profession were identified. Tye and O'Brien found the following top seven reason teachers left the profession:

1. Accountability
2. Increased amounts of paperwork
3. Students' attitudes and behaviors
4. Lack of parental support
5. Lack of support from administration

6. Low status of the profession

7. Salary considerations

According to Tye and O'Brien (2002) other teachers considered leaving the profession based on the same reasons but ranked them in a different order:

1. Salary considerations
2. Increased amounts of paperwork
3. Accountability
4. Low status of the profession
5. Lack of support from administration
6. Students' attitudes and behaviors
7. Lack of parental support

Durham (2005) noted that declining health issues could cause teachers to need more personal time. More and more teachers are facing difficult health problems. Durham went on to say that cancer and other diseases limit the amount of time one can dedicate to a career. Treatments such as chemotherapy leave patients feeling weak and tired. Maintaining a teaching position while facing major health obstacles can be more than a just a challenge. At times it can seem impossible.

As the line between making a life and making a living becomes increasingly thin, it is even more imperative that people reconfigure free time (Halberstam, 2000). People have a tendency to work hard without rewards or leisure. Time off from work can be very beneficial.

Clausen and Petruka (2009) suggested that some would argue that because educators are so intrinsically motivated by the work their well-being and home life may

suffer more as they focus so highly on the job at hand. Clausen and Petruka noted that a teacher who is managing a full class, conducting ongoing evaluations, and preparing lessons remains in a constant state of nervous tension. Those duties are only a few duties on the ever-expanding list of things to do. Even after a teacher has left the school building, he or she often continues school work at home. Working from home imposes on personal time.

The teaching profession has gradually become less about teachers and students and more about the directives and mandates coming from beyond the classroom (Bunting, 2011). Bunting added that the teaching profession offered teachers an opportunity for fulfillment and it was a chance to do something important and become someone significant before the directives and mandates became so rigorous.

Esch (2010) noted that the most insidious type of competition between teachers is that of test score excellence. Each individual teacher is working hard to obtain test score excellence and teachers may start working against each other without realizing they are doing it. Esch also noted that many experienced teachers are very knowledgeable about the contents of the test and they modify their instruction to “teach to the test” so that students will achieve high on the mandated tests. A respondent to the Tye and O’Brien survey (2002) said, “I don’t mind standards, but too much emphasis is placed on testing. It has taken the fun out of teaching. You feel like you don’t have time for Art, Music, Physical Education, etc.” (page 27).

Teacher Retention

Low teacher salaries; low respect by administrators, parents, and students; insufficient teacher preparation time allowed in teacher’s daily schedules; excessive

nonteaching duties; insufficient supplies available for students and teachers; and the amount of violence growing in classrooms are just a few of the reasons former teachers, education critics, union leaders, and school administrators named as reasons why recruitment of highly talented, college graduates to the teaching profession is difficult (Petress, 2007). Every teacher, school, or administrator faces the exact same problems; however, these problems can create difficulties for most educators. Cooperation and support among teachers, administrators, and school system personnel could help alleviate some of these problems.

Retention of young teachers is also problematic. According to Petress attracting and retaining high quality and dedicated teachers is expensive, vital to the image and success of schools and school districts, and an ongoing major issue for school administrators, parents, and the American taxpaying public. With many teachers leaving the teaching profession, administrators are finding it harder and harder to recruit and keep good teachers.

When a teacher is hired, money is spent on professional development to train teachers to work in that school or district. Sterling and Frazier (2011) noted that when school districts continually hire, train, and lose teachers, high costs occurs not only in dollars but student achievement and in the school's morale. Levin (2008) also indicated that the high turnover of teachers imposes significant costs on an education system not only in training and developing new teachers but also in the lost productivity of experienced and capable people. The administrators start all over again hiring and training a new teacher. To attract the best teaching candidates, district administrators participate in area job fairs, take advantage of college recruiting opportunities, and

advertise for teaching positions as far in advance of the school year as possible (Sargent, 2003).

Aspects of Teaching

Teaching is giving of your skills and talents so students can discover and develop the best of theirs (Krop, 2013). Teaching is a rewarding profession, but it is simultaneously complex and demanding (Ferfolja, 2008). There are many aspects of a teacher's career that can cause stress. In today's society teacher's success relies heavily on whether a student learns the subject material or not with evidence of this learning limited to performance on standardized tests.

Standardized testing has become one of the main criteria used to measure a teacher's ability to teach and it is also used to measure a student's growth from year to year. If a student does not like the subject, teacher, or even being a student at the school itself, the student may not choose to learn. Teachers can only be successful if students choose to learn (Labaree, 2011). According to Labaree this is the core problem facing every teacher every day in every classroom. Labaree identified the following as possible sources of a student's resistance to a teacher:

- The student does not want to be at school
- The student may not like the subject
- The student may not like the teacher
- The student may be bored
- The student may be distracted by fear of a bully
- The student may be hungry

A vital part of teaching is adapting to the students' needs (Landsman & Gorski, 2007). These obstacles are not measured by standardized testing. Teachers are held responsible for a student learning and making high scores on standardized tests given by the school system or state. Teachers are held to a standard by which they are responsible for each student meeting the requirements set forth through standardized testing and brings forth a lot of pressure.

Gavish and Friedman (2010) reported that novice and veteran teachers are feeling pressures more and more each day. Novice teachers are also under pressure to function as more experienced teachers and assume the same sort of responsibilities as their colleagues. These pressures are causing some teachers to experience increasing levels of stress. Novice teachers are expected to function and work as if they have been teaching for years.

School districts are faced with decisions regarding budget cuts every school year. Krop (2013) reported that a lack of educational assistants, lack of timely educational testing for students who are struggling academically, and limited budgets for materials (causing teachers to feel obligated to spend out-of-pocket) are examples of stressful impacts of inadequate budgets. Krop also noted that teaching is a demanding type of work. Teaching is a profession filled with compassion and being compassionate sometimes requires personal sacrifice. Teachers must meet the needs of the students but also teach within limits. Richards (2011) indicated that teachers and schools are experiencing severe cutbacks in resources, oversized classrooms, and often pay cuts because of the economy. School budgets have been cut to the bare minimum and teachers are being laid off.

Race to the Top

The state of Tennessee is one of the states that was a recipient of funds from the “Race to the Top” federal grant (RTTT). Armed with \$500 million in federal Race to the Top Fund money Tennessee’s education officials were committed to boosting the quality of their teacher and principal ranks and also turning around low-performing schools faster than ever (Aarons, 2010). For the state of Tennessee, this was an opportunity to make some changes in the state’s education system.

Tennessee, which has about 846, 000 public school students, ranked No. 2, behind Delaware, in the Race to the Top’s competition which was based on a 500-point grading scale (Aarons, 2010). Tennessee’s rating allowed the State Department of Education to receive funds to assist schools across the state of Tennessee. Tennessee was awarded \$500 million in March of 2010, but in order to meet criteria the state passed legislation that required the student achievement data to be linked to teacher evaluations by the end of the 2011-2012 school year (Heitin, 2011).

In 2011 Tennessee’s Department of Education implemented changes in the teacher evaluation process to comply with Race to the Top funding criteria (Calahan, 2013). School districts in Tennessee were given the choice of several approved evaluation models. Calahan also noted the model the state endorsed and that most districts chose to implement was Teacher Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). The participants in this study are evaluated using the TEAM model. Tennessee teachers are scored using a new multi-measure evaluation system that includes principal observations, test scores, and other measures of student success (Tribune, 2012). The number of observations and the frequency of observations changes from year to year.

The new evaluation system bases 50% of a teacher's evaluation on observation ratings, 35% on student- growth measurement (value-added data), and 15% on other measures of student achievement (Heitin, 2011). Every teacher in the state of Tennessee is being evaluated regardless of tenure or years of experience. However, the number of evaluations varies for different teachers.

According to Heitin (2011) many teachers are already frustrated, primarily with the extensive lesson planning needed to score well on the observational measure. Administrators are feeling the pressures of the new evaluation system as well. Heitin also reported that principals are finding the system cumbersome. More observations must be completed on teachers and principals are finding themselves spending most of their days in the classrooms. The new evaluation system is tied to a new teacher-tenure process under which teachers must teach for 5 years and receive high evaluation ratings in the final 2 years of teaching before being eligible for tenure.

Common Core

McKinney (2013) noted that the knowledge and training teachers will need for the amount of growth required over the next 3 years seems to be large in order to implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS). McKinney also noted that to implement CCSS teachers will need a broader knowledge base, a more diverse tool kit for teaching and learning, and greater experience teaching in a standards-based environment. Rubinstein (2013) perhaps somewhat facetiously suggested that development and implementation of CCSS were similar to the beginning of the American Revolution when Paul Revere rode through Boston. Now, he would be saying, "The Common Core is coming, The Common Core is coming!" (p. 84).

Another concern is the requirement for online testing. New, online assessments challenge educators to ensure that students have learned CCSS and can demonstrate their knowledge with using technology, while at the same time applying their learning to a variety of tasks (Gullen, 2014). Student assessment systems developed as a part of the CCSS were delivered online in some states beginning in 2014-2015 (Kennedy, 2013).

The students facing performance tasks and questions being created by the consortia connected to CCSS, Smarter Balance, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) will need to learn and retrieve knowledge and then synthesize it under pressure (Gullen, 2014). Gullen also added that students taking the computerized Common Core Assessments may become frustrated due to the inexperience with testing online. Educators realize that computerized and online testing will require students to have skills like using a mouse, highlighting text, dropping and dragging text, operating the computerized calculator, drawing lines and creating graphs on a screen, and keyboarding. Along with teaching CCSS teachers must integrate these skills into their instruction and give students practice working on a computer before administering assessments on the computer.

Assessments

A standardized achievement test is a test that is developed using standard procedures and administered and scored in a consistent manner for everyone taking the test (Molland, 2007). The scores calculated from standardized tests provide information on individual student or group performance. Summative assessments that have developed from the two assessment consortia-the Partnership for Assessment of

Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortia-were field-tested by some schools as early as Spring 2014 (Doorey, 2014). According to Castelhana (2013) states that participate in PARCC's summative assessments are committed to building a K-12 assessment system that adheres to the following standards:

- Builds a pathway to college and career readiness for each student
- Creates high-quality assessments that measure the full range of Common Core State Standards
- Makes better use of technology in assessments
- Advances accountability at each level, and
- Supports teachers in the classroom

According to Doorey (2014) both of the consortia's summative assessments will be administered during the last 3 months of school and are estimated to require 7-10 hours for both English Language Arts and Mathematics combined. The assessments will be administered across multiple testing sessions.

Formative assessments are another means of assessment. Formative assessments check for understanding, are designed to inform teaching and learning, and are not a summative or final exam grade (Fisher & Frey, 2007). Teachers generally use quizzes, exams, classwork, homework, projects, and other assessment tools to measure students' learning. However, a standardized test is the tool state and national agencies use to measure student performance and achievement (Molland, 2007). The perception of how well a teacher teaches is partly based on the one standardized test a student takes that year. Along with teaching students the academic standards, teachers must

also teach test taking skills. Teachers work to make sure they have enough time to teach all of the curriculum standards that are going to be tested on standardized tests. Unfortunately, when intense pressure is associated with ratcheting up test scores as high as possible, instruction usually does not move beyond what is going to be tested (Smith, 2009).

Students and Parents

In a study conducted by Tye and O'Brien (2002) teachers who left the profession after 5 or more years in the classroom ranked changes in student attitudes and behavior as the third highest reason for leaving. Tye and O'Brien added that even in classrooms with low student numbers teachers often find themselves devoting more time and energy to classroom management than to actually teaching. Effective and ineffective teachers deal with the same challenging student behaviors (Breux & Whitaker, 2013). Students that have behavioral problems create problems for others (Maxfield, 2009). Students who are not interested in learning are challenging and perhaps one of the greatest disappointments for teachers (Cain, 2001). All effective teachers know that the most thorough lesson plans do not help accomplish anything if the students are not behaving appropriately.

Parents play a large role in their child's education by supporting their child's teachers, facilitating student learning, and encouraging good behavior (Maxfield, 2009). According to a survey conducted by Tye and O'Brien (2002) lack of parental support is frustrating for teachers. One teacher who responded to the survey said, "When you have a classroom with so many undisciplined students and there is no support from the parents or administrators, teaching is about the last thing that goes on. I do not need

that frustration” (Tye & O’Brien). Another respondent stated, “Dealing with discipline problems is bad enough, but it is nothing compared to the harassment some parents inflict. I’ve been shocked by the demands of some parents and the ruthless measures they will use to gain what they desire” (Tye & O’Brien).

The Teacher’s Work

If you asked a teacher his or her reasons for entering the teaching profession he or she will unlikely say it was for the paperwork (Smith & Eisterhold, 2010). Many teachers cite noninstructional duties (e.g., creating lesson plans, grading papers, parental communication, etc.) as time-consuming. The lesson plans can include lessons or activities that require the teacher to do extra preparation before he or she actually teaches the lesson. Novice teachers are usually unaccustomed to the seemingly endless stream of forms and might be unable to balance the workload of planning and completing paperwork.

People who have been able to succeed or at least get by without preparing is not likely to change until a reprimand is given (Goulston, 2005). For some teachers that reprimand may be from the principal or in cases of constant lack of preparation it could result in termination. In order to ensure they are prepared teachers may get to work early, stay late, work on days off, or take tasks home to work on at night. These extra hours teachers work may take a toll on their health. While they are working long, extra hours they are taking out of their personal lives, which as a result could add extra stress. Some studies have shown a link between working extended shifts and deaths due to coronary heart disease (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997).

Sometimes teachers spend personal money on items needed for the classrooms. According to Smith and Eisterhold (2010) many caring teachers provide essential classroom supplies for students who are unable to afford them. With budget cuts the school, district, or state cannot provide enough money for teachers to purchase classroom supplies. Adams (2009) stated that rocky economic times are taking a toll on the nation's teachers' pocketbooks. Adams also stated that the most recent economic slumps make it even more difficult because many teachers already live on modest salaries that have been relatively flat for years.

Teachers often find themselves spending their personal money on resources for their classroom. Over the course of a school year this money can add up. These expenditures comprise no small expense. Teachers spent an average of \$475 a year (Smith & Eisterhold, 2010). Esquith (2014) noted that the ever-present media outlets are always ready to print a headline that trumpets a horror story about a teacher committing some heinous crime, but these same media outlets rarely run a story about the hundreds of thousands of educators who come in early, stay late, and dip into their own pockets to finance activities.

Teachers Leaving the Profession

Stress among teachers is related to turnover, absenteeism, and early retirement, which all could negatively affect the climate of the school and lead to poor student outcomes in academics and behavior (Kipps-Vaughan, 2013). When a people are not motivated to perform job duties or be at work, he or she begins to lose interest in his or her job. A lack of interest in the job is a reason that people may leave their profession.

People who work in professions that help others, such as social workers, nurses, police officers and teachers, are the hardest hit by burnout (Potter, 1996).

Many teachers develop burnout on the job and as a result they leave the profession. According to Durham (2005) many teachers find themselves considering early retirement or resignation for a variety of reasons. Many parents and grandparents feel guilty about leaving their children in daycare for so many hours each week. Some teachers have young children and need more time to spend with their children.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Followup Survey (TFS), to conclude that 40%-50% of teachers leave the teaching within 5 years of entering the profession. According to Ingersoll and Smith the teaching profession suffers from a high annual turnover rate compared to other occupations. The turnover rate is evenly split between attrition, teachers leaving the profession altogether, and migration, which is when teachers leave to take jobs at other schools.

It takes time and money for a teacher to complete a teacher education program. When a teacher is hired, more money and time is spent providing district or school resources for training a new teacher. Westrom (2010) noted that the cost and benefit ratio of an effective teacher induction program is preferred when the alternatives are considered. More specifically costs to retain novice teachers through induction programs seem to be much more desired than spending money to recruit, prepare, and replace teachers every few years.

Not only are novice teachers entering a very difficult, demanding, and complex profession, but they also must learn how to do it in front of unruly students, anxious

parents, and watchful administrators (Johnson, 2011). Novice teachers have the pressures that come with teaching coupled with the pressures that come with being a new teacher.

Ways Teachers Can Cope With Stress

According to Botwinik (2007) having the ability to manage stress is imperative if teachers are to thrive and survive on the job. It is vital that teachers find and use strategies to cope with the stress they endure. Teachers must find ways to cope with the stress that comes with the job. If they do not they become exposed to teacher burnout. Teacher burnout can lead to teachers leaving the profession. Finding ways to cope will benefit teachers.

Exercise provides a variety of benefits that help build resiliency to stress, including the burning of stress hormones (Nagel & Brown, 2003). Yoga is one form of exercise that could help teachers relieve some stress. Yoga is an excellent exercise that can relieve stress and develops strength, body awareness, and flexibility (Crupi, 2004).

One resource teachers, especially novice teachers, can use to cope with stress is having a teacher mentor. Most school districts provide mentors to novice teachers. Mentoring has evolved to become the dominant component of teacher induction (Greiman, 2010). Teacher mentors can be very influential in a novice teacher's success. Most schools have veteran teachers who serve as mentors to novice teachers, but even then some novice teachers are not being successful in fulfilling all of the job requirements.

The veteran teachers work to ensure that the novice teachers have necessary skills, and the novice teachers help the veteran teachers by bringing in new ideas that can

improve the veteran teachers' approaches (Johnson, 2011). Mentoring not only provides help and encouragement for novice teachers, but mentoring can also provide a breath of fresh air for veteran teachers as well. Teachers bring out the best in their students when they feel connected, appreciated, and energized by their colleagues (Beaudoin, 2011). Teachers should have positive conversations and interactions with each other. They can encourage each other and give each other energy to handle certain situations.

Each job skill or ability has the potential to enlarge your horizons and personal power (Potter, 1996). When a person has mastered how to do something, it makes him or her feel good. The person may want to do more of this particular task or skill. Knowing how to do something helps to build self-confidence and that "Why should I even bother" attitude could turn into an "I can do it" attitude.

Cartwright and Cooper (1997) indicated that physicians and clinical psychologists support the idea that problems with emotional stability could result when the relationship between the boss and a subordinate is psychologically unhealthy for one reason or another. Pressures are placed on teachers and school leaders just the same. However, having and maintaining a healthy, working relationship with your principal is very important.

The ability to develop healthy relationships with the people you work with could have a positive impact on your attitude about work. Relationships with colleagues at work are very important not only to our productivity but also to our job satisfaction and health (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997). In the field of education every person in a school, district, or state is working toward the same goals.

Halberstam (2000) said, “Despite all of the enlightened managerial rhetoric, employees are still commonly viewed as passive organisms waiting to be stimulated” (p. 76). Adults are just like children in a sense that they enjoy rewards. The acknowledgment that a job or task does was performed well can go a long way in the eyes of a teacher. Even when the demands are high, rewards can be the perfect motivation to help a teacher survive.

The teacher has to find his or her own strengths and apply his or her talents where these talents can best be used at the school. This may mean starting something new or joining in on something that already exists. “Like the little engine that believed it could, persuading yourself that you can climb the mountain gets you to try, and once you succeed, your confidence is nourished even more”, said Halberstam (2000, p. 169). When a person experiences that success, his or her confidence will continue to grow and he or she will take on more responsibility no matter how long the individual has been working on the job.

Elements That Can Reduce Teacher Stress

Although many teachers are leaving the teaching profession every year, some researchers report that maybe some things could be done to prevent so many teachers from leaving the profession each year. Some teachers leave the teaching profession because they feel unappreciated. Appreciation can be rewarding in many ways to a teacher. Educators are so giving of their time, hearts, energy, and sometimes their personal finances that appreciation needs to be at the forefront of school reform (Beaudoin, 2011).

Along with appreciation, teachers like to be recognized. Teachers like to be recognized for good things they have done. Teachers who feel connected to a school-who feel that their work is important and recognized-are more likely to remain dynamic, vital, and contributing members of the school community (Sargent, 2003). This recognition does not have to be announced publically or to the entire school. Verbal acts of appreciation or recognition can make a teacher's day. Placing a note or card of thanks in a teacher's mailbox can go a long way.

In addition to helping teachers handle stress, mentoring may help teachers remain in the profession by providing extra support at work. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004) an effective mentoring relationship reduces the stress level of beginning teachers, increases job satisfaction, and advances the professional growth of novice teachers. New teachers want experienced colleagues who will watch them teach and provide feedback, model skilled teaching, help them develop instructional strategies, and share insights about student work (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Teacher mentoring has become one of the components in a novice teacher's professional induction.

Sargent (2003) indicated that working in a positive work environment can lead to less stress for teachers. If teachers feel welcomed and relaxed in their school setting, this can also help reduce stress. Developing relationships with other staff members helps teachers have an outlet for support. To establish a supportive environment for new teachers, schools must offer teachers professional development opportunities and provide a social setting in which teachers enjoy working. Even the most difficult days teachers can feel less stressed if they are working in a positive environment.

Principals and administrators can also play an important role in reducing stress levels among their staff members within a school. Principals who provide their staff members with strong social support provide a buffer that helps reduce teachers' job-related tension (Black, 2004). When the principal can help a teacher reduce his or her stress levels, the principal may have a much better opportunity to retain that teacher.

Summary

Contemporary literature related to stress, job burnout, and teacher stress was outlined in this chapter. People become stressed with the daily problems of everyday life. Stress can also become common within the workplace. Occupational stress can develop in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons.

Finding ways to help teachers cope and manage their stress levels will be beneficial to our school systems. The goal of teacher retention is on the rise because teachers are continually leaving the profession. Teachers play an important role in the future of everyone because each day they influence the lives of our future leaders.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice and veteran elementary teachers' levels of stress and attitudes toward their profession. More specifically, this study identified factors of stress endured by certified novice and veteran elementary teachers in a city school system located in Northeast Tennessee. Participants work in either a Title I Elementary School or a Non-Title I Elementary School. I chose to conduct my study in one of each of these kinds of schools to compare any differences of stressors identified or not identified by teachers.

This study is qualitative in design. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated that qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that is concerned with understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives. Chapter 3 presents the research design including the process for identifying the participants from whom the data were collected, the data collection procedures, and how the data were analyzed.

Method of Study

The qualitative research method was used to identify and examine stressors experienced by elementary teachers related to their teaching profession. Qualitative research is inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations through interactions with selected persons in their work settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). For this study I conducted focus groups and individual interviews with the participants in order to gather data.

By using the qualitative research methods of focus groups and interviews, I was able to interact with people in their own environment. I asked open-ended questions that gave the interviewees a chance to openly express their thoughts and perceptions about stress among teachers. Through focus groups and interviews, I was able to gain insight on teachers' thoughts and perceptions regarding stress.

The participants in this study were elementary teachers from a city school system in Northeast Tennessee. Participants interviewed for this study were a combination of novice and veteran elementary school teachers. The novice teachers have 1-5 years of teaching experience in the state of Tennessee. The veteran teachers have more than 5 years of teaching experience in the state of Tennessee.

Research Questions. This study focused on the perceptions of stress by novice and veteran teachers in elementary schools. The overarching question for this study is "What stressors do novice and veteran elementary teachers encounter in their profession?" This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What stresses do novice and veteran elementary teachers experience?
2. What are the sources of this stress?
3. How does stress impact teachers' perceptions of their job performance?

Role of the Researcher. I have had an interest in this subject matter since 2002 when I began my career in education. Trying to lead a stress-free life is important to me. I understand that being an educator can be stressful on a variety of levels, but teachers seem to handle it differently. I conducted the interviews and focus groups.

The digital recordings were transcribed. I then analyzed the transcripts and coded data collected from the interviews. An auditor was used for the verification of the transcribed material.

Participants in the Research. The novice and veteran elementary school teachers selected to participate in this qualitative research were employees of a city school system in Northeast Tennessee. Twelve teachers participated in this study, 3 novice and 9 veteran. Participants in this study also represented Special Area teachers for Kindergarten through fourth grades. For the purpose of this study, a novice teacher is a teacher who has taught for 5 or fewer years. A veteran teacher is a teacher that has taught for more than 5 years.

Data Collection. Focus groups and structured interviews were conducted and analyzed from 12 teachers. A focus group interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of typically four to six people (Creswell, 2012). With a focus group the researcher can collect shared understandings from several individuals at one time as well as collect views from specific people.

In-depth interviews are one of the main methods of data collection used in a qualitative research design (Ritchie & Lewis, 2008). Interviews provide the researcher with a deep focus and understanding of each participant in the study. Ritchie and Lewis also added that interviews provide an opportunity for a detailed investigation of each person's perspective, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within the research phenomenon is located, and for very detailed subject matter. Interviews provide a chance to ask each participant questions that will give the researcher more insight into the data that are being collected.

All interviews and focus groups were scheduled at a convenient place and time for the participants. Interviews and focus groups were conducted at the school of the participant. A guide for each interview was used (see Appendix A). Each interview was recorded to ensure the accuracy of the participants' words. A transcriber transcribed the recordings. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

Data Analysis. The inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns amongst the categories is called qualitative data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The interviews and focus groups were recorded and the recordings were transcribed. After the findings were transcribed, I checked my findings with the participants through a process called member checking. Member checking is the process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2012).

The next process of analyzing text in qualitative research was coding the data. Creswell (2012) defined coding as the process of segmenting and labeling text to form broad themes and descriptions in the data. Coding is an ongoing process. Coding was used to help analyze data by assigning words to specific themes to identify different pieces of information. Patterns and themes were coded as the data were reviewed.

Validity and Reliability of the Study. Validity is the degree of congruence between explanations of a phenomenon and the reality of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). McMillan and Schumacher also defined reliability as the consistency of measurement or the extent in which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Questions included in this study were developed to identify and examine teachers' stressors.

Triangulation was used among different data sources to enhance the accuracy of the study. Triangulation is the process of justifying evidence from different individuals, methods of data collection, or types of data in descriptions and themes in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). By using data collected from interviews and focus groups, from novice and veteran teachers, and from Title I and Non-Title I elementary schools, I was able to justify evidence that supported themes coded from collected data.

The auditor assisted in verifying that the transcriptions were an accurate reflection of the recorded interviews. The researcher worked with the auditor to examine the findings from the data. Themes were identified through understanding the data, coding, and comparing transcriptions.

It is also important to avoid over-complex categorizations or making assumptions about likely attitudes or experiences based on survey responses (Ritchie & Lewis, 2008). Steps were used by the researcher to ensure control of bias. An account of the focus of study, the role of the researcher, the participant's role, and the basis of gathering data, triangulation, and data analysis was given to enhance the internal validity of the study. Also, I kept my personal feelings and beliefs to myself. My feelings and beliefs could possibly influence the feelings and beliefs of the participants.

Ethical Protocol

Permission to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the school system's Director of Schools. A permission letter was sent to the Director of Schools and each school level administrator. This permission letter gave an introduction of myself, detailed the purpose of my study, and indicated the importance of interviews for this qualitative study.

Permission was given by the principal of each school in which teachers were interviewed. An e-mail was sent to each participant to ask for permission to schedule the interviews. The e-mail included a description of the study. As needed e-mails were sent or telephone calls were made to contact teachers. Permission was given by the participants to participate in a focus group or a structured interview.

Authorization from East Tennessee State University's Institutional Review Board (ETSU-IRB) was obtained before data collection began to ensure that the participants in the study are unharmed and received informed consent. Each participant was willing to participate in this study. The participants were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B). An Informed Consent Form was explained and given to each participant before the interviews were conducted. The Informed Consent Form also explained in detail to each participant before they signed it.

McMillian and Schumacher (2006) suggested that certain resources be used by the researcher to ensure the control of bias. A couple of those resources are an auditor and the use of member checking. An auditor was used in this study to validate that each transcript from the interviews was accurately transcribed. Member checking allowed each participant to review the information from the audio recording for accuracy.

I was also given written permission to audio record the interviews. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in person and an audio recording was made with consent of the participant. Member checking was completed and the transcripts were shared with the participants for verification of the content that was recorded. The transcripts

were then reviewed by the participants and coded by the researcher for emerging themes. Pseudonyms were used to protect each participant's identity.

Limitations and Delimitations. The participants of this study are teachers in Northeast Tennessee. The population included elementary school teachers. Before conducting my research I was unsure of the exact number of novice and veteran teachers who currently worked at the schools in which I collected data. The number of teachers who were willing and able to participate in the study was also unknown. These unknowns affected my sample size and the In other words, both the aims and the outputs are of quite different nature and it is this that can make their combined use so powerful (Ritchie & Lewis, 2008).

Summary. This chapter presented descriptions of the process of the qualitative research design that were used to investigate factors that may cause novice and veteran teachers stress in a local school system in East Tennessee. The purpose of this chapter was to identify the participants in the study and to describe the process by which data will be gathered. Chapter 4 provides summaries of the research findings. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the results of the research findings and recommendations for administrators to help alleviate stress among teachers.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice and veteran elementary teachers' levels of stress and attitudes toward their profession. Identifying teachers' areas of stress and finding ways to alleviate stressors could be beneficial to teachers, administrators, and school systems. Reducing stressors for teachers could assist in retaining good teachers.

Data were collected through one-on-one interviews and focus groups with 12 teachers. Of the teachers, three were novice teachers and nine of the teachers were veteran. An interview guide was used and follow-up questions were asked to probe for further meaning.

This study was focused on the perceptions of novice teachers related to the following research questions:

1. What stresses do novice and veteran elementary teachers experience?
2. What are the sources of this stress?
3. How does stress impact teachers' perceptions of their job performance?

The focus of data analysis was to identify emerging themes of stressors among novice and veteran teachers. The study involved 12 participants who are teachers in a public school system in Northeast Tennessee. The 12 participants were asked and volunteered to participate in this research study because they fit one of the following two

criteria: (a) a novice teacher in his or her first 5 years of teaching, or (b) a veteran teacher in his or her sixth or more years of teaching. All participants were certified teachers who taught Kindergarten through fourth grades.

Participants in this research are listed below in Table 1. All teachers were females and ranged from 2-22 years of teaching experience. One Elementary Librarian and one Elementary Guidance Counselor participated in this study.

Table 1.

Research Participants

Participants	Gender	Current Role	Experience	Novice or Veteran
Lillie Tomlin	Female	1 st grade teacher	13	Veteran
Emma Austin	Female	2 nd grade teacher	4	Novice
Olivia Reaves	Female	Kindergarten teacher	22	Veteran
Jane Smith	Female	Librarian K-4	19	Veteran
Denise Webster	Female	3 grade teacher	7	Veteran
Victoria Baxter	Female	4 th grade teacher	2	Novice
Kim Stover	Female	4 th grade teacher	19	Veteran
Marjorie Lowrey	Female	Guidance Counselor K-4	12	Veteran
Mary McFadden	Female	Kindergarten teacher	8	Veteran
Elizabeth McQuilla	Female	4 th grade teacher	15	Veteran
Ada Bowens	Female	2 nd grade teacher	2	Novice
Elaine Montgomery	Female	Kindergarten teacher	7	Veteran

All of the participants were accommodating and gracious as the interviewer worked to set up the interviews and focus groups. Each interview and focus group lasted from 30-45 minutes. Participation in the study was voluntary and before the interviews or focus groups began, the informed consent process was explained in detail and a form documenting consent was signed by each participant (see Appendix B). All of the interviews were taped and participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities. After each interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and verified by an independent IRB trained auditor. In addition, all transcripts were reviewed by the interview subjects to verify authenticity.

Themes

After a process of analysis, the frequency of words and phrases were used to identify themes of stressors in formulating the data. Coding is a process of labeling and segmenting text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data (Creswell, 2012). Creswell also defined themes as similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the data. In this study nine themes were identified. These themes were (a) resources, (b) testing, (c) lack of time, (d) changes in curriculum, (e) relationships with coworkers, (f) internet sources and technology, (g) school community and culture, (h) personal life, and (i) job satisfaction.

Resources. One theme that emerged from the interviews was resources. There are a variety of resources that teachers could use to help them teach students. These resources could be anything from things to people. However, teachers do not always have an abundance of or access to resources they may need. Participants in this study identified resources that are beneficial to them as classroom teachers.

Novice Teachers

Teachers discussed how not having particular resources available at times can make their jobs more difficult. Victoria, a novice teacher, felt her school lacked in technology.

She stated:

I did think of a disadvantage for my school. I feel like my school is a little behind technologically than other schools, which I know is not by choice. Well, I know that we don't have smart board projectors or smart technology projectors in every room yet. The number of classroom computers that we have I don't think is high enough. We have a laptop cart and a computer lab, so a lot of times with the laptop cart we're shuffling laptops around between a lot of us quite a bit so that we have enough computers in the classroom to even have a small group working on the computers and rotating through those.

Victoria also added:

Because logistically just getting a whole class to a lab and doing one activity all together really does take up a lot of teaching time from your school day. That time is so precious it can make it unbalanced to where the reward is not worth the sacrifice that you have to make to get them there and to do that activity.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teachers discussed the lack of resources. Two teachers identified different resources ranging from people to things. Denise, a third grade teacher, desired more

technology in her classroom. She likes the fact that her school has a computer lab, but teachers sign up for days and times to use it. She stated:

It's really hard to practice those writing skills that we need to have on the computers whenever you have three iPads. That's been one of my biggest frustrations, is not having that technology. I mean we have the computer lab and that's well and good, but you have a bunch of people vying for that computer lab and time there.

Lillie has taught in different school systems in different states. Her experience has allowed her to appreciate resources when they are available. Lillie said:

Having the resources that I need is important. Again, I have taught in schools where I've had abundant resources and where it has kind of been up to me to get creative and figure out how to meet the needs of my students. Resources as far as materials I have in the classroom, but even more so, resources as far as support teachers that we have. Do I have someone who can pull this student who needs extra help and give them the support that I can't provide them one-on-one in the classroom? I think that really adds to my success as a teacher.

Mary, an 8-year veteran teacher, discussed the difficulty of being a Kindergarten teacher without an assistant all day. She said:

"I would say maybe lack of classroom assistants. In Kindergarten it's really hard to be all by yourself all day long. So it would be helpful."

Olivia, another Kindergarten teacher in the focus group, added:

“I was going to say the same thing. We have kids on so many different levels and it’s extremely hard to meet every child’s individual needs when you are the only one in the classroom.”

Novice Teachers

Looking at the other facet of resources, some teachers have identified some helpful resources as well. Emma, a 4-year teacher, identified the instructional coaches as valuable resource. Emma stated:

We have instructional coaches in math and in reading. I think they are extremely useful, especially when I’m stressing about a benchmark that is coming up and I’ve exhausted all my resources, I need more, or if I need clarification on a standard. They’re able to come in here, even by email- they email at midnight, on a Sunday night. I’m teaching time, quarter hours and they’re still not getting it. Is that really something that they need to just nail or is it something I can just...okay, we’re getting it and we’re getting there and we might not get there this year, but we’ll get it next year. They’re able to answer my questions. They’re able to get me resources that maybe I don’t have time all day to go find them and they’ll find them on Teachers Pay Teachers and print them off or give them to us. So, I think they’re invaluable.

Ada, also a second year teacher, discussed the instructional coaches and Resource Central as a valuable resource. She said:

The coaches have been very helpful, both language and math. They've given us a ton of good resources. I'm probably in the minority here, but I like the Writing trainings/Learning Leader trainings (PLC's). And the things that Lucy puts on at Resource Central. I go to a lot of those. Most of those are really helpful.

Emma also talked credited summer trainings as a helpful resource as well. She discussed how it is more difficult to attend trainings and workshops during the school year because she is occupied completing other tasks that will help her teach from day to day, but during the summer she has more time to learn new things and plan activities.

Emma added:

I think all the hours of stuff in the summer actually do help. I know some people complain about it, but I actually think it's when I have the most time to do things. It's better than during the school year when I've got five million other things to do.

Victoria, a second year teacher, identified people in her school as the top resource.

She said:

I would say the top resource for me would be the people in my school. Whether it's teachers, regular ed, related arts, special areas, the office staff, or principal, I feel like that's my biggest asset. I just feel a strong culture and I can see the effects of their good teaching and the abilities that they have to support students to succeed.

Veteran Teachers

Lillie, a 13-year veteran teacher, reported that trainings are beneficial to her and help her as a teacher. She stated:

I think another resource would be the training that I've received. We always kind of roll our eyes at sitting through more training, but it really is helpful to know that this is the direction that education is currently veering and I need to understand what's going on. And it's always helpful. Not that I always get new ideas in training, but it's always nice to be reinforced in what I am doing. Knowing I'm on the right path. That's a nice reinforcement.

Two veteran teachers identified RTI resources as among the greatest resources. Lillie, a 13-year veteran teacher, expressed that there is not enough of her to go around to all of her students, but the RTI teachers are there to help fill that gap. Lillie stated:

I think our support teachers are a really big resource (our RTI teachers). But then again, I could go back to your last question with the RTI and the stress that it has caused because that's been a really stressful thing this year, honestly. Trying to meet the needs of the kids in the classroom and not feeling that there is enough of me to go around. So I would say a big resource would be our RTI teachers.

Denise, a 7-year veteran teacher added:

The RTI program here. They do an amazing job with our kids. Because I have a good portion of my class in RTI and the teachers that they've hired at other places, I've been like I don't want my kid out of my classroom. This one, I'm like take them. Because I know that small group is going to benefit them and I know the teachers they have hired are top quality and I'm seeing growth in my kids. So, definitely the RTI program benefits.

Veteran teachers Elaine and Olivia also discussed how resourceful the instructional coaches have been. Elaine said:

“I feel like in language arts, our literacy coaches have sent us a lot of resources that we’ve been able to use this year.”

Olivia reflected on curriculum changes and how the coaches have been helpful with the transition to teaching Common Core standards. She stated:

“And as we’ve switched over to Common Core, they were just invaluable resources to us to get us trained and familiarized with the new standards.”

Kim, a 19-year veteran teacher, identified Resource Central, which is located at the Central Office for Kim’s school system, as a resource. Resource Central provides many resources to teachers like, trainings, die-cuts, book check-outs, and other materials for teachers. Kim said:

“And I think at Central Office we have any kind of resource as long as we use them. If we go over there and get it. I think our school system has any kind of resource we could need.”

Testing. Another theme that emerged from the data was testing. Teachers are teaching standards with hopes of students being successful on standardized tests. Students’ levels of success on standardized testing can have a positive or negative impact on a teacher’s evaluation.

Novice Teachers

Novice and veteran teachers discussed different views on testing. Novice teacher Emma identified testing as a factor that contributes to her stress. She stated:

I am a perfectionist anyway and so, like I said before, I don't always feel like testing is a reflection on them always, I feel like it's a reflection on me. So, I feel like they're looking at that average and it's not an average of my students, it's an average of what I've taught them. Like, well maybe you didn't teach them well enough or maybe you didn't spend enough time with this.

In addition, Emma said:

I think it's more that than it is what they know. Which is what it's supposed to be, but it just doesn't always feel that way to me. I always feel very stressed. Even though it's not a TCAP. It's just a benchmark. And I just feel anxious. And so the day of, I don't think it leaks into what they're doing, but I think they do realize how important it is and some of them get a little anxious. So, I think a little bit of my stress trickles down, even if it's not intentional.

Victoria, another novice teacher, added:

As a teacher I think that the factors that cause stress would be the amount of weight that's put upon standardized testing that students are a part of. You can kind of see the stress that it puts on your students. You try not to convey that stress to them and keep it to where it shouldn't be a big deal. It's just something we do every year, but you still see it affect them and it affects you and you want to do everything you can because you feel like whoever sees or is looking at those will come up with a perception of how

you are as a teacher and if it makes you an effective teacher or an ineffective teacher.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teacher Elizabeth spoke of standardized testing and how difficult it can be to show growth between high performing students. She stated:

Because our children are high performing and making sure that they show that growth, which is even harder when they are up towards the top anyway just making the gains that they need to and should when they are already in the nineties already.

Lack of Time. Another theme discussed among teachers is the lack of time to teach required standards. Teachers strive to make the best use of each school day in order to teach each standard, but sometimes there is just not enough time in a day.

Novice and veteran teachers expressed how difficult it is to teach everything in time. Veteran teacher Emma discussed time constraints as a factor that impedes her ability to teach everything that is required. Emma said:

Time constraints. Lots and lots and lots of time constraints. There's a lot of material and not enough time. The Benchmarks are good and bad thing I think. It tells me what they know and what I need to go back and review maybe in a spiral, but it also makes me feel like I got to get it in, I got to get it in, I got to get it in. That Benchmark is 2 weeks away, 3 weeks away, 1 week away, 2 days away, it's tomorrow and I'm sitting here drilling because they need to do well.

Even though it's supposed to just tell you where they're at, it feels more like a 'did you succeed in teaching them or not'? It feels to me like it's a pass or fail on me, not on them. Did I fail this 9 weeks on them, relaying information? Or, did I do very well? So, I kind of take it that way. And again with the time constraints, sometimes I feel like I have to move on even though they may not be where I want them to be when we're there, Emma stated.

Emma continued by saying:

I feel like it's never ending. My job never ends. So, when I got home, it's just a continuation of school without the kids. I love what I do, but it is very time consuming and I don't think people going in at first realize how time consuming. It's again the time thing. I think with teachers, time is never enough. You never have enough of it.

Novice teacher Victoria stated:

Some things that would inhibit success I think would be time constraints, whether it's trying to decide where to spend your time most. Whether it's grading, planning, taking time to pull small groups during a certain time, or even how to spend your time when you have the students in a classroom. Dividing up the different subjects and things like that.

Emma stated:

Pacing. And, you know, I have a student teacher today or this year. Pacing, pacing, pacing, pacing, pacing, pacing. Looking at the clock. Constantly looking at the clock. Moving on when you need to move.

Knowing when to call it quits. I know that I understand that they don't get something, but sometimes they're not giving any good here. They're not going to understand anymore if you just wait until the next day. So knowing when to just say when. And then knowing when you can keep going or knowing when you should keep going.

Emma also added:

Knowing that my lesson plan says it is now reading time, but you're on a roll with language and they're light bulbs are going off. Knowing that it's okay to keep going and just take something from somewhere else. Or move on to the next day. It took me a long time to not...okay, we've got to move on, okay, we've got to move on, okay, we've got to move on because I kept looking at the clock. Knowing that that clock yes, it's important. And yes, you have to stay on pace, but sometimes it's okay to just give a little extra time somewhere when you know that they're...or when they're...you know, science and they're all inquisitive and they're really into it...sometimes, you just need to spend a few more minutes.

Veteran Teachers

Participants in one focus group were veteran, related arts teachers. These teachers expressed how they felt that their time was minimized with students because during their related arts time, some students were required to leave to attend other classes or programs. Marjorie said:

And with us too, this is the time the kids are removed from. They're removed for their RTI, they're removed for speech, and they're removed

for case management type issues, ESL, or assessments. This is the time they take them out. So literally, as we're teaching, and in some classes more than others, we have kids going in and out, and really, it's almost impossible to have any kind continuity. That is a big challenge. And I don't know other way, but it is something you have to be flexible about.

Changes in Curriculum. Teachers also discussed changes in the curriculum. The state releases information and standards to be taught to students. When the standards change, teachers change what they are teaching and how they are teaching it. For some teachers the constant changes make it more difficult to teach.

Novice Teachers

Some novice and veteran teachers described the curriculum as changing constantly, which made it harder to learn and understand what they are to be teaching. Second year teacher Ada had an interesting perspective. She discussed how quickly the curriculum changed from the time she graduated from college until a couple of years later when she started teaching full time. Everything she learned in college changed.

She expressed it like this:

When I went to school and by the time I got out, a lot of things had changed. I've been an academic tutor, and I was this, and it took me so long to get hired, but by the time I did, a lot of things that I have learned in school, newer things had come along and that's what schools were using, so it was hard for me. I had to relearn a lot of stuff. That was stressful. Feeling not obsolete but out of the loop with the new teaching techniques.

Victoria added:

As well as all of the different changes that occur within education, in general, as a job field. There's new personnel, new decisions, new initiatives, who all have different groups backing them and supporting them and trying to have their say into what's going on and it can create confusion and it can create stress for new teachers who maybe aren't prepared for how much they'll have to change. Maybe on a week-to-week, month-to-month, year-to-year basis I would say. Instability in general.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teachers also discussed how much the curriculum changed over the years. They have been teaching longer, so some of them have seen more changes. Denise, a 7-year veteran teacher, explained it this way:

Whenever I first started, we were SPIs and I taught fifth grade. And so, then, in the past couple of years, this year and last year, you know, last year they were like we are going straight Common Core and so we're teaching Common Core and mid-year they came back and said nope, here's 40 SPIs that you've got to teach in addition to what you have in remaining Common Core, so it's just been stressful. It's been a whole sea of change constantly. Now, we are sitting again and looking forward into future and wondering what standards are we going to have next year. Because there's tons of legislation where they are asking to change things and do this and to do that. There's really nothing settled right now in

education. From our evaluations, to how they are going to figure out our pay, to how they are going to test our kids to...I mean, there's nothing settled.

Laughingly, 15 year veteran teacher Elizabeth stated:

The curriculum is always changing. I keep relearning and keep reinventing the wheel over and over again to find different ways to do different things. The curriculum has changed continuously. I went from one state to another, so there was a change in that, but then since just in being in Tennessee, I've had a change of two different standards through that, so. That's probably the biggest thing.

Elizabeth also talked about how frustrating it can be to start teaching a concept one way, the students learn and master it, and then it's time to change the way it's taught again. She giggled and added:

"Especially when you start like a new curriculum. Like last year, and then saw what we did and it actually did work. And the test changed next year, so you're back at square one again."

Relationships with Coworkers. Relationships with coworkers proved to be a prevalent theme. Having teachers and other staff members who can help you helps teachers feel supported. That support could be professional or emotional. Working together and discussing situations could help alleviate stress.

Novice Teachers

Novice and veteran teachers describe how rewarding it is to be able to work with or go to mentors or other teachers that are able to assist in anything needed. Coworkers also provide an outlet for vent and release energy. Novice teacher Victoria said:

The collaboration factor is HUGE for alleviating stress because you don't feel like you are all on your own. You don't feel like you have to do everything yourself, come up with every single activity. You have people to bounce ideas off of and ask them advice. Get reassurance from them if you are unsure about how you're looking at a specific student in your classroom.

Novice teacher Emma stated:

As a team we work really well. We talk about things. We plan together. And we kind of bounce ideas off of each other. And even though we don't teach exactly the same way once it's carried out, we all have the same content. Being able to go to another teacher and say I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do anymore. I feel like I'm failing. They're not getting it. I don't know what else I can do. And the teacher saying, it's okay. We've been there.

It was reassuring to Emma and Victoria to know that veteran teachers who have been teaching for a while had the same feelings at times. Emma explained how she felt this way:

Especially the teachers that have been here a while. They made me feel like okay. This is somewhat normal and I'm not crazy and I'm doing fine.

And just for her to say, “You’re a great teacher. I’m hearing great things.” Like that made me feel like...okay-I can do this. I can do this. And then I dug into that pile of grading and I got it done and I did what I needed to do. So, I think mentors are very important, especially for a first year teacher. Even if you could muster them up for second year teachers.

Victoria stated:

I think here it’s advantageous that there are quite a few teachers who have many years of experience, either in their subject or in their field. Many of them are master teachers who have continued education and I think that’s been a really big help to me. Because I feel like I can go to them for advice and they’re open about what they do and very eager to help. Even if I go to a kindergarten classroom and ask them for advice, they’re always willing to give and help someone else.

Victoria also stated:

Also, having a good support system of mentoring for new teachers, which I feel like I have here and in the other schools I’ve worked at in Johnson City too. I feel like they really try to find good matches for new teachers and people who want to be mentors and have the type of experience and knowledge that would help out a lot. There are just so many unknowns when you come into a school and you’re new. It can be simple, little things as far as how do I get these forms that I need or who do I talk to for this. Just having someone who knows the procedures or just can point you in the right direction is really helpful because those types of things are

more of the things that I would have had questions about in the beginning. I knew how to teach, I knew what do within my classroom, but outside of that, there are so many parts and pieces to make sure you're contributing to the school, as a whole that the mentor program is really helpful for that.

In addition, Victoria added:

My mentor also teaches the same subject and grade level that I do and I think that's how it usually is whenever possible. So, we are always meeting weekly, daily, talking about how a certain lesson went, how effective it was, where we need to go from there. Self-evaluating and having someone to hold you accountable. And help with the planning and see somebody who you know is an effective teacher just gives you a way to gauge yourself too.

Although two of the novice teachers had positive experiences with mentors, second year teacher Ada did not have such a good experience to begin with. She explained how teamwork was important and said:

It was really hard coming in to a new school, where everything, down to how copies are made, is different. And being assigned a mentor who was bothered when they were asked too many questions. They wanted all of their stuff done before they left school, so they didn't have time to devote to me to tell me how to make copies, or anything, so I had to go around and figure everything out for myself so that made it tough and just real lonely and just being on a different hall didn't help.

Even though Ada's experience with a mentor did not begin as helpful as she needed it to be, she taught on a hall with helpful teachers and it I was a great experience for her. Ada exclaimed:

"It turned out to be the best thing ever because the teachers on my hall are great! They're very helpful!"

Veteran Teachers

Lillie, a 13-year veteran teacher, expressed gratitude for the team of teachers who she works with. Lillie stated:

I would say the third resource would be my team of teachers. We actually team plan. So, once a month, I'll write language arts, and once a month, I'll write math and they do the same and we take turns and we share resources and that's really been helpful. That's made me a much better teacher just because the plans are better because we each get to spend more time on them than if we were writing them ourselves. And there's more resources that one individual can gather in the course of 2 weeks than if you are trying to write for every subject, every week. So, that's been a big thing that has increased my effectiveness I think.

In one focus group all four participants agreed that having a close relationship with coworkers was very helpful. Olivia explained it this way:

"I think by having a close relationship with them, after school, we can kind of de-stress each other and helps to hear that others are going through the same problems you are."

Elaine added:

“And even as planning, you’re not the only one bringing ideas to the table. We can all three share ideas and that helps as well.”

Kim explained how it was helpful to have other teachers on your team to share grade level responsibilities with. She discussed some important responsibilities of fourth grade teachers at her school and how they are divided. She said:

And we all take a little piece of what’s going on. Like in fourth grade, we have to do Senior Reunion Tea, we have to do Honor’s Day, I mean it’s on and on and on, especially for the transition to the middle school. It’s constant. So, we all take parts of that so it’s not just on one person. And plan for it. It makes it much easier.

Related arts teachers expressed how important it is to communicate with each other in the building as well as other related arts teachers throughout the school system. Communicating with other related arts teachers within the school system provided opportunities to collaborate with someone that is particular to that field. Jane explained it this way:

See, I’m fortunate. I get to meet with all of the librarians for my system and that in itself is helpful. We have a big support team. And when I came on board too, they welcomed me. It was just phenomenal. So I was able to meet with all of the teachers and all of the librarians. That was great! We had a silly video this summer we showed to the children about book care and we YouTubed it. Just fun stuff. In our positions, we’re by ourselves. So anyone that we can bring in and go, oh, I’ve got this and

they're doing the same thing. If they're doing it, I can do it, and if we're all doing it, we're good.

Marjorie added:

And it's sad because we don't have much opportunity to do that. In our professional development, a lot of the times, we are grouped with the classroom teachers, but it's really resources that don't really have a lot of value for us. It's nice to be aware of it and have knowledge of it, but a lot of the time, it's not things that are really helping us with our day-to-day work. But when we can get together with our counterparts at the other elementary schools, oh, that's huge!

Marjorie also said:

I think having people to talk to helps. Just talking with people that are experiencing the same types of stress because I think our stress is a little unique versus a classroom teacher. I think having a trusted, small group of people that you can kind of talk with and vent to a little bit and that get it.

Internet and Technology. Novice and veteran teachers use internet sources and technology as aides in teaching students. In today's world the internet is at the fingertips of most people. Teachers can use a variety of internet resources to create lessons for students. Also, there is a variety of technological devices teachers and students can use throughout a lesson if those devices are available.

Novice Teachers

Teachers discussed unique ways that internet sources and technology have been helpful. Victoria discussed how having the ability to communicate with teachers around the world has helped her as a teacher. She said it this way:

Having a computer and being able to have even a world-wide system of support from teachers across the globe, across the country who are sharing what they're doing in their classroom, what results they're having, things that are working, things that are not working because I think the only way to succeed in teaching is if you are working together. I don't think it's an individualized job. So I think it's important to collaborate and share your ideas because you want to help other students succeed, not just the ones in your classroom.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teacher Elizabeth said:

It's changed by technology. Having to learn a lot of different things, but most of them have been helpful. The internet has really kind of come along and helped out from when I first started teaching. There wasn't as much as there is now to find ideas and suggestions and to be creative with things.

Elizabeth laughed and added:

I feel like that technology really has helped though because when I first started teaching all I had was an overhead to teach with. And now, showing the videos and the things, I do really feel like that is helpful.

Because as a learner, that's what I would like see. If you are talking about the Revolutionary War or something and I could show you things of pictures during that period that where on the overhead I could just kind of tell you some of the story.

Having a computer and accessed to the internet and its resources proved to be important to Mary. She stated:

“Well, I do a lot of my lesson planning on the computer. I like Pinterest and Teachers Pay Teachers. That helps me a lot.”

Kim loves the time that she is saving by using internet sources and apps. She agreed by saying:

And all that she was saying-Teachers Pay Teachers, Pinterest, all of the apps. We have iPads. You are not spending as much time making things. Now it's already made. Task cards are what I love. In fourth grade we need to do a quick review when we start out a lesson, a little activator, and I've got a task card for everything. I found it right on Teachers Pay Teachers.

The participants laughed as Kim explained how it's worth every penny to purchase resources from the internet. Kim said:

“I would spend a dollar for something that would take me 4 hours to make. Any day! Or 10 dollars. My budget gets higher as the night gets longer.”

Olivia also had an appreciation for the internet and its resources. A 22-year veteran teacher, Olivia explained it this way:

You know, I have been around for a long, long time. I was explaining to my student teacher the other day that when I first started teaching, and for several years, I had to spend so much money on resource books and I would have one for this and one for that. And now we have the internet at our fingertips and it's much quicker. A lot cheaper. You are not spending near as much money as you use to.

Jane, a librarian, was excited about having access to internet resources and having Wi-Fi at her school this year. She explained how some of these resources have helped her as a librarian. Jane stated:

And my resources too are the internet. We just got Wi-Fi this school year, so we're really behind the times and this is golden to us. Access to YouTube is amazing because the author interviews that are on there are awesome! A lot of reliable sources. Scholastic is awesome for me because I have all of the interviews with each of the authors. I love the internet!

Marjorie added:

Pinterest and different type of web resources I feel are huge supports! I've also participated in some online communities before that have been really good, with counselors from around the United States, where they throw out this is what I'm dealing with, what do you do in this situation and that type of thing. I think we've been able to help each other through some of those online communities.

School Community and Culture. The school's community and culture proved to be an important component for novice and veteran teachers. A positive school community and culture helped teachers be more effective. A positive school community and culture also impacts students in a positive way.

Novice Teachers

Novice teacher Victoria said:

I think the culture of the school is really important, especially for teachers who are new to the field like I am because attitude can be a big factor in how you work and what you put into your work and what you see coming out of it. I think it's advantageous that the culture of this school is a positive culture that puts students at the top of everything, puts them first. And focuses on setting high standards for them to do the best that they can and supporting them whenever they need it.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teacher Lillie talked about her school's community and culture. She said it in this way:

I think that we have in this school a really good spirit among the faculty and staff. We are very supportive of each other. There are friendships there and that helps a lot. I think as well that the parents in our school, for the most part, are really supportive. They see our school as a community.

Denise has experience working in more than one school. In her experience she has not always worked in a school where she felt the community and culture was positive,

but she is very pleased with the community and culture of the school she currently works in. She explained:

The staff here is very supportive of one another. I've worked at other schools where that's not so. And it's really hard sometimes to get up in the morning and go when you don't have that positive support. So I think all of that comes together to help you be more successful.

Personal Life. Novice and veteran teachers discussed ways in which teaching affects their personal life. Each teacher described unique effects of teaching on her personal life. Some factors that influenced the effects of teaching on their personal life were responsibilities at work, responsibilities at home, marital status, having children, and the support of the teacher's family.

Novice Teachers

Novice teacher Emma did not realize that teaching affected her personal life until her marital status changed from single to married. She explained it in this way:

I didn't think it did when I was single, but then I got married and I found out it does affect me. A lot. I'm at home, but I'm not home. I'm at home talking about school or I'm at home grading papers or I'm at home getting my husband to help me grade these papers. So, then he gets actually dragged into it as well. Weekends are not all the weekend for me to just have fun and relax. I have to allot time to relax. So, Saturday, I can go and have fun, but Sunday, I've got to look for this next standard. I have to write my lesson plans. I have to make sure that I change things. I have to

make sure that I write my parent email. I have to make out my homework thing for Monday.

Emma continued by saying:

And if I try to allocate that during the week, then I'm sitting here until 6:00 or 7:00 doing that stuff and then I free up my weekend, but then every night, dinner doesn't get done on time, I don't spend time with my baby. I don't spend enough time, I don't think, with her. I have to allocate that to my husband. I'm like "Can you play with her for a little while so that I can grade this or so that I can respond to all of these parent emails or so that I can do this?" It does affect a lot. And it affects a lot more than I thought because when I was single, I didn't have anyone to tell me that oh, all you're doing is school work. Now, I have someone telling me. And so, it does.

Victoria, a second year novice teacher, expressed her concerns about how other people may perceive her due to the time she devotes to her job. She explained:

I worry more about losing time with people outside of my job because of spending too much time on it. I don't want people to have a perception of me that I don't do anything at all except teach all day, stay too late, come too early and do nothing but grade papers and plan. I don't want to give the perception that my job is drudgery to me. Because I feel like a lot people get that perception.

Victoria explained how she tries not to avoid completing work at home, but at times she does. She added:

I would say I try to have it affect my personal life as little as possible because I think that part of your life is very important to your well-being and your health and how you feel and relationships. However, there are times where things have to get done, so I might be grading papers at home or when we're in the car going on a trip or I might have to do planning. If I am planning a certain activity that uses multiple resources or I have to gather materials for. So, I would say just taking up time away from that.

Ada, a second year novice teacher, explained how she does complete a lot of work at home, but her family has been very supportive and that has helped her. She stated:

In order to be truly prepared, you have to put a lot of time into that and you don't have a lot of time to do that at school so you have to put it in at home. I have a very supportive family, so, that helps.

Ada, also explained how she felt she could not go out in public and have a good time with friends due to the way teachers are viewed in public. Ada explained:

I'm afraid of doing anything outside of school, like have a drink with dinner. I mean that's pretty much all I do, but having that amenity outside of school. Always running into somebody, especially living in an adjoining district. I live in the school district. Not feeling like you could really go out without having to worry about constantly representing your school.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teachers also discussed the amount of work they complete after hours or at home. Denise, a 7-year veteran teacher, explained how working at home does take

away time from her family, but she feels lucky because her children are older and her husband works a lot as well. Before Denise began her teaching career, she worked as a social worker. While working in social work, Denise was able to go home after work.

She said:

It's a lot of time away from my family. My kids are older and all of that and my husband is a workaholic too, but still, it's a lot of time-on weekends and it's a lot of time at night that I am having to do stuff for work. And as a social worker, I just went home.

Lillie has taught different grades but feels a little more accomplished during the day as a first grade teacher. Lillie stated:

Wow. I've gotten pretty much to the point now, at least being a first grade teacher, where I can mostly leave school at school. I mean, there's times where I do have to bring stuff home. I come in early, and I work like crazy, but then I am usually able to leave it here. But there are certain times during the year like when we are starting up the beginning of the school year where I'm gone a lot. My children go to daycare a lot. My mind is always on teaching. I'm trying to problem solve something or figure out a better way to do something. I walk away at the end of the day but my brain is always kind of here I would say.

Elizabeth had a unique view of how teaching affected her personal life. She explained how she felt teaching helped her work with and prepare her own children at home. She explained:

I feel like it helps me with my own children, like helping with their homework, because I know what's expected of you at school and what it should be like. Helping her through her school career, discipline wise, and academically-making sure that she's ready and prepared for that.

Olivia, a 22-year veteran teacher, explained how she felt like she worked all of the time during the school year. She said:

We are so on. For so many hours and even weekends. And we never have the chance to unwind. And we take it home with us on the weekend and lesson plans have to be done on the weekend. There's not enough down time for us to de-stress ourselves, except during the summer vacation. We never can completely turn it off.

Kim agreed by explaining how difficult it is to complete any tasks during her planning period because there is usually another meeting. She explained:

And to piggyback on that, like in a perfect world, we would get it done during the week. I always take mine home. One day I meet with a coach, sometimes 2 days depending on which one's coming. And I want to meet with them. I need to meet with them. Then other days we have reports to go over. And then we have a meeting. These are all during planning period. So, I get maybe two planning periods a week if I'm lucky. And then a parent comes in and they come on my planning. I wish those could be more sacred. If I could go in my room and shut the door and just work in my room for that time, for at least 3 days a week, maybe I could get more done.

Kim also added:

I think it would scare us if we actually took a week and wrote down everything that we did. With my own children, I always said I would work after school when I could and then I would take them home and then I would take my stuff and then I'd put them to bed at 9:00 and then I'd work from 9:00 PM-12:00 AM. And I got in that habit. And then on weekends, I was always working. I'd get up really early and I always did that because I wanted to have more time with them, so I'd get up early. And it was because I wanted to and I needed to.

Job Satisfaction. The novice and veteran teachers who participated in this study were satisfied in their job. They love teaching and helping children. Helping students succeed was main reason these teachers were satisfied with their jobs.

Novice Teachers

Novice teacher Emma said:

I love being in the classroom. I know some want to move on into administrative roles. I don't ever want to do that. I love being in the classroom. I love teaching. I know that I'm stressed. I stress all of the time, but like I said, the one thing that does de-stress, de-stresses a lot, and that's the children. I love being around kids. Love, love, love, love, love. If I could have a house full of kids, I would. This is a way I can do that without having to have that many kids. I don't know. I just like being around them. They're funny. They make me laugh.

Emma also added:

Some of them have these big dreams and funny stories and I feel like I can do the most good here, in the classroom, than I could as an administrator. So I think for me, it's always going to be in the classroom. Now, I do want to possibly pursue getting endorsements in different subjects like science or history and moving up to high school and see how that is or maybe just stay here, but I think I would like to stay in the classroom.

Even though Ada plans to further her education and obtain other educational endorsements, she plans to teach until she reaches retirement. She said:

I plan on retiring from teaching. I want to go back and get my masters. I'm not sure in what, probably reading. Just because that it is where I feel like I need more help is with the reading. Yes, guided reading. So that's probably what I will go back for.

Victoria, a 2-year novice teacher, plans to continue working in the teaching profession as well. She stated:

I plan to continue in the profession. The factors that influence it are that I love it and I find it very rewarding. I feel rewarded by the students who make straight A's on everything they're given. I feel rewarded by students who don't do that because I see them growing in other ways or succeeding in other areas and I like helping them do that. I feel like it's very important to the community and society and I just enjoy it.

Although Victoria plans to continue in the field of education, she would consider opportunities to advance in her career. She added:

I think there are opportunities to advance. There are opportunities to further my education and become better at what I do. There's never a point in time in my job where I'm going to reach a point and say 'that's it.' I'll be right here for the rest of my career so that is important to me because I like to continually be changing and doing different things. So, that's a big factor for me. So, I would definitely be staying in the profession, if possible, as long as possible.

Veteran Teachers

Veteran teacher Lillie discussed how she was very happy in her current grade and planned to stay in education until she reaches retirement age, even if it is in a role other than teaching. Lillie explained:

At this point, I am very, very happy in first grade. I am planning on being in education until I reach retirement age. I don't see myself leaving education. I'm not sure exactly what role I want to stay in. I'm not sure if I'm going to want to be a first grade teacher, when I'm 55 and getting on my hands and knees on the floor and doing the stuff that I do. I definitely plan on staying in education. This is where I feel that my strengths are. This is what I know and I honestly I have a hard time imagining myself anywhere else. This is who I am.

Elizabeth, a mom and teacher, explained her satisfaction as a teacher. She stated:

I do enjoy it. I feel like it's a good career as a mom too, to have the time with my kids like that. It's a career I enjoy. I feel like I'm good at it. I do a good job. I feel satisfied that I'm doing a good thing when I'm here and the kids are learning and getting things from that. It is a job I enjoy.

Denise simply said:

"I wake up in the morning and I am happy to walk in the door."

In one focus group all the participants agreed that watching the students make progress and seeing their excitement once progress was made provided the greatest satisfaction.

Kim stated:

"Excitement from them when they make progress."

Elaine agreed by saying:

"Yes. They're proud of themselves. The student reactions."

Kim also added:

And plus, we wouldn't do those extra hours if it wasn't because we get that. I feel good about what I do. I like my job. I like what I'm doing and feel like that's why we push ourselves to be better.

Olivia completed by saying:

"And we sincerely care about the kids. The whole child, not just the academic aspects."

Jane simply exclaimed:

"Oh-The kids! They're great!"

Marjorie quickly agreed in the background by saying:

“The kids definitely. The relationships with the kids. Oh my goodness! They’re amazing!”

Summary. Analysis of the data reveals that several strong themes emerged from these interviews and focus groups. Novice and veteran elementary teachers discussed stressors they experience as elementary teachers. Some of the most common stressors were resources, testing, lack of time, and changes in the curriculum. One of the most common alleviants of stress was relationships with other teachers and coworkers. Access to the internet and its resources and a positive school community and culture provide other supports to these teachers.

Even though these teachers endure varied amounts of stress, they all agreed that the students provided an unconditional job satisfaction that could not be replaced. Each and every participant plans to continue working in education in one position or another. The significance of these findings is discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice and veteran elementary teachers' levels of stress and attitudes toward their profession. This qualitative case study was conducted by interviewing 12 novice and veteran elementary teachers. Participants were obtained with permission from the Central Office and from the principals of each participating school. Respondents signed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) and an interview guide was used (see Appendix A).

As many as 30% of teachers leave the profession within their first 2 years of teaching. An astonishing 50% of teachers leave the profession within 7 years of teaching. Today's teachers must have the confidence and skills to assess and respond to a wide range of student needs with engaging, relevant, and focused lessons that not only present content, but teach students how to read, write, listen, speak, collaborate, research, and integrate technology (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). School systems strive to find effective ways to retain teachers. High teacher turnover rates have an impact on a school's ability to build a cohesive staff and the investment of money and training used to improved teacher quality.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

1. What stresses do novice and veteran elementary teachers experience?

Lack of Resources. Teachers identified a lack of resources as a stressor. These resources could be in the form of people, technology, or other items that could assist in the classroom. Some of the participants expressed that they could be more effective

teachers if they had more technology in the classrooms. Even though funding for this equipment may not be available each school year, teachers still indicated a desire for it.

Having classroom assistants, RTI teachers, and other personnel available to help with small groups in the classroom was also discussed as a resource. Teachers expressed how all of the students could benefit. Each and every student has different needs and at times it can be hard for the teachers to provide equal amounts of time with each student. Having additional personnel in the classroom or available to conduct small groups outside of the classroom would help reduce this frustration for novice and veteran teachers alike.

Testing. Some participants expressed how mandated, standardized testing caused stress for them as teachers. Along with the pressure to teach all of the standards in a given amount of time, teachers felt that they were being measured as teachers based on how the students performed on tests. Teachers discussed that they like to know how their students performed on tests. They also use the data from these tests to reteach or review standards that students did not master. However, when the results come in, teachers also feel like the data are used to measure how well they teach.

Lack of Time. Time constraints were also discussed as a stress for teachers. Novice and veteran teachers discussed how they felt there was not enough time to teach all of the standards that needed to be taught over the course of a quarter, semester, or school year. “We usually think of time as a constraint rather than a resource”, said City (2013, p. 12). Teachers felt cramped for time in order to teach all of the new Common Core standards. One participant even discussed how she felt that

her students were not as well prepared for the next grade as she felt they should be because of the lack of time to teach the required standards.

Research Question #2

1. What are the sources of this stress?

Changes in Curriculum. Changes in curriculum were deemed to be the most prevalent source of these stresses for teachers. Teachers also felt that the rigor in the changing curriculum did not allow enough time to teach each standard as it needed to be taught. Students may not understand the standard or be able to master it, but teachers felt they needed to move to the next standard in order to make time to teach all of the standards.

Some participants discussed how the curriculum changed so frequently, that they always had to find new and improved resources to match the new curriculum on a yearly basis. Wilson (2011) identified meaningful, well-designed, and well-implemented professional development as an important investment in teacher quality. Providing quality, professional development for teachers could provide additional resources for teachers. Most of the participants were grateful for the internet and technology. The internet and technology sources offered resources with a variety of ideas, all at your fingertips.

Participants also discussed their feelings on changes in standards and testing. Recently schools and school districts around the state of Tennessee have been practicing field tests in different subject areas. The results from these tests may be used in formulating future mandated tests. Standardized testing is also taking a shift from written tests using paper and pencil to online testing using computers.

Research Question #3

1. How does stress impact teachers' perceptions of their job performance?

Expectations. Some of the participants discussed expectations from the state can feel unrealistic at times and make them feel unsure of tasks to perform. Some teachers discussed how being unsure of those expectations makes them unsure of how or what to perform on their job. This uncertainty can bring on stress that lead to mistakes that impact job performance.

Participants also discussed how this uncertainty causes them to place expectations on themselves that they probably should not have. Some of these participants discussed expectations that they place on themselves and the burden it has on them. Working to fulfill expectations that they put on themselves make the job harder and more frustrating as a teacher.

Teachers also reported that having a mentor or a team of other teachers to work with on their grade level or at their school provided some encouragement for handling these expectations. With everyone having similar expectations, the teachers said they could support each other and help work through the difficult times. The participants felt fortunate to have other teachers on their team or at their school that they could relate to, learn from, and share experiences with.

Job Satisfaction. Even though the novice and veteran teachers in the study experience different levels of stress, they all agreed that they have satisfaction with their job because they love teaching. They love impacting the lives of children. These participants noted that it is gratifying to see a child's face light up when they have those magical moments of learning. All of the teachers find their jobs to be rewarding

because they work hard to create environments in which students can have those moments.

In order to endure the stresses of teaching and still love it, one must have passion for teaching. Teaching is not as rewarding financially as most teachers would like it to be and most teachers do not teach for the money. They teach because they are passionate about what they do and truly want to make a difference in children's lives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through this research and the examination of honest, reflective, and thoughtful responses shared by novice and veteran teachers who volunteered to participate in this study, I was able to draw specific conclusions. The need to support and encourage all teachers will be beneficial to school districts. Providing stress management for teachers could address teachers' needs and create a caring culture that would have a positive impact on the education process (Kipps-Vaughan, 2013). It was refreshing to hear the positive efforts made and the relationships built within each school. It is hopeful to look toward the possibilities for continued support for novice and veteran teachers within the schools.

The data collected and analyzed in this study support the following conclusions:

1. Some of the most common stressors among teachers are evaluations, paperwork, testing, and students' academic and behavioral needs.
2. Positive relationships with other teachers and staff members within a school are important throughout the school year.
3. Support from school and district administrators is very much needed and appreciated in order to retain teachers.

Support for these novice and veteran elementary teachers in this Northeast Tennessee school system is strong, yet, there are some recommendations to continually offer teachers support based on the findings of this study.

Recommendations for Novice Teachers

1. Communicate regularly with your mentor, administrators, and other personnel who could be helpful to specific situations. Also, ask questions about anything you are unsure of. Seeking solutions to problems could help alleviate unnecessary occupational stress.
2. Continue professional growth throughout your career. This may include, but is not limited to, trainings and workshops at your school; within your school district; or throughout your region or state. In order to continue to grow as a teacher never stop learning.
3. Remain aware of trends in education that could impact what you teach and the way you teach. Local, state, or federal changes in curriculum could impact what you teach and how you deliver instruction.
4. Use time management strategies to help make the most of your time. Time is one thing that teachers do not have an abundance of. Making the most of the time you do have will help you manage tasks more efficiently and diffuse some of the stressful aspects of teaching.

Recommendations for Veteran Teachers

1. Communicate regularly with novice teachers. Share past experiences with novice teachers. Novice teachers may be encouraged by knowing that other teachers have been in similar situations. Veteran teachers can help mold a

novice teacher and a novice teacher can also provide information to veteran teachers that could be very helpful.

2. Continue professional growth throughout your career. It can be easy for veteran teachers to become comfortable with teaching styles. This may result in veteran teachers not being open to curriculum changes that could occur. Local, state, or federal changes in curriculum could impact what you teach and how you deliver instruction.
3. Use your years of experience and expertise to promote a positive school community and culture. Get involved with your school's improvement team and make suggestions on how to improve the community and culture at your school.

Recommendations for Administrators

1. Create a positive work environment for teachers and other staff members. It takes everyone to foster this work environment, but the spark should begin with the administration.
2. Create and foster a positive school community and culture for students, parents, and staff.
3. Provide as many professional development opportunities as you can. Also, offer professional development opportunities that are specific to certain grades or subject areas. Avoid requiring teachers to attend trainings that do not assist the teacher in being more effective in the subject area or grade that they teach. Appropriate professional development opportunities could help the teacher continue to grow. These opportunities could also foster and help retain good teachers.

4. Communicate clear expectations to teachers and provide regular feedback.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Examine the mentoring assignments for novice teachers to ensure that new teachers not only have a mentor, but a mentor who is willing and able to invest time into a novice teachers' needs. A positive, influential mentor could impact the retention of novice teacher.
2. Review the possibility of extending the mentoring program for more than one year to continually provide support for novice teachers in the critical, first few years of their teaching career.
3. Examine the perceptions of stress from other teachers, for example, middle and high school teachers, teachers in private schools, or Special Education teachers. Some issues may expand outside of the elementary school setting. Identifying system-wide issues and working to solve them may improve results system-wide.
4. The participants in this study should be interviewed 3-5 years from now to see if their perceptions have changed. With the ever-changing curriculum, it could be interesting to study their perceptions on the current curriculum.
5. Examine the quality of teacher preparation programs. Work together to ensure that preservice teachers are prepared to work in 21st century schools and classrooms. This could be one of many ways to help teachers be successful in their career.
6. Administrators, central office personnel, and school board members were not interviewed for this study. However, they are instrumental in teachers' overall

success. Study strategies they could use to help improve teacher quality and overcome teacher burnout.

7. Examine stressors of school administrators. Compare stressors of administrators to stressors of novice and veteran teachers. Identify similarities or differences between those stressors.

Researcher's Final Thoughts

The process of research, literature review, data collection, interviews, and data analysis have helped me identify regular stressors for teachers novice and veteran alike. I currently serve in an administrative role. I am not long removed from the classroom, so I do remember the daily stressors of being a classroom teacher. As an administrator, I never want to forget those stressors because I always want to know and understand what teachers are experiencing.

As a person, I handle stress differently than most of my peers and coworkers. So, I always found their reactions to situations interesting, especially as a teacher. I began this process with the quest to satisfy my interests. I want to understand what my peers went through because as an administrator I want to remain in touch with what teachers' experience. In my administrative role I always aspire to assist and understand teachers in any way that I can because in the end it will benefit the students.

My main reason for entering the education field is to teach, help, and inspire children. Even though I am removed from the classroom, my mission is still alive. At times I am occupied with meetings and paperwork that sometimes I feel that I do not impact the lives of children, but that is not true. I do! Every decision I make is guided

by what is in the best interest of the students. Every teacher I can help is in the best interest of students as well.

It is easy to experience burnout in anything but especially in teaching. As an administrator I want to help reduce the possibility of burnout for any teacher with whom I come in contact. I believe this study provides an understanding of stressors among teachers, which will help me, and hopefully other administrators, provide resources that could help prevent teacher burnout.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guides

I. Novice Teacher Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your role as a teacher during the 2014-2015 school year.
2. What factors facilitate your success as a teacher? What factors inhibit your success as a teacher?
3. If you can, identify no more than 3 advantages of being a teacher in your school. Also, if you can, identify no more than 3 disadvantages of being a teacher in your school.
4. Are there factors that contribute to your stress as a teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 factors? Explain.
5. Identify no more than 3 resources that contribute to your effectiveness as a teacher.
6. Explain how being a teacher affects your personal life.
7. Identify no more than 3 factors that contribute to any stress you experience as a teacher, if you can. Also, if you can, identify no more than 3 factors that alleviate stress you experience as a teacher.
8. Explain how the mentoring program affects your role as a novice teacher.
9. Have there been aspects of teaching that you find more challenging for you as a novice teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 of those aspects? Have there been aspects of teaching that you find less challenging for you as a novice teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 of those aspects?
10. What are your plans for staying in the teaching profession? What factors have influenced your decision at this point in time?
(Follow up-Identify factors that would make you stay in the teaching profession or factors that would influence a decision to leave the teaching profession.)

II. Veteran Teacher Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your role as a teacher during the 2014-2015 school year.

2. What factors facilitate your success as a teacher? What factors inhibit your success as a teacher?
3. If you can, identify no more than 3 advantages of being a teacher in your school. Also, if you can, identify no more than 3 disadvantages of being a teacher in your school.
4. Are there factors that contribute to your stress as a teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 factors? Explain.
5. Identify no more than 3 resources that contribute to your effectiveness as a teacher.
6. Explain how being a teacher affects your personal life.
7. Identify no more than 3 factors that contribute to any stress you experience as a teacher, if you can. Also, if you can, identify no more than 3 factors that alleviate stress you experience as a teacher.
8. Has teaching changed since you began teaching? If so, how have those changes impacted the way that you teach?
9. Have there been aspects of teaching that you find more challenging for you as a veteran teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 of those aspects? Have there been aspects of teaching that you find less challenging for you as a veteran teacher? If so, could you identify no more than 3 of those aspects?
10. What are your plans for staying in the teaching profession? What factors have influenced your decision at this point in time?
(Follow up-Identify factors that would make you stay in the teaching profession or factors that would influence a decision to leave the teaching profession.)

III. Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your role as a teacher during the 2014-2015 school year.
2. Identify no more than 3 factors that contribute to any stress you experience as a teacher, if you can. Also, if you can, identify no more than 3 factors that alleviate stress you experience as a teacher.
3. Identify no more than 3 resources that provide the most support to you as a teacher.

4. What is the most frustrating aspect of being a teacher?
5. What is the most rewarding aspect of being a teacher?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Forms

Informed Consent for Interviews

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Melissa C. Stukes

TITLE OF PROJECT: Perceptions of Novice and Elementary Teachers' Levels of Stress and Attitudes toward Their Profession

INTRODUCTION:

This study is designed to evaluate the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers' level of stress and their attitudes toward their job. Stress may be caused by many different things. Work related stress is common amongst many people in the work force. In education, stress is dealt with, in some cases, on a daily basis. There are many demands put on teachers to ensure student learning. These demands can cause an overwhelming amount of stress to teachers. This stress can also have a positive or negative impact on a teacher's attitude toward their job.

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the stressors experienced by teachers, related to the teaching profession. More specifically, to identify factors of stress endured by novice and veteran teachers in kindergarten through fourth grades. This study is qualitative in design, therefore, interviews and focus groups will be conducted.

DURATION

There should be about 45 minutes allotted for time that the researcher spends with you. Informed Consent will be reviewed and signed before the interview begins. Each interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes and will be audio-taped. At your discretion, you will have a chance to add additional comments after the recording has ended.

PROCEDURES

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher of this study. The purpose of the interview is to assess the perceptions of novice and veteran elementary teachers' levels of stress and attitudes toward their job. One novice teacher and one veteran teacher will be interviewed from each school. The researcher will come to your school to conduct the interview.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks or discomforts to participating in this study.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no known benefits to participating in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled (if applicable) will not be affected. You may quit by calling Melissa Stukes, whose phone number is 423-434-5260. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related problems at any time, you may call Melissa Stukes at 423-434-5260 or Dr. Robbie Anderson at 423-434-5200. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423-439-6055 or 423-439-6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the home of the researcher for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services or ETSU IRB and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records.

I have read this information, and I will receive a copy of this form after it is signed.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable) DATE

Informed Consent for Focus Groups

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Melissa C. Stukes

TITLE OF PROJECT: Perceptions of Novice and Elementary Teachers' Levels of Stress and Attitudes toward Their Profession

INTRODUCTION:

This study is designed to evaluate the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers' level of stress and their attitudes toward their job. Stress may be caused by many different things. Work related stress is common amongst many people in the work force. In education, stress is dealt with, in some cases, on a daily basis. There are many demands put on teachers to ensure student learning. These demands can cause an overwhelming amount of stress to teachers. This stress can also have a positive or negative impact on a teacher's attitude toward their job.

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the stressors experienced by teachers, related to the teaching profession. More specifically, to identify factors of stress endured by novice and veteran teachers in kindergarten through fourth grades. This study is qualitative in design, therefore, interviews and focus groups will be conducted.

DURATION

There should be about 1 hour allotted for time that the researcher spends with you. Informed Consent will be reviewed and signed before the focus group begins. Each focus group will take approximately 40-50 minutes and will be audio-taped. At your discretion, you will have a chance to add additional comments after the recording has ended.

PROCEDURES

Two novice teachers and two veteran teachers will participate in the focus group from each school. You will be asked to participate in a focus group with three other novice

and veteran teachers from your school and the researcher of this study. The purpose of the focus group is to assess the perceptions of novice and veteran elementary teachers' levels of stress and attitudes toward their job. The researcher will come to your school to conduct the focus group.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks or discomforts to participating in this study.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no known benefits to participating in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled (if applicable) will not be affected. You may quit by calling Melissa Stukes, whose phone number is 423-434-5260. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related problems at any time, you may call Melissa Stukes at 423-434-5260 or Dr. Robbie Anderson at 423-434-5200. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423-439-6055 or 423-439-6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the home of the researcher for at least 5

years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services or ETSU IRB and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records.

I have read this information, and I will receive a copy of this form after it is signed.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)

DATE

VITA

MELISSA CHARLENE STUKES

Education: Public Schools, Sumter, South Carolina
B.S. Elementary Education, College of Charleston,
Charleston, South Carolina 2001
M. A. Education, Lesley University, Cambridge,
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Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership, East
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Professional Experience: Educational Assistant, Pocalla Springs Elementary
School; Sumter, South Carolina 2002-2003
Teacher, Rafting Creek Elementary School; Sumter, South
Carolina 2003-2006
Teacher, R.E. Davis Elementary School; Sumter,
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Teacher, South Side Elementary School; Johnson
City, Tennessee 2007-2012
Assistant Principal, Fairmont and Mountain View
Elementary Schools; Johnson City, Tennessee 2012-
2013

Principal, Mountain View Elementary School; Johnson
City, Tennessee 2014-present

Honors and Awards: Golden Key Honor Society
National Honor Society
A Day Made Different Recipient (2007)