Concerns of First-Year Teachers in Selected Public Schools

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

CONCERNS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY
DELORES A. PRICE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY, 1997
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could do anything I put my mind to. I love you both.

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I believe the impulse to teach is fundamentally altruistic and represents a desire to share what you value and to empower others. Of course, all teachers are not altruistic. Some people teach in order to dominate others or to support work they'd rather do or simply to earn a living. But I am not talking about the job of teaching so much as the calling to teach. Most teachers I know, even the most demoralized ones who drag themselves to oppressive and mean schools where their work is not respected and their presence not welcome, have felt that calling at some time in their lives.¹

Herbert Kohl

Teachers have been studied extensively throughout the last three decades. But, in actuality, teachers have probably been studied in America since 1642. The Massachusetts Bay Colony of 1642 provides the earliest known description of educational supervision record. This supervision developed through Massachusetts School Law, 1642, which reads (in part):

This court, taking into consideration the great neglect of many parents and masters in the training up of their children in learning and labor, and other implements which may be profitable to the common wealth, do hereupon order and decree that in every town ye chosen men appointed for managing the prudential affairs of the same shall henceforth stand charged with the care

of the redress of this ... evil... "

Had beginning teachers been queried about their concerns in 1642, no doubt their greatest concerns would have been in regard to their supervisors. Salary was non-negotiable, pupil progress was steady and discipline problems were practically naught. But, the attitudes and assumptions of their supervisors was that: "(1) Teachers were not to be trusted; (2) Supervisors had the right to intervene directly in the classroom; and (3) Supervisors were meant to be inspectors."  

Over the years, much has been learned about teaching and about teachers. But, only, in the last four decades has the beginning teacher been encouraged to tell the story of what it means to be a first-year teacher. This research sought to explore the world of fifteen first-year elementary, middle and high school teachers; specifically, seeking to understand their concerns. At the advent, it was questioned why these men and women, as well as other men and women, entered the field of teaching. Consequently, in beginning this research, the first question sought was: Why do people become teachers?

Is it the challenge, the excitement, the spotlight, or a potpourri of rewards and incentives? What does it mean to

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3Daresh, 10.
be a first year teacher? Is there anxiety along with anticipation? Is the long awaited arrival to the classroom everything hoped for? Do beginning teachers, in a pattern of similarity, make their entrances into their classrooms in a spirit of optimism and promise for their students and the world of education? Why do men and women choose to become teachers?

As in any career, there are many attractions to teaching. People are drawn into the field for a number of reasons. A "1989 Metropolitan Life Survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,000 teachers (kindergarten through grade 12), revealed that 81 percent of teachers 'strongly agree' that they love to teach, while 16 percent 'agree somewhat'."4 Within the choice of "love of teaching lies a definite influence and admiration of a former teacher.

Former Chicago Teachers Union President, Jacqueline B. Vaughn said that she had originally intended to become a nurse. It was Alice Bibbs, first-grade teacher at Douglas Elementary School for 32 years, who convinced Vaughn to become a teacher.5 For some, the process of deciding to become a teacher comes early in life. The decision may be

4The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1986; Restructuring the Teaching Profession (New York: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.).

formed in conjunction with deciding that he or she is the best choice for the role of teacher, when a group of peers play school. The teacher, being the adult that a child spends a considerable amount of time with, occupies a powerful position of influence.

Educational researchers, Wright and Tuska, in their study of nearly 4,500 teacher trainees, found a much higher incidence of teachers being remembered as "admired" and "influential" than in a group of almost 1,000 nonteachers. Educational researchers, Wright and Tuska, in their study of nearly 4,500 teacher trainees, found a much higher incidence of teachers being remembered as "admired" and "influential" than in a group of almost 1,000 nonteachers.6

Joseph and Burnaford attempted to gain insight into teachers' self-images by asking teachers to use metaphors to describe their teaching methods and student-teacher relationships.7

Two immediate patterns were found: those of the artistic and of the mechanical teacher. Joseph and Burnaford questioned these teachers as to where their metaphors came from. They concluded that the surveyed teachers' images, formed of teachers and teaching, were still operating as one of the powerful influences on the their assumptions about teaching. Many of the twenty-six teachers in the study gave descriptive reports of the warmth

6Benjamin Wright and Shirley Tuska, "How Does Childhood Make a Teacher?," The Elementary School Journal (February 1965): 235-246.

and respect of their former teachers. For some of these teachers, this respect epitomized an image of their former teachers as an all-powerful, all-knowing figure.  

An important study of why people became teachers was conducted by Dan Lortie during the 1960s and reported in his book, *Schoolteacher*, published in 1975. In Lortie’s book, he identified the following five major attractions to teaching:

1. The Interpersonal Theme: Selecting the field of teaching based on the desire for continuing contact with young people.
2. The Service Theme: Selecting the field of teaching, in order to make a contribution to society.
3. The Continuation Theme: Selecting the field of teaching because educational institutions are enjoyable and comfortable.
4. Material Benefits: Selecting the field of teaching for reasons of money, prestige, and employment security.
5. Time Compatibility Theme: Selecting the field of teaching because it offers a short workday and ample vacation time.

In 1981, Armstrong, Henson and Savage, in their publication, *Education: An Introduction*, identified four

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8 Joseph and Burnaford, 62.

major reasons why people chose teaching as a career. They named the following:

(1) Working Conditions: Selecting teaching because of perceptions of attractive physical environments and personal autonomy.

(2) Lack of routine: Selecting teaching because of the unpredictability of students and each day in the classroom.

(3) Importance of Teaching: Selecting teaching in order to make a contribution to improving society.

(4) Excitement of Learning: Selecting teaching out of a love of learning.\(^\text{10}\)

A significant amount of studies asserted that new teachers chose teaching as a career because a former teacher(s) influenced them as a role model. However, a question to consider, asks, does teaching offer perks or benefits that would provide attractions to potential candidates, in addition to love of teaching, love of students and desire to serve as role models? Could a factor as worldly as salary be a deciding factor in this choice?

Comparing the public school teachers’ salary scale to the corporate world employee or to the world of blue collar workers provides some insight. In 1994, the average starting salaries of public school teachers, compared with salaries in private industry by selected positions, were as

follows: Teachers, $22,505; Engineering, $35,004; Accounting, $28,020; Sales Marketing, $28,021; Business Administration, $27,564; and computer science, $31,164. In 1994, the highest state average teacher salary reported was from the New York, reporting at $45,800. In the same year, the state of Indiana reported its average as $35,700.\textsuperscript{11}

Although, each of the fore-mentioned professions measured with teaching salaries paid more money for beginning salaries, it could be argued that these professionals work longer hours than schoolteachers and work year round. In South Bend, Indiana, elementary teachers in the South Bend Community School Corporation work an 8:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. day. The teaching day ends at 2:20 p.m. when the students are dismissed. The 2:20 to 3:20 p.m. time is set aside for teacher preparation. Additionally, each teacher is guaranteed an uninterrupted, duty-free thirty minute lunch period and an additional thirty minute planning period within the school day.\textsuperscript{12}

Chicago public school elementary teachers may very well have the shortest contract teaching day in the nation. Their teaching day starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 2:30


\textsuperscript{12}Professional Agreement between the South Bend Community School Corporation and the National Education Association South Bend, 1993-1995.
p.m., constituting a six hour day.

With a work day that ranges between six and seven and a half hours, public school teachers are afforded the option of securing additional employment throughout the year as well as during the summer months; as well as the option of spending more time with their family members. Teachers receive a generous "spring break", "winter (Christmas-New Year) break", and many other holidays and designated curriculum days that serve to make teaching more attractive in comparison to other careers without such liberal leave.

Some candidates find job security appealing. The tenure systems that most states continue to honor are bound up in strong contract and union negotiations. Beginning teachers may reach tenure status in as early a time frame as three years. Some districts merely require two formal observations a year, to be conducted by a school administrator. Traditions of courtesy may entitle or allow the teacher being evaluated to choose one or both of the required observation times. This courtesy practice of allowing the teacher to select the time of observation allows preparation time and serves to take away the pressure of risk of failure.

Salary rates for beginning teachers may vary from state to state and even within a state. If one conducts a query of the public's views on a beginning teacher's salary, the responses may range from too high to too low. Before
teaching salary negotiations became so high profile, perhaps, much of the public sentiment and perception was that of a grossly underpaid teacher populace. However, now, in a changing economy, one that is largely service, teaching positions may be viewed as secure, well paying jobs. "Undoubtedly, salaries are becoming one of the attractions of the profession."\(^{13}\)

In the urban Black community, prior to integration, for many, the most significant career options were teacher, preacher, and social services. These three occupations offered the easiest entry and the greatest job security. Additionally, these three occupations offered prestige and could satisfy the altruistic urging to Black America to "uplift the race". For many of the African-Americans who chose teaching, the altruistic dimension of teaching may well have been the core of the motivation to teach.

Accounts of black history are filled with examples of black Americans who laid the foundations to illustrious careers by way of an initial entry into the world of teaching. As previously mentioned, Jacqueline Vaughn went from classroom teacher to president of the third largest teacher union in the country. Marva Collins, another Chicagoan went from the classroom to founder of the prestigious West Side Preparatory School. Mary McCleod Bethune and Booker T. Washington, both, went from classroom

\(^{13}\)Ibid, 9.
teachers to founders of outstanding black colleges. She founded Bethune College in Florida; and he founded Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama.

In past decades, the profession of teaching, revered in many communities, was especially revered in the black community. However, in the eighties, as more opportunities in industry and corporate America opened up to minorities, fewer African-American high school graduates opted to major in education. This shortage of black applicants has led school corporations to send out teacher scouts on annual and bi-annual recruiting trips. Many districts have created high school cadet programs to encourage youth, particularly minority youth, to explore the career of teaching.

Approximately, ten percent of teachers in the United States are black. Within the division of black teachers, most are female. Looking at the total group of teachers, nearly sixty percent are female. A composite of the average teacher would be female, white and slightly more than thirty-five years old with approximately eleven years experience.¹⁴

Having explored the initial question of why people choose to become teachers; the next question is, what lies ahead for the first-year teacher upon classroom arrival? Does, the newly appointed teacher ride off into the sunset in a blaze of glory of the wonder and majesty of the newly

¹⁴Daresh.
appointed teaching position, or is there another side of the picture? Is there "reality shock"?\textsuperscript{15}, the shock that occurs while teachers make the transition from the secure, controlled teacher preparation program to real classroom teaching where conditions may be considerably different from those previously experienced and studied.

Does the beginning teacher feel like a "stranger in a new land", as phrased by McDonald and Elias (1980):

The beginning teacher is a stranger in a new land, the territory of which and whose rules and customs and culture are unknown, but, who has to assume a significant role in that society. If the problem is put in this manner, it is easy to see that we are studying a general problem in human experience as well as a particular problem in adaptation to a specific institution and to a specific social role.\textsuperscript{16}

Lortie (1966) compared the beginning teacher's admission in teaching to Robinson Crusoe's struggle for survival.

As for Defoe's hero, the beginning teacher may find that prior excellence supplied him with some alternatives for action, but his crucial learning comes from his personal errors; he fits together solutions and specific problems into some kind of whole and at times, finds leeway for the expression of personal tastes. Working largely alone, he cannot make the specifics of his working knowledge base explicit, nor

\textsuperscript{15}Ralph E. Martin, H. George, and Edward W. Stevens Jr., \textit{An Introduction to Teaching: A Question of Commitment} (Needham: Allyn and Bacon, 1988), 93.

need he, as his victories are private.\[^{17}\]

In this study, the researcher asked the question, do first-year teachers have concerns? Equating concerns to problems, the conclusion can be drawn, that, yes, of course, teachers, as all human beings have problems. Then the more significant question is: Do first year teachers have concerns that are similar in kind to those of other first year teachers and can those similarities be measured?

Donald R. Cruickshank, author of "Teaching is Tough" stated that there are three reasons why teacher concerns or problems should be identified and studied. First, teacher concerns should be studied to find ways to make sure that teacher education relates to the needs of teachers. Second, teacher concerns persist, even with experience. Thirdly, it is important to strive for teacher satisfaction.\[^{18}\]

Cruickshank summarized that "teachers feel their preparation program does not adequately prepare them for their work. They do not necessarily improve from on-the-job experience and they are often told or made to feel they don't count."\[^{19}\]

When the National Teachers Association's (NEA) Research


\[^{19}\]Ibid, 3.
Division published its study of the status of the American Public School Teacher in 1972, with a sampling of 1,592 questionnaires, it included a section entitled, "Attitudes Toward The Profession." In this category, it found that "the desire to work with young people remained the most important factor in determining teachers' choice of career.

Second, a majority of secondary teachers were influenced in their choice of career by their interest in a particular subject matter field. Third, three-fourths of 1971 teachers, like three-fourths of 1961 teachers, would again choose teaching if they could go back to the beginning of their adult professional lives and make a new career choice. And fourth, adequacy of resources as teachers' area of greatest concern in doing their jobs successfully. More teachers mentioned sufficient or insufficient materials, staff, or funds than anything else in naming the greatest help and greatest hindrance they encountered in their work. ²⁰

Veenman in his (1984) publication, "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers," cited the following eight common problems for beginning teacher: (1) Classroom discipline; (2) Motivating students; (3) Dealing with individual differences among students; (4) Assessing students' work; (5) Relationships with parents; (6) Organization of class

work; (7) Insufficient materials and supplies; and (8) Dealing with problems of individual students.21 These beginning teacher problems, selected from Veenman's review of ninety-one studies published since 1960, stand out as the most common problems; with classroom discipline being the one most significant area of concern.22

Frances F. Fuller (1969) in her publication, "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization," reviewed more than fifteen beginning teacher concerns' studies. She stated,

To summarize the data as it is reported by these investigators, what we know is that beginning teachers are concerned about class control, about their own content adequacy, about the situations in which they teach and about evaluations by their supervisors, by their pupils and of their pupils by themselves.23

Additionally, Frances Fuller asked the question: "Do teachers continue to be preoccupied throughout their teaching life with problems of self-adequacy?" She continued, "To answer this question, we turn to studies of concerns and problems of experienced teachers,"24 and she used studies of veteran teachers to measure the stages that beginning teachers moved through.


22Ibid.


24Ibid, 216.
Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to determine the specific kinds of concerns experienced by first year teachers in public, elementary, middle and high schools, in Evansville, Indiana. These concerns would be measured with other studies and with the perceptions of first-year teacher concerns reported by eighteen veteran teachers and fourteen administrators in in-depth, personal interviews. A secondary purpose of this study was to determine which coping strategies appear to be most helpful to the first-year teacher. The procedures used in this study attempted to seek answers to a series of research questions.

Research Questions

These research questions were the following:

1. What are the reasons for choosing to become a teacher?

2. What are the specific kinds of concerns experienced by first year teachers?

3. What strategies do these first year teachers use to address their concerns?

4. Are first year teachers more concerned with "self" than with their pupils?

5. In what ways do first year teachers differ in their concerns, based of the categories of gender, race and grade level divisions?
6. Are administrator and veteran teacher perceptions of first-year teacher concerns more similar or different from reported first-year teacher concerns?

7. In what ways are first-year teachers influenced by mentors?

**Procedures of the Study**

The procedural part of the study consisted of two phases. In phase I, agreement was obtained from twenty-one first-year teachers in a southern Indiana Public School district (November, 1994) to participate in research for this dissertation. Because of work schedules and family responsibilities, only fifteen of the original group participated. In February 1995, eighteen veteran teachers agreed to participate in this study. The final group of fourteen administrators, from the areas of elementary, middle, high school and central administration were solicited in March 1995.

The purpose of the study was explained to each group of proposed participants. Expressed support for the project was enthusiastic and extremely positive.

Phase II consisted of compiling the data, analyzing it according to the researcher's variables, seeking to answer the research questions and lastly comparing it to studies in the literature.

Fifteen first-year teachers were personally interviewed in the months of January, February and March, 1995.
Approximately thirty minutes were spent with each interviewee. With each teacher, before the actual interview began, the researcher talked about the study, what was hoped to be gained and assured complete confidentiality in not using names of the interviewees or their schools. Participants were asked to seek clarification for questions asked that they didn’t fully understand.

When participants sought clarification, the researcher attempted to answer the question without biasing their answers. Most interviews were conducted within a school setting, when the respondent had no students in his/her charge. All interviews were conducted in a private setting.

Additionally, fourteen public school administrators and eighteen veteran, public school teachers were personally interviewed, during this time frame. Seven middle school, five high school, three elementary, and two central office administrators were interviewed. Of the eighteen veteran teachers interviewed, there were ten middle school teachers, five high school teachers, and three elementary teachers. Participation in this study was based on individual consent and a promise of confidentiality. These interviews, like the first-year teacher interviews, were conducted within a private setting.

In the area of administrator and veteran teacher perceptions, this study was designed to integrate knowledge about what is known about first-year public school teacher
concerns. Clearly, first-year teacher concerns must be obtained from a first-year teacher population. Furthermore, because the first-year teacher generally works within a school setting, he/she is not entirely autonomous. For this reason, additional sampling of "veteran teachers (tenured teachers with more than five years teaching experience)" and administrators of first-year teachers have been interviewed with questions regarding their perceptions of first-year teacher concerns. Their perceptions of first-year teacher concerns were compared to the data collected from the first-year teacher sampling.

**Definition of Terms**

Many of the studies utilized in this dissertation used the terms "beginning teacher", "novice", and "first-year in-service teacher." Each of these terms is consistent with the author's term "first-year teacher", meaning a state certified teacher, entering into his/her first teaching contract with a school district.

The sampling used in this study was a total of fifteen (elementary, middle, and high school) public, first-year teachers, fourteen (elementary, middle, high school, and central administration) public administrators and eighteen (elementary, middle, and high school) public school veteran teachers.

Veteran teachers are defined as those teachers who possess a minimum of five years of classroom teaching
experience.

The term, administrators, is in reference to elementary principals, middle school principals, middle school assistant principals, high school principals, high school assistant principals, and central administrators.

Principals are defined as the chief administrative and supervisory officer of a particular school. Assistant principals are generally in charge of discipline and/or programs. Central administrators may be classified as supervisors or directors. They generally have a particular area of authority and may work with principals, laterally, or may directly supervise them.

"Reality Shock" is defined as "the point in which beginning teachers begin to face the harsh and rude reality of everyday teaching." 25

A mentor is defined as a teacher with at least five years experience, at a similar grade and subject level, in the same building, who is certified and has outstanding teaching skills. 26

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited by its small sampling.

2. The study was limited in using only one school district.

25 Veenman, 143-178.

26 Indiana Beginning Teacher Internship Program: A Program of the Indiana Professional Standards Board, 26-27.
3. The discussion regarding categories of responses was based on the judgement of the researcher.

A review of related literature will be discussed in Chapter Two. A discussion of the collection and analysis of data will be presented in Chapter Three, along with the presentation of data gathered from the research of this study. Lastly, in Chapter Four, summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study will be discussed.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The related literature is replete with articles, surveys, and published texts regarding the teaching profession and particularly the development of the beginning teacher. This chapter will focus on some of the most relevant literature relating to new teacher concerns.

Historical Perspective

In 1969, Frances F. Fuller published "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental conceptualization." In her publication, Fuller stated, "The Purpose of this study was to examine intensively the developing concerns of small groups of prospective teachers and to reexamine the findings of other investigators in the hope of discovering what teachers are concerned about and whether their concerns can be conceptualized in some useful way."\(^1\)

In her paper, Fuller cited the research of Ahleing (1963), Deiulio (1961), and Shunk (1959), as examples of studies with considerable speculation about teachers' concerns.

concerns and problems. Additionally, she stated that,

New teachers in England complained in 'extensive correspondence' about difficulties in maintaining discipline, about inadequate equipment, social background of schools in which they taught, about their own unwise job placement, and about depressing effect of neighborhood areas and aggressive attitudes of parents toward teachers (Phillips, 1932).

More recently, new British were most concerned about class control and evaluations by their inspectors (Gabriel, 1957).

In Frances Fuller's second study, "Written Concerns Statements," twenty-nine different student teachers supervised by four different supervisors, were asked at the beginning of an informal luncheon followed by discussion with a counseling psychologist to write what you are concerned about now. Responses were classified into three categories: (1) Where do I stand? How adequate am I? How do others think I'm doing? (2) Problem behavior of pupils. Class control. Why do they do that? (3) Are pupils learning? How does what I do affect their gain?

The results from this twenty-nine subject sampling cited twenty-two expressed concerns classified mainly as: (1) Concern with self, (2) Concern with pupil's behavior, and (3) Concern with pupil's learning. In category number (1) Concern with self, twenty-two subjects expressed concern exclusively with concern with self. While six subjects expressed concern in both categories (1) and (2), one subject expressed concern exclusively in category (2). None

\[2\text{Ibid.}\]
of the twenty-nine subjects expressed concern in category (3) (Concern for pupil learning). Additionally, Fuller cited the work of Jean L. York. York gathered data from first year in-service teachers from Indiana (York, 1967) and Texas (York, 1968). Fuller compared and analyzed those data. One hundred and thirteen teachers from Indiana were surveyed. Their most frequently mentioned area of concern was discipline. "Discipline" was named as the greatest area of concern by thirty-six percent of the sampling and "adequacy of subject matter" was named by twenty-two percent of the subjects. Thirteen percent of the Indiana sampling identified "pupil learning" as their most single concern.

When compared to the Indiana teachers, the findings revealed that one hundred and seven first-year teachers in Texas agreed with those in Indiana. As a point of particular relevance, Fuller cited three points of note:

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3Ibid, 9, 213.
(1) The obvious consistency with one another (Indiana first-year teachers being compared to Texas first-year teachers), despite the fact that diverse populations were surveyed over a period of thirty-six years. (2) No study supports the proposition that beginning teachers are concerned with instructional design, methods of presenting subject matter, assessment of pupil learning, as with tailoring content to individual pupils; the areas often presented before student teaching in education courses. (3) The findings about beginning in-service teachers are similar to those about pre-service teachers. Both pre-service and new in-service teachers had principal concerns that fell in the category of concerns with self.

**Expert and Beginning Teacher Differences**

In a series of studies conducted at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University, Cushing, Sabers and Berliner asked the question, What makes an expert teacher an expert? Their study revealed three important propositions.

**Proposition One:** Experts, Advanced Beginners and Novices differ in their perceptions and understanding of classroom events.

**Proposition Two:** Experts, Advanced Beginners and Novices differ in the role they assume in classroom instruction.

**Proposition Three:** Experts, Advanced Beginners, and Novices differ in their notion of typicality within the classroom environment.\(^7\)

Cushing, Sabers and Berliner found that advanced beginners and novices generally focused on issues of management or control, rather than on issues of instructional methodology or content. They found that expert teachers focused on events that had instructional implications. Moreover, they found that advanced beginners and novices, in contrast, not knowing what was important instructional, provided descriptions of what they saw but did not provide interpretations. 8

Based on their study, they predicted that beginning teachers would not always know what to expect, or what was "normal" student behavior, and might respond in ways that increase the confusion or lead to management problems within a classroom. Cushing, Sabers and Berliner concluded that no matter what the desire of the novice teacher may be, they perceive and understand information differently and the level of performance that they need to reach will require several years.

Feiman-Nemser and Buchman offer similar conclusions to Cushing, Sabers and Berliner. They found that pre-service teachers tend to suffer from three pitfalls: "(1) The Familiarity Pitfall; (2) The Two World's Pitfall; and (3) The Cross Purpose Pitfall." 9 The familiarity Pitfall

8Ibid.

9S. Feiman-Nemser and M. Buchman, The First Year of Teacher Preparation: Transition To Pedagogical Thinking?, Research Report Series No. 156. (East Lansing: Michigan
was described as unquestioned familiarity that resulted in arresting thought. The authors offered that future teachers often do not recognize that their conception of teaching is limited and biased. And, because of this, they often approached early field experiences with preconceptions of what classrooms were like and what teachers should do rather than inquire about the relationships between what is observed to both pupils' learning and their own subsequent learning.

For example, prospective teachers might participate in classrooms by helping individual pupils with their seatwork, grading papers, and taking the class to the library without mishap. But, only, if the participant teacher in training questions these practices in terms of what they reveal about how and what pupils are learning will the experience help them form new habits of thought and action.\textsuperscript{10}

The two world's pitfall is described as first understanding that there is a world of college and university and that there is a world of classroom teaching.\textsuperscript{11} The two world's pitfall comes into play when the prospective or beginning teacher begins to feel the pressure to relate to both worlds. The university tended to focus on abstract concepts in a discipline of knowledge

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
rather than on the classroom teacher's interest in how abstract concepts could be applied in the complex setting of elementary and secondary schools.

By way of example, field experience was often shaped by the instructional purpose of university courses such as educational psychology. The prospective teacher was told to observe differences in children's responses to instruction, which in turn, might be helpful in deciding whether pupils were learning. The problem for the novice was that the assignment required writing detailed notes and paying attention to the behavior of selected pupils. It did not get the novice involved in the class itself, for this would prevent concentrating on the product required by the university class.

The emphasis was on the participant learning ways of seeing, not of acting. Consequently, participants might learn the academic skill of observing; yet not learn how this skill could be used in their future work as teachers. The danger was that the academic skill was seen as something to be learned for a course rather than part of the participant's conception of teaching. Too often, participants became skilled observers but did not know how to act in the classroom on what was observed.

In (3) the cross purpose pitfall, Feiman-Nemser and Buchman looked at the supervising teacher's role as cross in purpose to the student teacher. They offered that in the
realm of student teaching, the supervising teacher sees the teaching of children as the primary purpose; and helping the student teacher learn was secondary. Frequently, in place of encouraging student teachers to experiment on their own and subsequently to analyze what happened, so that they could learn, supervising teachers expected student teachers to carry out routines established by the supervisor who believed that the practices enhanced the learning of pupils.

Thus, student teachers learned to reproduce the routines of another in someone else's classroom; but, were given no opportunity to make and justify their own instructional decisions or to consider their short and long term consequences. In such cases, student teachers did not learn to create environments that could take different forms for different purposes. Too often, student teaching made it possible for novices to have success in carrying out decisions made by another; thereby, generating unwarranted confidence in their ability to teach.

Only when supervising teachers expanded their roles to that of helping novices develop; and where, collegiality and experimentation were the norms, could student teachers understand that learning from teaching was part of the job. Whatever they did in the interest of pupil learning should not be at the expense of learning to teach.

Cushing, Sabers, and Berliner in their study of expert teachers, advanced beginners and novices asked the question,
"What makes an expert teacher an expert?" Expert teachers who made classroom management and instruction look easy were compared to Olympians, who made their specialties in athletics look easy. They believed that if they found differences in the perceptions, understanding, and problem-solving skills of expert and beginning teachers, such findings would have implications for teacher training and certification as well as for discussions about master teacher and career ladder plans.

They defined advanced beginners as those who had completed student teaching or who were in their first year of classroom teaching and who were viewed by supervisory personnel as having the potential to develop into an "excellent" teacher. Experts were junior or senior high school teachers of science or mathematics, identified as outstanding teachers by their supervisors and by members of the research team. And novices were individuals employed by business and industry who expressed an interest in classroom teaching but who had no formal teacher training or experience in public school teaching.

Cushing, Sabers, and Berliner's data suggested that qualitative differences of considerable importance existed among expert teachers, beginning teachers with some training, and those who desired to be teachers through the

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12 Cushing, Sabers, and Berliner.

alternative certification route. Like experts in other fields, expert teachers perceived and understood information in their area of expertise differently from novices. Thus, expert teachers saw and made sense of classroom events differently than beginning teachers.

Pre-Service Education

Feiman-Nemser and Buchman critically analyzed pre-service education and determined that the pitfalls they conceived were detrimental to the central purpose of teaching. Those purposes being, helping pupils learn and fostering the teacher's ability to learn from future experience.

In addition to pitfalls, Long, Frye and Long asserted that beginning teachers enter the field with untrue beliefs and unrealistic expectations. In their 1985 publication, *Making it till Friday*, they explored five common myths and misconceptions that those entering the teaching field might have about teaching.

Myth #1: GOOD TEACHERS DON'T HAVE PROBLEMS

The authors believed this myth to be widespread. They reported that many believe that a teacher actively engaged in teaching and keeping students stimulated and interested through the use of exciting materials can prevent all discipline problems. They stated that appealing to student interests was important and could prevent many problems, but the potential for problems extended beyond academics.
Because students experienced difficulties at home which spilled over into the classroom; students experienced problems with peers during class breaks and in the classroom which often involved the teacher. Additionally, students experienced mood changes and on any given day numerous interactions could occur that could pose trouble for teachers.

**Myth #2: KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER IS SUFFICIENT FOR TEACHING**

Competence in one’s subject area was sometimes considered to be all that was necessary for effective teaching. Unfortunately, knowledge in a specific subject area did not insure effective sharing of that knowledge; nor did individual knowledge guarantee the humane treatment of others.

**Myth #3: ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME**

Beginning teachers often believed that sameness, resulting from a need to show impartiality in carrying out school policies should be generalized to all circumstances. But, in actuality, students coming from different family backgrounds respond to different approaches to correction. Because students possess differences, those differences when identified could lead to greater understanding.

**Myth #4: THERE’S NOTHING I CAN DO**

Teachers sometimes get the feeling that there is little or nothing they could do to change students who have been
negatively influenced by the home, the community, or peer group. But, if teachers would change the ways in which they act and think, they could increase their sphere of influence.

Myth #5: I CAN HANDLE ALL THE PROBLEMS MYSELF

Many teachers have had difficulty accepting their limits. They have regarded receiving help from others as a personal failure. While teachers have had a major responsibility for what occurs in their classes, no teacher could be the sole problem-solving agent in a classroom. Some problems are just too complex for teachers to solve alone. Teacher success might be greatly increased by seeking help through a multi-disciplinary team (Counselor, Social Worker, School Psychologist, Special Education Teacher).¹⁴

Doris K. Liebert, director of student teaching at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, conducted a study of student teachers, in the spring of 1991. She surveyed thirty-two student teachers, asking them to respond to questions about their interactions with their elementary school principals. She queried her participants as to how much interaction they had with the building principal. The responses described a broad range of principal interaction -

from "never saw her" to "was supportive and helpful."\textsuperscript{15} Liebert concluded that eighty percent of the participants in her study wanted contact with the principal and sought it out.

Although, only seventy percent of the principals spent active time observing these student teachers and meeting with them; the students were preoccupied with expectations of utilizing the principal in her role of "instructional leader." This study affirmed that some pre-service teachers may hold unrealistic expectancies of how closely they will be supervised and assisted by their building administrators.

**Anxieties and Concerns of Pre-Service Teachers**

In 1963, Michael L. Thompson conducted a study with the purpose of identifying anxieties experienced by student teachers.\textsuperscript{16} Because he felt that young men and women aspiring to become teachers seemed to be beset with questions, problems and anxieties during their period of preparation; his purpose of conducting the study was to identify and record the frequency of said anxieties. Thompson queried one hundred and twenty-five student teachers who were near the end of their internships. He


used a checklist containing thirty-five questions, with each question representing a particular type of anxiety.

Thompson found that his results confirmed his hypothesis. His sampling of student teachers acknowledged that they felt anxieties, in the following areas: mastery of the subject matter in their major teaching areas, lesson plans, pupil reaction, standards of teacher conduct, inability to answer questions and problems of discipline (percentages ranging in the order given).

The research questions to which Thompson sought answers are:

(1) What are the specific kinds of anxieties experienced by student teachers?

(2) Do they, in fact, represent a normally distributed pattern?

(3) Are elementary school internees beset with more or fewer anxieties than secondary school internees?

(4) Do male student teachers show more or less anxiety than female student teachers?

(5) What are the sources of the anxieties experienced?17

Thompson borrowed his definition of anxiety from Sawrey and Telford. He quoted: "Anxiety is a mixture of fear, apprehension, and hope referred to the future."18

Thompson's results revealed that almost sixty-six percent (65.6) of his entire group felt anxiety about their

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17 Ibid, 437.

18 Ibid, 435.
mastery of the subject matter in their major teaching fields. Lesson plans, pupil reaction, standards of teacher conduct, inability to answer questions and problems of discipline were also matters of real concern to these future teachers. He further denoted that anxieties were more prevalent in prospective female elementary teachers than any other group. 19

Problems of Beginning Teachers

Richard H. Dollase surveyed first- and second-year teachers and veteran teachers. He asked these groups to list their three most serious problems. His results revealed that forty-eight percent of his beginning teachers ranked classroom discipline as their first most serious problem. While only twenty-nine percent of the veteran teachers ranked classroom discipline as their number one problem of concern. Beginning teachers cited student motivation as their second most serious problem (forty-three percent), while sixty-two percent of the veteran teacher group cited student motivation as their number one concern. Both groups listed curriculum as their third most serious problem. 20

It is interesting to note, in Dollase's study that the beginning teachers corresponded somewhat similarly with the

19 Ibid, 437.

veteran teachers in both the categories of classroom discipline and student behavior. Of course, it could be argued that the two concerns have a great deal of connectedness. Dollase used Berliner's (1988) studies on pedagogical expertise to analyze developmental differences between the expert and the novice teacher.\textsuperscript{21} Dollase further maintained that the beginning teacher seemingly focused on the more immediate and surface manifestations of the problem of reaching and controlling young adolescents in her classes, while "the veteran teacher emphasized the underlying causes that lead to some of her students' inappropriate classroom behavior."\textsuperscript{22}

Dollase asserted that there is a period in a teacher's life that is full of critical events and turning points. He called this period, a cycle of teaching. He attempted to depict the ups and downs of teaching, the best of times and worst of times, the times of greatest challenge to the teacher's classroom authority and control, the time of greatest challenge to the teacher's classroom authority and control, and the time of the teacher's greatest (and growing) sense of competence and effectiveness in the classroom.


\textsuperscript{22}Ibid, 10.
Dollase used data from responses from twenty beginning teachers and twenty-five veteran teachers. His data suggested that many beginning teachers felt the first four months of teaching to be the most difficult. Forty percent of this sampling declared December to be the most difficult month of the teaching year. Dollase, among other offerings, allowed that beginning teachers might be particularly overwhelmed in the month of December due to adjusting to a new work cycle, one without the usual large block of time that college semester break offered. Additionally, they might be overwhelmed by the large amount of reports and paperwork that they are responsible for. Then, too, the beginning teacher quite possibly might have exhausted all strategies and creative approaches to classroom management.

Of the veteran sampling, the second half of the year (semester) was reported to be the most difficult; with May and June being cited as the "toughest months" for forty-four percent of this group. In explanation of why, May and June appeared to be the most difficult months for veteran teachers. Dollase offered that end of the year paper work, the need to cover so much material in too short a time, and the general restlessness of the students, who are looking forward to summer vacation or graduation as valid reasons. Additionally, he added, there is just plain fatigue of an
older faculty.

Data from Dollase's study further delved into why classroom management problems were more likely to occur in September, at the beginning of the year, with the months of September and October being the time of greatest testing and challenging. Dollase believed that a beginning teacher showed a predictable pattern of assigning detention or seeking help from an administrator within the first sixty days of school.

Dollase's research indicated that seventy percent of beginning teachers could use a "helping hand" during the first four months of teaching. His study indicated that most beginning teachers needed special nurturing during the first semester because that was likely to be the time of troubles for them in both their classrooms and their personal lives.\textsuperscript{23}

For the beginning teacher, the task of perfecting the skills and understandings needed to implement a mutually successful mastery plan of study objects and classroom management may take several years to develop. In comparison, veteran teachers recognized, more readily, patterns in student behavior, and were more responsive to

\textsuperscript{23}Dollase.
planning and more sensitive to the teaching context.\textsuperscript{24}

Veenman (1984) in his study identified problems that new elementary teachers perceived as most serious. These included: discipline; dealing with individual differences; motivating students; relations with parents; organization of class work; assessment; insufficient materials and supplies; dealing with individual student problems; heavy teaching loads; insufficient preparation time; relationships with colleagues; planning and preparing for the day; and awareness of school policies and rules.\textsuperscript{25}

**Classroom Discipline**

As early as 1944, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development began to recognize and address the area of discipline as a classroom concern. The opening section of its publication, *Discipline for Today's Children and Youth*, spoke to problems of discipline and self-control and a civilization in which individuals would subjugate their personal behaviors to conform to a complex civilization.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid, 124.


During the time period from 1969-1981, twelve of thirteen Gallup polls reported that Americans viewed discipline as the most important problem in the schools. The National Education Association, one of two major teacher unions, took a teacher opinion poll in 1979. Its findings revealed that "seventy-four percent of the teachers surveyed stated that discipline problems impaired their teaching effectiveness, and seventeen percent said their effectiveness was seriously reduced by discipline problems."\(^{27}\) While the poll did not have a specific grouping for first-year teachers, it is generally assumed that beginning teachers have more discipline problems than more experienced teachers. "Classroom discipline has a direct and major influence on what most teachers consider to be the two key aspects of their professional lives: (1) the degree to which students develop personal and cognitive skills; and (2) the extent to which teachers enjoy their work."\(^{28}\)

While not a new issue, behavior in the schools is a topic that tends to reactivate with publicized incidents of student violence. High-profile, public-opinion polls, including "First Things First," the 1994 report by the

\(^{27}\)Ibid, 53.

\(^{28}\)Ibid.
nonprofit Public Agenda Foundation in New York, and the annual American Teacher surveys compiled by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., have listed school discipline as the number-one educational concern of both teachers and the general public.29

O.L. Davis, former president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, seemed to capture the essence and the tenacity of discipline problems, in a foreword he wrote. This foreword in "Helping Teachers Manage" by Daniel L. Duke, Editor, stated:

Some circumstances of schooling will not disappear. Discipline is one of these hardy, tenacious concerns. We know it is discipline, even though we change its name, and we recognize that we need help as we seek understanding of both our pupils and ourselves. As we try each proposed solution, we know that solution is temporary at best. We want administrative support in both policy and action. We want collegial and parental understanding and support. We teachers want to teach, and discipline - or classroom management - consumes precious time and energy.30

Stages of Beginning Teachers

Kevin Ryan, noted differences between experienced teachers and beginning teachers. He went further by advocating that becoming a teacher is a developmental process and has identifiable stages. Ryan, too, relied upon


30Duke, v.
the early works of Frances Fuller (1969). Ryan asserted that in becoming an experienced teacher of professional competence, teachers would go through four stages. These stages, while not rigidly adhered to were still identifiable. He called these stages: fantasy, survival, mastery and impact.\(^{31}\)

The fantasy stage was a prelude, a time when a person started to think seriously about becoming a teacher. Student teaching interrupted the fantasy stage. Thus, the individual became a beginning teacher and moved into the second stage, the survival stage. When the process of moving out of the fantasy stage and into the survival stage began to settle into the neophyte's consciousness, reality shock might occur. Veenman (1984, p. 143) defines "reality shock" as the point in which beginning teachers begin to face the harsh and rude reality of everyday teaching.\(^{32}\)

Corcoran (1981) referred to the transitional stage of going from university student to classroom teacher as "transitions shock."\(^{33}\) Whether called reality shock or transition shock, many studies would agree that by and


\(^{32}\)Ibid.

large, upon completing university requirements and entering the classroom, beginning teachers have and notice remarkably different experiences.

Kevin Ryan's third stage, following fantasy and survival was defined as mastery stage. As beginning teachers proceeded through the survival stage (for many novices this occurred by February), they proceeded to the mastery stage. According to Ryan, "the mastery stage was the craft stage, where the new teacher began to learn the craft of teaching in a step-by-step fashion" (p. 14).

Impact, the fourth and final stage of teaching, was not reached by the beginning teacher. In the impact stage, you would expect to find teachers who had mastered the skills of teaching and who would be capable of articulating that mastery. Ryan used a model from Lortie's "Teacher Socialization: The Robinson Crusoe Model, in The Real World of the Beginning Teacher" to demonstrate a comparison of the difficulty of a beginning teacher to gain mastery in the classroom.34

Ryan used the following quote from Lortie to further articulate his stages theory.

The beginning teacher may find that prior experience supplies him with some alternatives for action, but his crucial learning comes from his personal errors; he fits together special solutions and specific problems

34 Ryan.
into some kind of whole and at times finds leeway for the expression of personal taste. Working largely alone, he cannot make the specifics of his working knowledge base explicit, nor need he, as his victories are private.\textsuperscript{35}

Researchers, Clark and Elmore (1979) found, too, as Fuller, Ryan, Veenman and others, that beginners exhibited similar patterns and additionally seemed to go through identifiable stages of preparation. They asserted that elementary teachers went through identifiable phases of preparation at the beginning of each school year. They identified these three phases as: Get Ready, Get Set, Go.

The phase, ready, described the tasks that teachers must address before school opens for students. Set looked at additional tasks that teachers faced in the first week of school, such as: record-keeping, assessment of students, and discipline. Go described the interactions that occurred after ready and set; namely, the interactions with administrators and parents.\textsuperscript{36}


\textsuperscript{36}C. Clark and J. Elmore, Teacher Planning in the First Weeks of School, Research Series No. 56 (East Lansing: Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University, 1979).
Reality Shock

Ryan asserted that first-year teachers experienced, what he termed as "the shock of the familiar." He maintained that the world of teaching was familiar because every one had gone through it. So, the first-year teacher entered the classroom with a certain degree of believing that she knew what she was getting into. The routines that a teacher contended with: classes, bell schedules, attendance, assemblies, etc.; were generally all known in advance. However, Ryan maintained that even within that familiar arena, the first year of teaching is still a shock.

Ryan stated that "the shock came when the beginner changed from audience to actor. The role which he had seen played out thousands of times was now his. The familiar scene of the classroom was reversed, and he encountered a startling new situation."

The shock of the first year of teaching was not a precise science. When relating to individuals, one must recognize that each individual's experience had the capacity for uniqueness. But, still, the first year of teaching

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37 Ryan.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid, 171.
offered tremendous opportunities for researchers to study and find a pattern, whether loose or cohesive, of the surroundings and events for which the beginning teacher was unprepared.

For one beginning teacher, in the Indiana Beginning Teacher Internship Program, the term, apprehension, may have been a more relevant term than reality shock. She described her feelings:

I really didn't know what to expect when I stepped into the classroom for the first time. I mean, I had worked hard in my college preparation, but it still wasn't the same as when I entered my classroom and realized that I was totally responsible for what happened from now on. I felt very alone. Everyone around me seemed so sure of what they were doing, even the other new teacher. I was afraid to say I was scared. I was terrified of what might happen the first day. The night before I met my students for the first time, I dreamed that my class was completely out of control - and I had not even met my students yet! But in my dream they had faces, and the other members of the faculty were standing in the back of the room laughing at me. I hardly slept at all that night.⁴⁰

Recent Research

Although Thompson conducted his study, as did Frances Fuller, over thirty years ago; many of the same responses are echoed by today's beginning teacher. Huberman (1993), in his work with teachers, some of which dealt exclusively with beginning teachers, compiled a list of "eleven

preoccupations of beginners". This list of preoccupations was compiled from empirical research from the previous studies of (Bush, 1980; Fuller and Brown, 1975; MacDonald and Elias, 1983; Veenman, 1984).

Of the one hundred and fifty-five respondents, seventy-four percent answered yes to "fearing what others might think"; seventy-two percent answered yes to "feelings of continual trial and error"; sixty-two percent answered yes to "feelings of never measuring up"; sixty percent answered yes to "Inconsistency (sometimes rigid, sometimes laissez-faire)"; sixty percent answered yes to "Feelings of surviving from day to day"; five to eight percent answered yes to "Intimidated by the students"; fifty-six percent answered yes to "Physical exhaustion"; fifty-five percent answered yes to "Difficulties in maintaining class control"; forty-six percent answered yes to "Discouragement"; thirty-six percent answered yes to "Difficulty in teaching other than by standard lesson format (lecture)"; and lastly, thirty-one percent answered yes to "Preoccupation with oneself rather than with the task at hand."

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42 Ibid, 205.

43 Ibid, 207.
CHAPTER III
DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data collected. Fifteen first-year teachers, eighteen veteran teachers, and fourteen administrators participated in personal interviews. The data presented will address the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons for choosing to become a teacher?

2. What are the specific kinds of concerns experienced by first year teachers?

3. What strategies do these first-year teachers use to address their concerns?

4. In what ways are first-year teachers influenced by mentors?

5. In what ways do first year teachers differ in their concerns, based on the variables of gender, race and grade level divisions?

6. Are first-year teachers more concerned with "self" than with their pupils?

7. Are administrator and veteran teacher perceptions of first-year teacher concerns more similar or different
from reported first-year teacher concerns?

As previously noted, this study was designed to compare and integrate knowledge about what is known about first-year teacher concern studies from the past and this recent study of first-year teacher concerns. In addition to presenting and assessing first-year teacher concerns, a secondary purpose of this study was to determine if veteran teacher and administrator perceptions of first-year teacher concerns would differ from those stated concerns of first-year sampling.

RESEARCH QUESTION #1 - What are the reasons for choosing to become a teacher?

TABLE 1
FIRST-YEAR TEACHER REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO BECOME TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Models</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a difference in student(s)'s life</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of kids</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer vacation/free time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong> - 15 First-year Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When first-year teachers were asked, What attracted you to the teaching profession?; they responded in the following numbers. Seven of this group answered that they became teachers because of a teacher role model. One male inner-city, middle-school teacher answered,
My mother is a teacher and naturally that made an impression on me. But, it was probably my fourth grade teacher that had the greatest impact on me. He was like a father to me; which, was really important to me because I grew up without a dad. He was my first male teacher. Because of him, I’m hoping to have that kind of influence on my students, to be a father figure.

Four, first-year teachers said their attraction to the profession stemmed from a desire to help students, in order to make a difference. One female, inner-city school teacher responded that she chose teaching because it offered the chance to help as many people as she could. She said, "It was an opportunity to do something I enjoyed." A male, high-school teacher stated that he chose teaching because, "it offered me the ability to make a difference in a young person’s life. In a way, it’s like having a captive audience, I can try to make a difference whether they want it or not."

An additional two, first-year subjects opted to become teachers out of a love for kids, and because they highly enjoyed being around kids. One male middle school teacher in his late thirties, formerly in another occupation, said that he "witnessed how much fun teachers were having with kids in athletic environments", and was inspired to take the plunge. Taking the plunge for him meant rearranging his work schedule so that he could take the necessary university classes; as well as student teaching.

The remaining two teachers in this study chose to become teachers because it would allow them summers and
additional time off that they could spend with their own
children and families. One high school, female teacher in
her forties, worked in a related profession prior to
becoming a teacher. After becoming a parent, she began to
focus upon returning to work in an area that would allow her
time to spend with her own children.

When asked, If you could choose your career all over
again, knowing what you now know about teaching, would you
still choose teaching as a career?; thirteen of the new
teacher subjects answered yes. Their comments ranged from:
"yes, because I love it"; "It’s something I enjoy"; "Yes,
I’d choose teaching all over again, I’m in for the
duration"; "Yes, I wish I had started earlier. But, maybe
then, I would not have the maturity I have now"; "Yes, I
definitely would because my teaching experience has been
everything that I thought it would be and a lot more"; "Yes,
I would choose teaching all over again, without
reservation"; "Yes, because I’m getting self fulfillment";
"Absolutely"; "Definitely".

Two of the new teacher subjects answered this question
from a different perspective than the other thirteen
subjects. One female high school teacher (who had worked in
another field before becoming a teacher) answered, "I doubt
it. I got my degree in the sixties. Had there been more
opportunities, I’m pretty sure I’d be doing something else."
A male middle school subject replied, "I think so (meaning,
he would choose teaching again); I'm not really surprised by what teaching is; but, sometimes I think about what else I might have done."

RESEARCH QUESTION #2 - What are the specific kinds of concerns experienced by first year teachers?

TABLE 2
FIRST-YEAR TEACHER AREAS OF CONCERN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Concern</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attitudes Toward Learning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Preparation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Parental Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Attitudes about Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six of the fifteen first-year teachers responded that discipline was their greatest concern. Four teachers cited "student attitudes toward learning"; while three cited "preparation concerns; i.e., not enough time for adequate preparation for classes and classroom paperwork." One teacher cited the greatest concern to be "community attitudes about education." The last teacher answered "lack of parental involvement" as the greatest concern experienced.

Additionally, first-year teacher respondents were asked to describe their secondary concerns. While secondary
concerns were quite similar to primary concerns, they were much more varied. Two of the sampling responded that "discipline" was their secondary teaching concern. Two other respondents spoke to concern with their "students' attitude toward learning." Two other respondents worried about their "job performance" and whether or not they were meeting student needs. An additional, two respondents worried about "parental pressures" that they interpreted as pressure for good grades and other acts of favoritism, exerted by complaints to the principal and abundant requests for conferences.

Singular concerns expressed were that of "job security", "lack of parental involvement", "adequate preparation for classroom teaching", "salary" (low), "class size" (large), "time management" (so much to do so little time), and "student attitude toward work" (poor).

An underlying theme that many of the first-year teacher respondents seemed to echo was that of major disbelief that students demonstrated so "little concern for learning" and "little respect for teachers as symbols of authority." One teacher noted, but prefaced with "I don't want to be quoted", that "even parents don't respect teachers." "They seem to look down on us with an, 'is this the best you could do attitude', as if being a teacher is just nothing."

One respondent who indicated a secondary concern about his preparation for classroom teaching wondered "if his
college training was enough." When asked to elaborate, he candidly admitted that he thought, "many of his university professors were out of step with the practical applications of daily school life; because they only focus on the theoretical applications."

A female high school respondent spoke of students with grave attendance problems and wondered what type of work ethic they were learning. Another high school respondent voiced his concern that the "whole community talks about better schools but won’t take it serious and listen to teachers tell them how by creating smaller classrooms and taking a harder stand on discipline." A female, middle school teacher cited that "even administrators have a lack of respect for teacher opinions." When asked to elaborate, she added that she meant the downtown administrators (central administrators).

One female respondent (high school with a family), worried about her lack of job security. "If programs were cut, I could be one of the first to receive a pink slip." This respondent was in a group of her own, with her concern about job security. Most of the respondents when asked the question, have you ever considered leaving teaching?, answered "no". When prodded by the interviewer with questions such as "suppose you received a bad evaluation?," the other fourteen respondents indicated no display of job insecurity. However, three respondents admitted they had
flirted with the idea of leaving teaching. One middle school male teacher said, "I've had some bad days; but I've never seriously thought about leaving teaching. A female middle school teacher said, "I've been really anxious for Fridays, but I don't think I really considered leaving teaching."

The third respondent of this group declared, "yes, I've seriously thought about leaving teaching, strictly from the discipline aspect. It's hard to maintain control when the media portrays teacher and authority figures in such a negative light. And, kids without a decent home life have nothing to lose by coming to school to disrupt."

When asked, have you ever experienced concern about your safety or about the safety of your car?, eight of the first-year teacher subjects responded that they had not experienced concern about their personal safety or the safety of their automobiles. One male middle school teacher replied, "my size makes me the intimidator." Another, a male high school teacher replied, "no, because of my background. I come from a tough neighborhood in a large urban city." Another, a male middle school teacher responded, "no, my school teaches the city's elite, the upper class." Yet, another male high school teacher responded, "no, I don't fear for my personal safety or my car, we have a protected parking lot."

Seven members of the first year teacher sampling
reported a concern about their personal safety or about the safety of their automobile. Their comments were as follow: "I don’t worry so much about the students but I sure worry about the parents." "They come in here so angry and they don’t want you to do anything in the way of discipline with their children" (male middle school). A female high school teacher stated that, "I’ve had confrontations, more verbal than anything else, with kids and parents - but the potential is there for physical, it just hasn’t surfaced." Another high school female, first-year teacher replied, "yes, I’ve feared for my personal safety. You encounter so many disrespectful students in the hallways and you don’t know what they will do." A middle school male teacher expressed similar thoughts. He responded, "yes, when students are upset, you can’t be sure that they won’t come after you. And, yes, they’ll go after your vehicle, too." A female middle school teacher expresses, "frequently, I’m concerned about my personal safety, especially when I’m in the hallways around students I don’t know."

The remaining two teachers of this group expressed no concern for their personal safety. But, they both expressed concern for their automobiles. A high school female teacher said, "I often think, how easy would it be for them to smash a window or spray paint a car if you make them mad." The last respondent, a female middle school teacher replied, "My car has been scratched. We park on an unprotected lot, so I
worry a lot."

RESEARCH QUESTION #3 - What strategies do these first year teachers use to address their concerns?

TABLE 3

STRATEGIES FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS USE TO ADDRESS STRESSFUL CONCERNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk to Colleagues</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicit feedback from Mentor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to Family Members</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Sports</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions by the interviewer asked, "Have you experienced stress about your job as a teacher? If so, in what way(s) and how often?"; and "What coping strategies do you use for dealing with school stress?" Eighty-seven percent (13) of the subjects answered yes to having suffered some form of school related stress. Comments from the two elementary female teachers were as follow: "I was really stressed the first day of school. I was scared to death. I had to literally write down every thing I wanted to say and do, minute by minute. The first and second day were stressful because they were scary. I didn’t know what to expect and I worried because I was there to do a job and I wanted to do it well. After that week, I didn’t worry so
much. But, I guess, I still feel some stress because I want to do a good job. To ease the pressure, I solicit feedback from my colleagues about how I’m doing. I also go home and talk to my family. They’re very supportive."

The other elementary subject indicated that she felt stressed because "parents are watching me and I question whether or not they’ve accepted me. Everything is new and they wonder if I’m effective. My mentor says that they (the parents) always treat new teachers this way. I always feel better when I talk to her."

The middle school teachers acknowledged experiencing stress in basically two categories: discipline, combined with pressure from parents (five subjects), and preparation and organization (three subjects). Comments ranged from "sometimes I feel stress. It’s mostly due to parental pressure over low scores or their kids’ grades. But, sometimes, just the whining of the kids is stressful." "I frequently feel stressed. Most of the time it’s over discipline problems. Some of it is over not covering the amount of material desired. Talking to my co-workers usually helps or I play some sports."

Another middle school teacher comment spoke to feeling stress about dealing with parents. "I feel pressured by parents. Especially when they’ve requested that I contact them. They want you to play favorites. But, I try to just shake it (stress) off."
The three remaining middle school subjects acknowledged feeling stress, in the areas of organization and preparation. One subject said, "I feel stress of feeling like I have to prove myself and my abilities. And I feel stress in adhering to school policies; such as meeting the expectations of administrators. I also feel stress with my peers. I feel penalized for my ability. I got the most difficult kids."

Another of this group expressed: "Organization is stressful to me. Particularly with all the additional responsibilities you get. My stress comes with trying to get everything done."

Two members of the group, female high school teachers, indicated that they did not suffer from school related stress. One stated, "I know what my job is and I do it as best I can. And, I guess because of that, I don't get stressed out." The other responded, "No, for some reason or the other, I don't get stress about my job. I like my job and I think I bring a lot to it (qualifications). My co-workers are supportive and maybe, that's why I don't get stressed out."

RESEARCH QUESTION #4 - In what ways do first year teachers differ in their concerns based on the variables of gender, race and grade-level divisions?
TABLE 4
HOW FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS DIFFER IN THEIR CONCERNS
BASED ON GENDER AND SCHOOL DIVISION

Female Concerns
Discipline - 5
Student Attitudes Toward Learning - 2
Lack of Parental Involvement - 1
TOTAL - 8

Male Concerns
Classroom Preparation - 3
Discipline - 2
Student Attitudes Toward Learning - 1
Community Attitudes Toward Learning - 1
TOTAL - 7

High School Concerns
Student Attitudes Toward Learning - 3
Discipline - 1
Community Attitudes Toward Learning - 1
TOTAL - 5

Middle School Concerns
Discipline - 4
Classroom Preparation - 3
Lack of Parental Involvement - 1
TOTAL - 8

Of the fifteen teacher sampling, eight were female and seven were male. These data were used to determine similarities/differences. Additionally, five high school subjects and eight middle school subjects were compared. The two elementary teachers were not compared with middle and high school subjects.

Female first-year teachers readily expressed concern with discipline problems. An elementary teacher reported that her "greatest challenge" was behavior. She admitted to
previously thinking that younger children would not pose discipline problems. Five of these eight teachers said that discipline was their greatest concern. The remaining three females cited student attitudes toward learning (two) and lack of parental involvement (one) as their greatest concerns.

Of the seven men in the study, three indicated that classroom preparation was their greatest concern. While none of the females expressed a concern with classroom preparation, one of the three males "wondered if his college training was enough." Another male said that he "stressed out about being prepared and getting organized--making the day run smoothly." The third male said "preparation for the lesson - that you have enough and it holds their interest - then, you don't have discipline problems."

The remaining four male concerns were two in the area of discipline and one about student attitudes toward learning and one about community attitudes toward learning.

RESEARCH QUESTION #5 - Are first-year teachers more concerned with self than with their pupils?
TABLE 5
ARE FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS MORE CONCERNED WITH
SELF THAN WITH THEIR PUPILS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest Reward(s) in Teaching</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Progress</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Students</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Faculty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest Dissatisfaction(s) in Teaching</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Attitudes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/Trying to be politically correct</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Parental Support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an effort to determine whether new teachers appeared to be more concerned with self or pupils, they were asked, What do you like most about teaching and what do you like least about teaching? Not so surprising, the answers given as to what was liked most about teaching were answers similar to those given as having attracted the subjects into teaching, initially. All fifteen respondents spoke of the rewards of teaching children, using expressions such as: "working with students, interaction with students, watching students learn and grow, pupil progress, participating in hands-on activities with kids, being a father figure to kids, teaching kids survival skills, and seeing kids learn is love at work."

When new teacher subjects spoke to what they liked
least about teaching, their answers paralleled the responses
given for question number two, what is the most serious
concern that you have experienced in your first year of
teaching? Eight of the new teacher subjects responded that
discipline problems were what they liked least about
teaching. They offered such comments as: "The worst part of
teaching is discipline. You are so limited in what you can
and cannot do"; "Discipline has to be the worst part of
teaching. I worry about getting into trouble for what I say
during class. You have to be so politically correct." 
"What I like least about teaching is spending too much time
on motivation; and generally it's for the same old
behaviors, kids who can't or won't pay attention."
Continuing with this subject of what is liked least about
teaching, one female high school teacher said, "What I like
least about teaching is the amount of discipline problems
encountered. What I really hate and get tired of is
breaking up fights." A male middle school subject continued
along this line with, "I really dislike the discipline
problems. I hate having to police kids and write referrals
on them, causing them to miss class when I know they need to
be there."

The seven remaining subjects answered what they liked
least about teaching in basically two categories: lack of
student motivation and positive parental involvement and too
much paperwork and bureaucratic constraints on teaching
time. One male high school subject said, "What I like least are the kids who don't meet your expectations, who don't even try to live up to your expectations. A male middle school teacher answered, "I like least those whiners. Whining kids with parents pressuring you to give them grades they haven't earned."

RESEARCH QUESTION #6 - In what ways are first-year teachers influenced by mentors?

TABLE 6

HOW FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS ARE INFLUENCED BY MENTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-year Teachers With a Mentor</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-year Teachers Without a Mentor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors at Same School</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors at Different School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Ratings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Satisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven of the fifteen subjects said that they had been assigned a mentor by their principal or supervisors. Four of these nine subjects were very enthusiastic in expressing their relationships with their mentors. One female elementary teacher said, "my relationship with my mentor who is a teacher in my building has been very positive. She is
like a "backbone, a strong support system that doesn’t prevent me from making my own choices."

A male middle school teacher responded, "my mentor is at my school and he’s been really helpful and supportive as have been others of my peers. And, my administrators have really been supportive." A female elementary teacher stated that her mentoring process had been "a very valuable experience, very supportive. She gave advice and sometimes she just listened. And, because of her, I became a stronger teacher."

A female high school teacher said that she indeed had enjoyed the support of a mentor. She continued, "Yes, that really helped. I don’t know what I would do without it. She is a twenty-six year veteran and she knows the ropes."

Five other first year teacher responses were: "Yes, my mentor’s been really helpful. But, due to our teaching schedules, we’re both really busy and this minimizes the amount of time we can spend together" (female middle school); "Yes, my mentor is a co-worker and it helps" (male middle school); "My mentor is my team teacher, actually there are three of us and an aide. We draw support from each other" (female high school); "Yes, a teacher at my school is my mentor. But, with the teaming schedule, I have six or seven other teachers who also serve as mentors" (male middle school); "Yes, I have a mentor and he had been very helpful. Of course, the bottom line is that you’re in the
classroom alone" (male middle school).

Of the remaining five subjects, one male high school teacher responded, "No, I’m on my own. Well, I tried it (having a mentor), but it didn’t work out." The other four subjects responded as follows: "No, I wasn’t assigned a mentor. But, I’ve personally adopted one within my department" (male high school); "No, I wasn’t assigned a mentor. But, my peers at school serve as my mentors" (female middle school); "No, I wasn’t appointed to a mentor; but I seek out opinions from veteran teachers and enjoy good working relationships with my co-workers" (male middle school); "No, I was not assigned a mentor, per se. But, I have an unofficial person, a teacher in another school who helps me sort out the difficulties of teaching" (female high school); "No, not an assigned mentor, but I use three of my co-workers in my field as mentors and sounding boards" (female middle school).

RESEARCH QUESTION #7 - Are administrator and veteran teacher perceptions of first-year teacher concerns more similar or different from reported first-year teacher concerns?
TABLE 7
FIRST-YEAR TEACHER CONCERNS AS PERCEIVED BY VETERAN TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Preparation/Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Insecurity about Handling the Job</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veteran Teacher Data

Eighteen veteran teachers were asked four questions. They were asked to elaborate, to explore the questions fully, and to offer any relevant discourse they desired. Question number one asked, What do you believe to be the greatest concern(s) that first year teachers experience? As each of the eighteen veteran teachers offered their answers, with plenty of elaboration, it became apparent that each answer contained a common thread. That thread, carefully woven into every response was discipline. Although only half (9) chose discipline as the number one concern, every veteran teacher expressed in some way that he/she believed discipline to be the or one of the greatest concerns for first-year school teachers.

Comments ranged from: "I remember when I was a beginning school teacher. I quit asking kids, Is this the
way you talk to your parents, like you're talking to me? Because invariable, they answered yes." "Many of these young teachers don’t have good organizational skills. They just plain don’t know how to organize what’s got to be taught and what they are responsible for getting to the office on time. In the interim, their classes suffer and they have severe discipline problems."

Question number two of the veteran teacher interview schedule asked, What school programs, personnel, or coping strategies do you believe to be most beneficial in helping the first-year teacher have a successful first year? Ten of the veteran teacher subjects specifically referred to the district’s mentoring program. Specific comments ranged from, "The Mentor program is excellent. It’s a network for acceptance of immediate teacher neighbors and subject matter teachers." "The Mentor’s program is good and co-workers can help, if they will. Also, the principal can help and should help." "The Mentoring program can help. But, the mentor needs to be closer to the first year of teaching rather than being a veteran teacher."

The other eight veteran teacher subjects answered that co-workers, veteran teachers, administrators and parents bore the responsibility of helping first year teachers to have a successful year. Three of the eight also articulated that schools should have more social events and faculty interaction to create opportunities for the first year
teacher to network and find a support system. Comments ranged from: "Teaming with a veteran teacher on that grade level would be useful." "The mentor that I had was worthless." "Top administrators on down should help the new teacher, especially the principal and assistant principal." "School personnel should help the new teacher; particularly the secretaries. In too many schools, it’s woe be unto you if the secretary doesn’t like you." "More after school faculty socials should be held. Some of us have taught together for years and hardly know each other."

Veteran teacher question number three asked, "What do you think provides the most satisfaction(s) for a first-year teacher?" Seven veteran teachers answered, "pupil progress" provided the most satisfaction for the first year teacher. One veteran phrased her answer as such: "when you see a light bulb coming on in a child’s head, it makes it all worthwhile. You know that they have and you’ve had a breakthrough."

One middle school veteran teacher answered, "Job security ought to be their greatest satisfaction; knowing that they have a job, because lots of people don’t." Two other veterans felt that job security provided the most satisfaction to first year teachers. Additionally, six veterans felt that student and parent appreciation and approval provided the most satisfaction to new teachers. Rounding out the responses to veteran question number three
were two other categories. One respondent stated, "don't see any satisfaction; only a strong belief in God keeps me going. There is no support. This is a job like no others." The last respondent, a female middle school veteran replied, "Just to get through their first year and achieve half of the things they wanted to do."

Question number four asked veteran teachers, "Why do you think that first-year teachers leave teaching?" Seven veterans answered that first-year teachers left teaching because their university classes and practicums had not prepared them for the real world of classroom teaching; and that upon their arrival, they suffered various forms of culture and reality shock.

Six veterans specifically answered, "stress". One elementary veteran responded, "They can't handle the stress of the classroom, i.e., the parents, the principals, the co-workers, or the discipline. They don't know how to get the kids to do what they're supposed to do." A middle school response stated, "They leave when they reach the realization that teaching involves so much more than teaching from a book (like in college). You have to be a friend, mother, father, etc. You have to teach and appeal to the whole child, not just the mind."

Other comments were, "Not prepared for the real classroom; they just aren't able to deal with all the discipline problems." "They leave because of the stress
from discipline and paperwork. And, I’m sure because of the many extra responsibilities other than actual teaching."

"They are frustrated. They are gung ho after they complete college, interview, and get a job. Then they get to their classrooms and reality sets in. The classroom is not like college. Everything is not in a neat little problem which can readily be worked out. "Disillusioned with what teaching is because they have been taught in the University setting, hypothetical problems, which aren’t always reality based."

"They come in trying to be friends with the kids. They should start off mean. You can always lighten up; but, if you lose them you won’t get them back."

The final respondent to question number four answered, "They leave because they get no support from the principal. Teachers are just on their own. Everybody has an opinion about what you do and how you do."

As expressed by several of the veteran teacher respondents, new teachers need special assistance in their adjustment to their new classroom settings. Veterans, novices, and university specialists maintain that the principal as instructional leader sets the tone from the induction of new teachers.¹ The last series of interviews questioned administrators.

TABLE 8

FIRST-YEAR TEACHER CONCERNS AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University has not Prepared Them For The Job</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations are unrealistic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrators Data

Fourteen administrators from the levels of central administration, high school, middle school and elementary answered the same four questions that had been posed to veteran teachers.

Again, question number one asked, "What do you believe to be the greatest concern that first-year teachers experience?" Five of the fourteen administrators cited classroom management as the most serious problem of the first-year teacher. One central administrator replied, "They don’t understand management of pupils and they suffer reality shock because they don’t have a good knowledge of societal differences."

Four administrators stated that "discipline" is the greatest concern for first-year teachers. A middle-school administrator responded, "Discipline. They don’t understand the mechanisms of eliciting student co-operation. Their
only answer is to kick the kid out of class. Their plan for everything is to send it to the principal. I’ve often wondered, what do they think they get paid for?"

Three administrators cited "lack of preparation" as the greatest first-year teacher concern. A middle school administrator responded, "I believe their greatest concern is the realization that they’re not prepared for classroom management or discipline. I also don’t think they have a clue to interpersonal relationships with their peers or students."

The final two administrators responded that they believe the greatest concern for first-year teachers is that "they expect too much." An elementary administrator replied, "First-year teachers have a tendency to expect too much. They need to adjust their expectations of what children can achieve and how they behave. When they do this (expect the unrealistic), it results in more parent and student conflicts."

Question number two asked the school administrators, "What school programs, personnel, or coping strategies do you believe to be most beneficial in helping the first-year teacher to have a successful first year?" Eight of the group answered that the mentoring program was the most beneficial aid to helping. Three administrators felt that administrators were the most beneficial aid for first-year teachers. The last three administrators of the group
expressed the following three answers: (1) Staff development, (2) veteran teachers, and (3) knowledge of learning styles.

One female elementary Principal commented that, "veteran teachers seem to take new teachers under their wings, even without being officially appointed as a mentor." A male, middle school administrator replied that, "an open door policy should exist for first-year teachers, from administrators and teachers." Another male, middle school principal stated, "The mentoring program has been a big plus. Principals can go over the discipline program and orientate them on procedural stuff of office administration. Then, they can watch for signals of change in new teachers. And, when signs are present, seek them out and give them help." A male middle school principal added, "The mentoring program is the most significant program of help to offer first-year teachers. However, choosing the proper mentor is very important. Choosing someone who is more "student oriented" than "me oriented" is crucial."

A Central Office administrator responded, "A multicultural staff development type of program would be the most valuable program that I can think of for first-year teachers. Many teachers, here have had a 'one-race' experience and they really need multicultural training; something that exposes teachers to other cultures and to their learning styles."
Question number three asked, "What do you think provides the most satisfaction(s) for a first-year teacher? Four administrators answered that they believed pupil progress or student success provided the greatest satisfaction to the first year teacher. One male, central-office administrator volunteered the following answer: "Pupil Progress. The only way to know if you’re doing a good job is to measure your progress with the kids."

Of the remaining ten administrators, three answered that the greatest satisfaction first-year teachers experienced was "just getting through the first year." Three other administrators added the following: "getting a good evaluation from the principal (2)"; and "approval and comraderie of co-workers" offered the most satisfaction. The last two administrators answered separately that "having a job" and "receiving a paycheck" were surely the most satisfying benefits of the new teachers first year.

Question number four asked, "Why do you think first-year teachers leave teaching?" Seven of the fourteen administrators indicated through their answers that first-year teachers were sorely dissolutions and frustrated due to the inability to cope with the vast amount of discipline problems. The discipline problems, they felt were the cause of first-year teachers leaving the field of teaching.

A male, middle school administrator stated, "They leave due to their inability to cope with overwhelming feeling of
having to raise students rather than teach. A teacher is everything to a student - mother, father, etc. Teaching is overwhelming and the discipline problems are never ending. They are so great, they just wear you out. That's why they leave."

Five additional administrators offered that first-year teachers leave the field due to their "lack of preparation", and "reality shock". A male, high school administrator explained that, "They come in thinking that it's going to be wonderful and they're going to work miracles. Then, reality sets in and they're disillusioned with what they thought it would be like. I guess, in essence, they suffer 'reality shock'."

The remaining three administrators answered singularly that first-year teachers leave the field for the following reasons: "Teaching did not meet their expectations", "bad experiences", and "they were offered or found other opportunities."

**Comparison of Current Study with Related Research**

Frances L. Fuller analyzed and compared two of Jean York's studies of first-year in-service teachers from Indiana (York, 1967) and Texas (York, 1968). Fuller had analyzed more than fifteen other studies involving pre-service and in-service teachers. Her analysis of those studies was that (1) There was obvious consistency; (2) First-year and pre-service teachers were more concerned with
themselves than with their pupils; and (3) discipline was the greatest concern.

In this study, obvious consistency was found in comparing data from first-year teachers, veteran teachers, and administrators. Each group was consistent in attributing discipline as the greatest concern of first-year teachers. Data also led to the conclusion that the first-year teachers of this study were more concerned with themselves than with their pupils.

Thompson conducted a study, in 1963, with the purpose of identifying anxieties experienced by student teachers. Thompson's results confirmed that the one hundred and twenty-five students surveyed felt anxieties. Included in the areas of anxieties were problems of discipline. Thompson further denoted that anxieties were more prevalent in pre-service female elementary teachers than any other group.

Although the current study measured first-year in-service teachers' similarities were consistent with Thompson's study of student teachers. The apprehension that teachers felt was labeled concerns rather than anxieties. Concern was expressed in the area of discipline. Females in middle and high school expressed more concern with discipline than did their male counterparts.

Dollase surveyed first and second-year teachers and veteran teachers. His findings revealed that classroom
discipline ranked as their number one problem of concern; as it did in this current study. Unlike this study, Dollase asked his veteran teachers to name their chief concerns. Veteran teachers cited student motivation as their most serious concern.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

When summarizing the research gathered from this new teacher study, it is of note that these teachers have expressed many concerns that new teachers expressed over thirty years ago, as measured by Frances Fuller (1965) and Michael L. Thompson (1963). Discipline was reported to be the greatest concern of beginning school teachers then and it continues to be reported in more recent studies, such as: Ryan (1970), Veenman (1984), Dollase (1992), and Huberman (1993).

In Dollase's study, he compared his findings from beginning school teachers to that of veteran school teachers. In similarity, this study, too, sought views from veteran teachers. Additional views were sought from administrators. The reasoning being that if there is a perception that veteran teachers think and act differently from beginning teachers, it is highly probable that administrators think and act different from veteran and beginning teachers.

This study sought to find what veteran teachers and administrators perceived to be concerns of first-year
teachers. Additionally, the study sought to determine if veterans and administrators offer any help or believed that they should offer help to new teachers.

When focusing on the responses from each group, first-year teachers, veteran teachers, and administrators, it is apparent that the same responses tended to be verbalized. A difference was found in the placement of the answers but the answers tended to occur over and over again.

As teachers struggled to settle into and "make it" through their first year of teaching, no matter how many observations and internships they had experienced, they reached the conclusion that teaching is tough.

Conclusions

1. More of the first-year teachers chose to enter the teaching profession because of role models than for any other reason. Of the fifteen subjects, seven chose to become teachers because of role models. Of the remaining eight, two entered the field "to make a difference in student(s)’s life; two chose teaching for "love of kids" and two chose teaching for summer vacation and free time.

Twelve of the fifteen expressed noble reasons for the selection of teaching as a career and would not be led to leave teaching for salary differences or greater pay.

2. First-year teachers were more concerned about discipline than any other concern. Discipline often mentioned, openly and subtlety, and sometimes intertwined
with poor student motivation, was a major challenge to these subjects.

At least one-third of the teachers in this study questioned whether their college and university coursework and experiences had prepared them for the "real world" of teaching. As other beginning teachers in the past had complained, these teachers suggested that their coursework had been too theoretical and that many of their professors were out of touch with current and realistic classroom practice.

While professing to experiencing apprehension of the unknown as beginning teachers, few experienced "reality shock."

3. First-year teachers dealt with stress by talking to colleagues, mentors and family members. They spoke to "using colleagues as sounding boards," and having supportive family members. Seven of this group talked to colleagues to ease stress. Five solicited feedback from their mentors. Two talked to their family members and one participated in sports. They expressed commitment, to the field, that would not be easily thwarted through the usual job stresses.

4. Female first-year teachers were more concerned about discipline than any other concern. Five of the eight females said that discipline was their greatest concern.

Male first-year teachers were more concerned about classroom preparation than any other concern. Three of the
seven males named classroom preparation as their greatest concern.

None of the female sampling mentioned classroom preparation as a serious concern. But, two of the males listed discipline as a serious concern.

5. High school teachers were more concerned about student attitudes than any other concerns. Three of the five high school teachers were concerned in this area. One high school teacher said, "I'm appalled by my students' attitude toward learning. I have to constantly push them to work. It's like pulling teeth. I never dreamed that kids who want to graduate wouldn't want to do the work."

Another high school teacher expressed that discipline was a "drag". The last serious concern of high school teachers was expressed in the following way: "The whole community talks about better schools but won't take it seriously by listening to teachers."

Middle school teachers were more concerned about discipline and classroom preparation. Four of the eight middle school teachers said that discipline was their greatest concern. Three of the eight said that classroom preparation was their greatest concern. Lack of parental involvement was cited as the other most serious concern.

High school and middle school subjects spoke of discipline problems, not only in their classrooms, but school wide, particularly in the hallways. Six of these
fifteen first-year teachers declared that discipline is their greatest concern.

6. First-year teachers were more concerned with self than with pupils. Although they expressed a concerted interest in subject matter and pupil progress, self concerns were primary. Only five teachers selected pupil progress as their greatest reward. None mentioned lack of pupil progress as their greatest dissatisfaction in teaching. While, discipline was cited by eight teachers as the greatest dissatisfaction.

7. In their first year of teaching, for the most part, teachers are attempting to construct professional identities and to bond with their mentors. Ten of the fifteen teachers enjoyed meaningful relationships with appointed mentors. Only one teacher professed to a less than satisfactory relationship with the assigned mentor. Four of the fifteen sought out colleagues for feedback and support. All fifteen actively attempted to form a successful network with their colleagues and peers.

8. In comparing the percentage responses of first-year teachers to that of veteran teachers, several conclusions were drawn. Most significant was the probability that first-year teachers were too inexperienced to recognize that many of their problems with students, including academic learning, stemmed from their inexperience with managing classroom discipline. Secondly, many had unrealistic
expectations of student learning and behavior.

Veteran teachers were much more aware of student behavior, by virtue of their experience, and of what actually constituted classroom discipline problems.

9. Only four of the fourteen administrators believed discipline to be the greatest concern for first-year teachers. Administrators cited many concerns for first-year teachers. Whereas, all eighteen of the veteran teachers cited discipline as the greatest concern for first-year teachers.

The administrators interviewed as well as administrators in general frequently do not have the time to actively supervise first-year teachers. Many of them rely on teachers, who serve as mentors to the first-year teachers, to keep them abreast of first-year teacher progress and concerns. Some administrators do not find the time to visit the first-year teacher beyond the required "two observation" periods. For these reasons their perceptions of first-year teacher concerns may not be as realistic as veteran teachers or first-year teachers.

Recommendations

First-year teacher face enormous challenges. The change from university student to classroom practitioner and authority may be abrupt. New teachers wear many hats. They must be competent in their subject material and know how to teach it to their students; and additionally teach in such a
way that they facilitate and maintain a positive climate conducive to learning.

Although, possibly not apparent to these first-year teachers, it was apparent to the interviewed administrators and veteran teachers that even with being certified to teach, beginners are not necessarily proficient in teaching. Beginning teachers need time, expert support and assistance to develop the mastery of their teaching performance.

As several studies indicate, there are distinct differences between beginning teachers and veteran teachers. It certainly makes sense to allow for those differences by structuring programs that provide support for the beginning teacher. The school district of this study, as well as individual building administrators, needs to ask, what do beginning teachers need to succeed?

As more and more state legislatures and school districts focus on the issue of how America teaches its teachers to teach, well thought-out teacher induction programs are needed. If the student population continues to increase, in the next few years, a record number of pupils in history will enter the nation's schools. They will represent the widest imaginable mix of cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. The nation will need an estimated two million new classroom teachers in the coming decade to maintain its educational programs.

While changes and improvements in teacher preparation
are certainly needed; that, alone, is not enough. When a school district creates teacher induction and staff development polices; local schools, directed by their local administrators must be prepared to breathe life into these programs through their own personal initiatives. Largely, whether a first-year teacher succeeds or leaves the field, depends on her administrator and colleagues.

These first-year teachers sought opportunities to maximize the greatest amount of success in their first year. Their school district should commit to more than one or two outlets for new teacher induction. As teachers, they entered the field with expectations of making a positive difference in the lives of children. For some, after one year of teaching, the hardcore reality of the toughness of teaching had stifled those feelings of being able to make a difference in student lives. Additionally, after one year of teaching some began to question the belief that all children can learn and even questioned whether or not they had been adequately prepared for the real teaching environment. During their first year of teaching, some of these beginning teachers had developed a severe decline in their enthusiasm and hopefulness.

Certainly, these and other first-year teachers would benefit from a well thought-out teacher induction program. A good induction program would not only look at first-year teacher concerns, but address them through specific
remedies. No matter how much orientation first-year teachers have prior to the beginning of the first school year, teaching children is an evolving skill. Every beginning teacher needs some type of help and support from her colleagues. Making the transition from student teacher or intern requires fore-thought, organization, diligence, trust and faith in one's own ability to make a difference.

Most of these first-year teachers have been able to reach out and seek help from veteran teachers. But, they should be cautioned not to rely too exclusively on what veteran teachers say and do. What works for a veteran teacher may be quite different from what is realistically possible for a beginning teacher.

These beginning teachers should continually seek self-evaluation and set goals based on the outcomes. It is vital that as evolving adults, they continue on the path to self-knowledge as well as seek to understand and know the students in their charge. Administrators and veteran teachers should encourage these beginners to identify strengths and weaknesses and work to enhance and redress them.

Lastly, beginning teachers should continually engage in reflective thinking in measuring their teaching progress. Sufficient time should be allowed in deciding if teaching is the correct career choice. If it is decided that teaching is not the right choice, a quick and decisive exit should be
made from the field. But, if there is a desire to continue to make a contribution that only she/he can make; hopefully, all of the resources needed to ensure success will be found.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Conduct a first-year teacher study using a larger sample of first-year teachers.

2. Future studies would gather data from a different city.

3. A longitudinal study of first-year teachers with an assigned follow-up period would compare first-year teacher concerns.

4. Mentors of first-year teachers would be interviewed.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
FIRST-YEAR TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What attracted you to the teaching profession?

2. What is the most serious concern that you have experienced in your first year of teaching?

3. What are other concerns that you have?

4. Have you ever considered leaving teaching? If so, when and how often?

5. Have you ever experienced concern about your safety or about the safety of your car? Explain why or why not.

6. Do you now have or have you previously had a mentor? How was your mentor selected? Has the mentorship been a rewarding experience? Elaborate.

7. Have you experienced stress about your job as a teacher? If so, in what way (s) and how often? If you've not suffered job stress, explain why.

8. Would you leave teaching, if you had a job offer of equal pay or better pay?

9. What do you like most about teaching and what do you like least about teaching?

10. If you could choose your career all over again, knowing what you now know about teaching, would you still choose teaching as a career? Explain, why or not?
1. What do you believe to be the greatest concern(s) that first-year teachers experience?

2. What school programs, personnel, or coping strategies do you believe to be most beneficial in helping the first-year teacher to have a successful first year?

3. What do you think provides the most satisfaction(s) for a first-year teacher?

4. Why do you think first-year teachers leave the field of teaching?
REFERENCES


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VITA

The author, Delores Ann Johnson Price, is the daughter of Joe E. and Mary L. Johnson. Her education was obtained in Evansville, Indiana public schools. In June, 1969, Ms. Price received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Evansville, with a major in Elementary Education. In August, 1973, she received the degree of Master of Arts in Education from the University of Evansville.

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