Lost in Translation? An Investigation of the Pre-service to Classroom Experience

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis)

At the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2016

Date of final oral examination: 12/09/2016

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Carolyn Kelly, for her support, guidance, and humor throughout this process. It's been a long, winding path but she never let me falter. I would also like to thank the participants in this research. Without the commitment of their extra time and candor, this research would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my friends, co-workers, and family. For all these years they kept pushing me, reminded me to constantly write and, especially in the last few months, cheered me on to the finish line.

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my husband Nick and my daughters A'di and Cadence. They were with me day after day, reminding me to be strong, hugging me when I most needed it, and above all, they never let me quit moving forward. I love you with all my heart and could never have done this without my little family.

Abstract

Retaining new teachers in the classroom continues to be a challenging issue for the public education system, with about 50% of new teachers leaving their first placement within 3 years and slightly fewer leaving the field all together (Ingersoll, 2002). Attrition is particularly high for the highest achieving teacher prospects (Ingersoll, 2003). Most recently, interventions intended to address teacher attrition are designed to support new teachers once they reach the classroom, such as remediation and mentoring, rather than address the training and preparation of teachers prior to facing challenges in the classroom. Further, the rise of alternative training and certification programs, some of which place teachers in the classroom within weeks of beginning preparation programs, have raised questions about the effectiveness of these programs and the necessity of traditional preparation programs. However, mixed and inconclusive research results have failed to answer these questions (Glazerman, Mayer, & Decker, 2006)

Consequentially, the role of "traditional" teacher preparation programs in producing effective and committed teachers has dropped largely from the political and academic conversation, and the push for deregulation of teaching credentials and opening the market of preparation programs to alternative models has become prevalent. In an effort to elucidate on the role of preparation programs in the rates of teacher attrition, I examine the connection between new teacher's experiences in preparation programs and their experiences in the classroom. Using qualitative interviews of 18 teachers, within their first three years of teaching, I find that the pre-service preparation experience, in tandem with a prior orientation to the role of the teacher and the role of education in students' lives, has a significant impact on teacher satisfaction, feelings of efficacy, and feelings of preparedness once entering the classroom.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Our public education system has come under fire for many years –criticisms of inefficiency, poor student outcomes, and a lack of qualified teachers are raised repeatedly in research and the public media. I n a 1980 TIME Magazine article, the author writes in depth about the problems of the education system and pointedly remarks: "Like some vast jury gradually and reluctantly arriving at a verdict, politicians, educators and especially millions of parents have come to believe that the U.S. public schools are in perilous trouble". The author goes on to show that according to Gallop polls, most of the general public places the blame for student failure squarely on the shoulders of their teachers. Though this article was written in the '80s, the narrative in the public media has changed little. Currently our student test scores lag other nations, school budgets are strained more than in the past as budget cuts on national and local levels are levied, and teacher turnover still remains high -- all of which promote a poor public image of the education system in the United States.

High teacher turnover creates the urgent issue of adequately staffing classrooms with qualified teachers. Approximately 50% of new teachers leave their first placement and slightly fewer leave the field altogether, with rates of attrition particularly high for high achieving teacher prospects (Ingersoll, 2002; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Compounding the issue of high rates of attrition of new teachers is the growing demand for teachers to staff expanding classrooms. A 2013 study estimates 17% growth in demand for teachers in K- 8 classrooms and 7% growth in demand for high school teachers between 2010 and 2020. The National Commission for Teaching and America's Future claimed that more new teachers would be hired in this decade than any other in America's history (Most, 1996). In a 2016 article, Deborah

Yaffe discusses the impact that severe teacher shortages have on schools, particularly rural and troubled city districts noting that some districts, such as Philadelphia and Los Angeles, experience turnover rates of upwards of 20% of the entire teaching staff in a single year. She finds that the most common coping mechanism of these districts cope is hiring teachers without credentials or experience, of which about half fail credentialing exams. Hiring teachers that lack experience and the knowledge to meet even the most basic requirements ultimately is a disservice to students and succeeds only in providing adult supervision in the classroom.

Having well-trained, seasoned teachers in the classroom has been shown to directly impact student learning gains. It's been shown that students make greater educational gains when they have a credentialed, well qualified teacher (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Ferguson (1991) found that 40% of variance in student math scores on standardized tests is attributed to teacher qualifications and experience. A study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) found that more than 25% of newly hired teachers lacked the necessary qualifications for their teaching assignment, and schools with the highest minority enrollments had less than a 50% chance of being taught by a science or math teacher trained in that field. In general, the more teaching experience a new teacher has, the greater their student's benefit from instruction, and even greater gains are had if the teacher's race/ethnicity matches that of their students (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014).

There have been multiple explanations for the teacher shortage, from low teacher pay to the draw of other economic sectors that tempt away some of the best applicants in the potential educator pool. Public opinion is that college students are choosing not to go in to teaching and as a result there is a lack of teachers in the applicant pool. Ingersoll (2003) points out that the teacher shortage in public schools is due to a high rate of turnover for new teachers, rather than a

lack of new applicants. Many researchers look to contextual factors, lack of professional autonomy, and low wages. Rob Weil, director of field programs at the American Federation of Teachers, explains the reasons for attrition as such: "People say we want to get the best and brightest into teaching, and then we put them in a situation where we tell them, 'We're going to tell you what to do ' And then those people don't stay in, and we wonder why" (Yaffe, 2016).

We know that certain demographic and contextual school qualities indicate a statistically higher chance of attrition in the first few years. Teachers placed in urban schools, difficult classrooms, field mismatch, and schools with large populations of low-income students, and high percentage of minority students are more likely to leave the profession after just three years than those placed in suburban, mostly white, middle-class schools (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006). The first few years of teaching can be particularly challenging for new teachers as they learn to adjust to the reality of the classroom. This adjustment is no small feat. A common idiom used for new teachers in the beginning phase of their career is the "sink or swim" phase. Teachers either learn to adjust quickly to the daily demands and emotional taxation of teaching, or they move quickly on to other careers (Ingersoll, 2002). It is thought that teachers transition from often idealized scenarios taught in preparation programs to classrooms that can be overcrowded, challenging, and often mismatched with their own educational background (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll et al., 2014). This can be even more difficult for teachers that lack pre-service training all together as they have often had no exposure to the classroom other than their own K-12 experiences. It has been shown that teachers that lack exposure to practicum or clinical teaching in preparation programs are more likely to leave the profession than those with more intensive exposure despite their academic

background or class standing (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Clearly, the causes of teacher attrition are multiple and complex.

There has been no "silver bullet" fix to surface that can adequately address the issue of teacher attrition. To understand how we've arrived at this crisis in public education, it is fundamentally important that we understand how the political debate around teachers and the education system has served to shape the system itself and consequently failed to address attrition. From the late 60's to the early 90's the political debate over the quality and retention of teachers and how to increase both has roiled. All of the actors in this debate concede that change is needed, but where those changes should take place is still hotly debated. The debate on research, policy, and interventions in education relating specifically to teachers and teaching can be thought of as falling along two ideological arguments professionalization or deregulation. In short, the professionalization argument is that we must address teacher quality *before teachers get in the classroom* – through investment and improvement to pre-service training and in increase in measures to *professionalize teaching*. The conservative free-market approach advocates for deregulation of the teaching profession to allow for more competition – and theoretically innovation- and direct interventions to *post-employment settings in the classroom*. It would seem that, in some ways, these two approaches should not be mutually exclusive, but the political nature of the debate has unfortunately served to make sponsorship and employment of any interventions a dichotomous one (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001).

Most recently, the conservative free-market approach has been the most effective at successfully implementing changes in the public education system. In this politically conservative rhetoric, schools of education have become stagnant and bogged down in pedagogical theory, losing sight of the practical knowledge needed to be an effective classroom

teacher. The argument follows that in order to address issues of pre-service education, the deregulation of teaching and alternative approaches for preparation and credentialing are needed to "wrest it from the monopoly of schools of education" (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). Often cited as evidence of this need for change is the well documented resistance to change on the part of institutes of higher education, inconsistencies between states in state certification program structures, inconsistent research findings on the causal role of the teacher in student achievement, and the changing role of the state in holding preparation programs accountable for their graduates (Allen, 2003; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Paul, Elder, & Bartell, 1997). In this approach the interventions needed to reduce teacher attrition focus primarily in on-the-job interventions such as remediation with a mentor teacher, induction programs for new teachers, and targeted professional development. Pre-service education, in this model, plays little importance in preparing teachers for the classroom. This free-market approach has been popular with many conservative constituents, but has largely failed to produce the intended results (Glazerman et al., 2006). Recent research findings indicate an overall ineffectiveness of in-class interventions and a failure of deregulation of teacher preparation programs to reduce teacher attrition and raise student achievement (Tom, 1997).

With little evidence that the conservative free-market approach has been successful in addressing the issues, we must ask - are we passing on "known" issues for more immediate post-preparation interventions, and is this focus in fact contributing to the rate of attrition and lack of a high quality teaching force? What processes and structures are meaningfully involved in *developing* high quality, committed teachers prior to their arrival in the classroom? The true impact of teacher preparation on teacher retention and quality is still unclear, as are the ways in which preparation programs are meeting the needs of new teachers and the public education

system. Without further elucidating the role of teacher preparation it is impossible to propose that preparation programs are not, in fact, an important influence in the development of high quality teachers. In this paper I attempt to answer the following research questions:

1) What impact do novice teachers believe preparation programs have on feelings of preparedness once they enter the classroom?
2) How does the experience in pre-service preparation programs translate into the lived experience in the classroom and does that experience impact the decision to continue teaching?

By investigating the lived experience of new teachers and their perceptions of the impact of pre-service education on their current service I hope to better understand the importance of those experiences in feeling prepared, efficacious, and committed to remaining in teaching.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

On average, 50% of teachers will transition out of their initial position or out of teaching all together within the first 3 years of beginning a career in teaching. Fifty percent is a remarkably high rate of attrition for any profession and has serious implications for the quality of teachers available in the public education system. It is established that certain demographic and academic qualities indicate higher likelihoods of leaving the profession. Statistically, once demographic and academic indicators are taken into account, the root cause(s) for the high rate of attrition becomes less clear. What role, if any, preparation programs have in successfully negating risk indicators remains unclear to researchers. Findings from attrition research have been inconsistent and appear to be generally complicated by the simultaneous interactions of static individual characteristics (such as demographic characteristics), limited market reward, intrinsic characteristics (such as individual drive for social good), organizational characteristics, leadership differences, and the erratic and potentially limited influence of pre-service teacher education (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Harris & Adams, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, 2002; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011). Further, a political climate that can, at times, be hostile towards teachers and demeaning of those invested in public education can serve to make the career field less attractive to potential teachers. In this chapter, I give an overview of the contribution of demographic and contextual factors that have been identified as contributing to high attrition rates, a framework to categorize the types of preparation programs, and a brief political history surrounding preparation of teachers.

Demographic, Academic, and Contextual Factors. The academic background of the existing teaching force primarily consists of those college students in the lower quartiles of academic achievement, particularly elementary education teachers (Guarino et al., 2006).

Ingersoll et al. (2014) find that only 1/10th of teachers in the teaching force currently come from the most selective colleges, and ¼ come from the least selective colleges. The proportion of males entering the teaching field has dropped from 1/3 of the overall teaching force in 1980 to ¼ of the teaching force in 2008 (Stalkils & Henke, 2013). Overall, males and younger male entrants are more likely to leave the profession within the first 5 years. Further, though minorities are less likely to go into teaching than whites initially, those that do are more likely to stay in the teaching profession than their white counterparts. The teaching force currently is 83% white, compared with a 53% white student body (Stalkils & Henke, 2013). In a study of undergraduate students choice of majors, Stalkils and Henke (2013) found that of minorities, 14% of African American undergrads were most likely to consider teaching, followed by 12% of Hispanic undergrads and only 2% of Asian undergrads. Why the field of teaching is less appealing to minority college students remains unclear, but the demographics of those going in to the teaching force are mismatched with the student body on whole. In sum, high achieving, minority, and male prospects are least likely to enter the teaching field and, with the exception of those minorities that do enter, are the most likely to exit the field early for other opportunities.

There are environmental variables that also increase the likelihood of attrition for teachers. Teachers placed in difficult classrooms or schools with high rates of low-income and minority students are more likely to leave the profession than any other teacher after just three years (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll et al., 2014). Darling-Hammond (1997) finds that teachers that are less highly qualified are more likely to work in high poverty high minority schools and are also more likely to be teaching outside of their field, known as mismatch, another indicator of high attrition. Other common difficulties new teachers face are lack of involvement and support from parents,

behavioral issues, unsupportive administration, extensive technical paperwork, lack of autonomy to decide on lessons, and difficult or mismatched teaching assignments (Ingersoll, 2002; Fantill & MacDougal, 2009). Some recent research has shown that issues such as difficult classrooms and teaching assignment mismatch can be somewhat ameliorated by stronger administrative support and other professional supports such as mentoring (Apple, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2005). However, the ability of a district to offer a strong mentoring program varies, and similarly the quality of mentoring also varies (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

The issue of relatively low teacher pay has garnered a lot of attention in both the academic realm and the popular media. Understanding the impact of teacher pay on satisfaction and attrition is more complex than it seems on the surface. Low pay is an indicator of attrition, however teacher salary only seems to be an indicator of attrition when coupled with other contextual characteristics such as rural location or field mismatch (Stockard, 2004). Multiple interventions to increase teacher pay or incentivize teachers have been attempted at a policy level without much success in reducing the rates of attrition (Ewing & Smith, 2003; Stockard, 2004). Preliminary research of these pay-for-progress programs[1] proves largely disparate and yields inconclusive results overall (Dahill-Brown, Bradley, & Knowles, 2013). Satisfaction with teaching as a career appears to have more to do with the preparation, support, sense of efficacy, and environmental factors than it does strictly with pay scale, however increasing teacher pay can increase satisfaction as long as those other variables are addressed as well (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Beltman et al., 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2014). Some research indicates that a strong personal sense of social justice or desire to help others could override negative

[1] Pay increases for student progress was one tactic encouraged in the large federal grant competition, Race to The Top. However, these programs vary widely in what merits extra pay or bonuses and how and to whom those funds were allocated (Dahill-Brown, Bradley & Knowles, 2013)

feelings about salary (Goddard & O'Brien, 2003). However, there has been little research on just how much of an impact a personal desire to help others, or sense of social justice, has on retention alone. Overall, some of the strongest indicators of teacher attrition besides pay are dissatisfaction with administration, lack of student investment in learning, lack of autonomy and lack of control over decisions being made in schools (Strong, 2011; Renzulli; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, Liu & Meyer, 2005).

In summary, there are consistent findings that in the current pool of teachers, minority students, males and those that display higher academic ability and/or come from more prestigious programs are more likely to leave teaching than their less capable peers, leaving the workforce composed of the lower quartiles of academics, whites, and females (Guarino et al., 2006; Macdonald, 1999). All of these factors are indicators of attrition once a teacher has entered the classroom. What this research does not address in great detail is what impact teacher preparation might have to reduce the impact of these indicators on attrition (Apple, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Pre-service education-An overview

Pre-service education of teachers can take many different forms, from traditional universities to non-traditional alternative education programs. Traditional universities generally house teachers in Schools of Education, but the focus of the educational program can vary from vocationally to pedagogically focused. The extent of exposure to classrooms also varies greatly in these programs, with student teaching and observation experiences lasting from a few weeks to a few semesters depending on the program (Ingersoll et al., 2014). The structure of alternative education programs, such as Teach for America, also varies, but they are typically shorter in duration and reliant on "immersion" to train teachers rather than extensive pre-service

preparation. Alternative certification programs are typically directed towards those individuals with degrees in fields other than education. Certification requirements also vary by state and teachers generally apply for certification towards the end of their preparation programs. Alternative certification programs generally rely on emergency certifications for students so they can simultaneously teach in the classroom during the training program.

Zeichner (1983) categorizes teacher education into four paradigmatic approaches- personalistic, behavioristic, traditional-craft, and inquiry oriented. Personalistic approaches to teacher education focus on the development of the psychological maturity of the perspective teacher, rather than the mastery of certain defined skills and content knowledge. The process of educating teachers is focused on "becoming" a teacher rather than teaching the individual *how* to teach. Behavioristic approaches to teacher preparation treat candidates much like vessels of pre-defined, tested skill sets and content knowledge. In this kind of preparation program the individual candidate does not need to psychologically develop as a teacher, but rather focus on mastery of delivery of content determined by the preparation program. Traditional-craft preparation programs are a combination of behavioristic and an apprentice style approach. While the prospective teacher is expected to learn how to deliver a pre-defined set of skills and content knowledge, they are also exposed to the "cultural knowledge" passed along by master/mentor teachers. It is important to note that in both the behavioralistic and traditional-craft approaches the content knowledge and specific skills pre-service teachers are expected to learn and deliver are identified, researched, and defined by "experts" in the field, and not necessarily by the teachers themselves.

Inquiry-oriented pre-service programs conceptualize the teacher candidate as a scholar that must learn, not only content knowledge, but how to develop, grow, modify, and adapt that

content and the approach for students once they have entered the classroom. Ziechner says that this approach "seeks to foster a problematic attitude on the part of prospective teachers toward existing institutional arrangements" (pp. 6). This perspective gives the most autonomy to perspective and practicing teachers in controlling the classroom and content delivered to their students. The teacher not only becomes an acting agent in the classroom, they are central to the determination of content and character of the classroom environment. As an active agent in the classroom, though, the content and character of the classroom becomes less standardized and more difficult to quantitatively assess.

Behavioralist and traditional-craft approaches are closest to the models seen in the current structures of university prep and non-traditional certification programs. Prospective teachers are expected to have some grasp of field knowledge, however the focus is on learning the pedagogical orientation and techniques to delivered pre-vetted pre-determined curriculum. Teachers in programs with this type of orientation spend little time learning the skills needed to develop or modify curriculum, or differentiate according to student needs. What's more, in alternative "immersion" programs prospective teachers are expected to have academic degrees prior to entry to the program and spend their class time learning pedagogy and standardized curricular models. In short, the teacher is not an acting agent in the classroom, but rather a standardized vessel for delivery of curriculum determined by the district or school. By treating the teacher as a standardized vessel the content and character of the classroom is controlled and standardized at a higher level with experts in the field of education.

Understanding these four models of pre-service education becomes important in understanding both the political framework in which the public education system is situated and how teachers view their pre-service experience, and view themselves as agents in the classroom.

The Development of a Political Framework. As politics in the U.S. has changed, so has the debate about the role and impact of teacher preparation programs. In the mid-1960's the National Teacher Corps was established to "shake up" teacher preparation programs and re-focus the policy agenda on holding schools of education accountable for the teachers they produced (Early, 2000). This was the first substantial and resounding critique of traditional schools of education to catch the public eye. During the 1980's and into the mid 90's the debate intensified and the substantive contribution of traditional schools of education in the preparation of adequate teachers, particularly teachers that would stay in the profession, was called in to question. Policy change was beginning to be shaped by the increasingly heated political debate. In his book, "Redesigning Teacher Education", Tom (1997) identifies the four most common criticisms of schools of education in recent literature:

1) Classes are pedagogically focused, insubstantial, and inadequate for preparing teachers for the classroom

2) Courses are impractical and not grounded in a scientifically substantiated "best practices" model of teaching

3) Courses are centered around the "university life" and not representative of what teachers will be dealing with on a day to day basis

4) Programs lack direction—inconsistency in the level of expectations and curricular composition.

Tom's critiques reflect the growing feeling of discontentment with the public university system which is seen as rigid and unresponsive. While this argument is based somewhat in rhetoric initially, an important contribution of this work is connecting the key critiques and the

development of a research and policy agenda drafted in an effort to spur change, particularly in colleges of education.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) was developed in 1994 as a bi-partisan effort between politicians and academics, to engage policy makers in academic research findings and to shape policy through recommendations based in research findings. The primary mission of the NCTAF is to address issues of teacher quality, teacher shortages, and teacher retention. The initial report produced by the NCTAF, "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future" (Darling-Hammond, 1997) defined the parameters of what was lacking in teacher preparation. Legislators focused on several key findings:

1) More people need to be recruited to teaching
2) Teachers are not well prepared in the subjects they are expected to teach
3) Teacher education is disconnected from the needs of K-12 schools and collegiate arts and sciences
4) The regulation of teacher preparation and licensing work against teacher quality

The findings in this report became central to shaping the newly re-authorized HEA and Title V legislation. The reauthorization of the HEA created substantial change in teacher preparation programs. It set mandatory reporting and accountability requirements for preparation programs, linked federal grants to the revision of certification by state agencies, and provided federal funding to alternative route programs (Cochran-Smith, 2005). This was a significant departure from previous legislation, which generally sought very little control over schools of education, and refrained from endorsement of alternative route programs. Some scholars have posited that as a result of the changes in the reauthorization, teacher education was becoming viewed as more

of a supporting force for teaching rather than a primary function of raising the quality of student education in the U.S. (Early, 2000).

As a result of the changes in the HEA Reauthorization, two distinct ideologies had formed, one arguing to professionalize teaching by raising the standards for schools of education (and therefore fiscal and political support) and one arguing for an open-market approach that would theoretically open the field to potential bright and innovative candidates through deregulation of credentialing an pre-service preparation programs in an effort to "remove barriers" for entering the teaching force (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). These perspectives fall on political party lines, resulting in a debate about teaching and teacher education being largely waged in political frameworks and rhetoric, but nested in the common lens of research and evidence based practices (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Unfortunately, a majority of the research generated in reaction to the reauthorization was marred by inconclusive findings, an inability to define a high-quality teacher, and partisan political framing of the "real issues" of education (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2005). In response to inconclusive and conflicting findings, Cochran-Smith (2005) developed a framework for moving the discussion of teacher quality and teacher education forward. She proposed that research and policy changes be framed within three broad lenses: the construction of teacher preparation as a policy problem, changes in programing be driven by research based evidence, and decision making be driven by quantitatively defined outcomes (Figure 1). She goes on to state that teacher preparation is a "social, ideological, rhetorical and political practice" (p. 3) that should be viewed through multiple lenses of research and policy development. It is within this framework, she argues, that both research and development of meaningful and effective policy can be created.

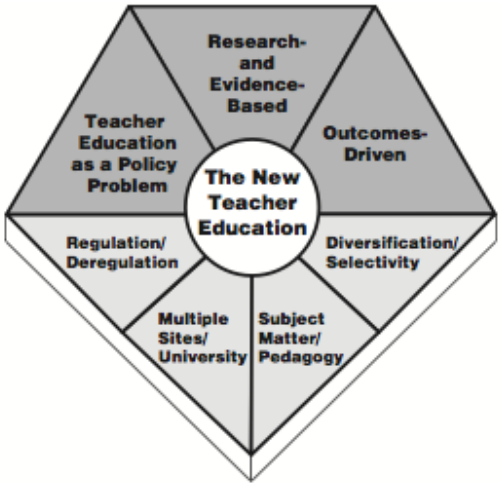


FIGURE 1. *The new teacher education—what's emerging.*

(Figure 1. Graphic from Cochran-Smith, 2005)

Professionalization. The argument for professionalization critiques schools of education and the direction of teacher preparation, but the solution in this narrative is to strengthen and reframe teacher education rather than dismantle it, as it is in deregulation. The argument for professionalization and the need for institutions of higher learning to raise the bar on schools of education has been heavily fronted by Linda Darling-Hammond. She has done extensive research and policy work around the slow de-professionalization of the teaching profession through changes in legislation targeted both at teachers in the classroom and traditional schools of education. She has shown that schools of education are continually funded at lower levels than other colleges and departments within universities, and that education faculty are paid at lower salaries than their peers in other departments (Darling-Hammond, 1998). In her 1997 report to the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, she outlines an agenda for schools of education to strengthen the quality of program for pre-service teachers that includes longer clinical experience periods, stronger core curriculum focused on pedagogy in the classroom, curricular focus on developing teachers as researchers, and strengthening the

supportive pipeline from graduation to in-field service. Though she makes a strong policy argument for the potential of colleges and universities to strengthen schools of education, the argument suffers from a lack of quantifiable and non-contradicting research findings (Tom, 2003).

In his 2003 report to the Education Commission of the States, Allen Tom reviews the most recent available research on schools of education and program evaluations of higher education interventions. In his review of the research he notes that most studies generated inconclusive findings quantifying the relationship between teacher preparation and student learning gains. The inconclusive summation of his findings, he states, is generally attributable to contradictory findings from different researchers rather than overall null findings and a lack of relationship between teacher training and student learning gains. The argument for professionalization of teaching has been appropriately framed in policy, but suffers from a lack of verifiable and concrete evidence of potential returns to teachers and students. Without the connection of evidence to policy we are inadequately prepared to the important distinctions in the policy arguments: Regulation vs Deregulation, Multi-site vs University; Subject Matter vs Pedagogy; Diversification vs Selectivity.

Deregulation. The argument to deregulate teaching and teacher preparation programs was initially lauded by conservative groups, but has been increasingly embraced by non-conservative education researchers and policy drivers. The policy framework of deregulation is built on the basic principal that teaching should be treated more as a trade than a profession. The policy driven effort to deregulate has generated changes to state law on lowering credentialing requirements as well as open the doors to alternative preparation and licensing programs (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2005). Deregulation would mean a focus on the

pre-service programing of traditional-craft and behavioralist regimes, where the teacher is not an active participant in the classroom but rather a vessel to transmit content determined from experts in the education field (Zeichner, 1983). A turn to this orientation to teaching allows districts to employ pre-formed scripted curriculum, which could theoretically be more standardized across classrooms and student learning gains could be more easily tied to curriculum than individual teachers. In this regime, the programs which are able to train and license potential teachers are held to a different, and some would argue a lower, standard of selection, content, and programming. Advocates of deregulation argue that by "opening the doors" of education to the free-market and lowering the bar on credentialing you could potentially attract a wider scope of applicant to the teaching profession.

Michael Apple defines the deregulation argument as the market-based reform approach. He defines three common ideologies as neo-liberal, neo-conservative, and new middle class action (Apple, 2001). A neo-liberal interpretation of deregulation and market based reform centers on the open market theory. This theory posits that the "invisible hand of the market" should be the driver in reforming teacher education and selection. It proposes to completely open teacher preparation to free market competition by eliminating the traditional routes to certification currently offered by schools of education and instead regulation of entry into the profession by standardizing the parameters by which states offer teacher certification. The neo-liberal proposal for change forwards the argument that by decreasing regulation of entry into teaching, the market flow created by deregulation would naturally increase innovation and quality in preparation programs and teachers. Though enactment of deregulation-based policies is still relatively new, research is coming to light on the potentially negative impact such policies have on the countries' neediest student populations.

The neo-conservative approach is still framed in open market theory, but focuses on heavier reliance of managerialism and bureaucratic organization. Policy enacted in the neo-conservative framework calls for a return to standardization and test score metrics to determine teacher quality. It also maintains the traditional preparation route for teachers but holds them to higher regulations and establishes measures of accountability for programs through the test scores of students taught by the graduates of these programs. This has been a popular rally cry for advocates of accountability and standardization, but research evidence to support the effectiveness of this approach remains largely lacking.

Apple argues that using any free market strategy for policy change affecting teacher preparation programs shifts the dynamic of the profession of teaching. Basing the evaluation of teacher preparation programs on student test scores, he argues, shifts the role of the teacher and student from what work the student must do in order to achieve gains in the classroom, to what work the teacher must do to achieve student gains in the classroom. What's more, the market approach to public education serves those that are most capable of activating social capital to access higher end "products", the white middle class (Apple, 2001; Lareau, 2011), effectively increasing the racialization and disparity of wealth inequalities through the same mechanisms as we see in our labor market system.

With the continued embrace of deregulation and free market based policies, state and federal policies have been increasingly focused on the incorporation of non-traditional route programs as a measure to combat attrition, and specifically attrition in the hardest to staff urban, low-income, and high minority schools, without much research outcomes to drive such policy changes. An example of employment of a neo-conservative approach is the employment of the Teach for America organization in some of the counties highest need areas. Teach for America is a private

organization that claims to recruit the "best and brightest" from non-education academic fields to work in hard to staff low-income and high minority schools. Those recruited by TFA are given a 6 week crash-course in pedagogy and curriculum, emergency teaching credentials and commit to teaching in classrooms determined by the parent organization for at least two years (Teach for America, 2013). Since the birth of TFA, their organizations' members have been increasingly employed in states with high rates of teacher shortage to address the shortage in some of the worst preforming schools. Despite the popularity of TFA as a 'fix' for teacher shortages, recent research has found that retention of TFA teachers is no higher than traditional teachers and that students taught by those who enter the field through TFA do no better than those taught by other novice teachers (Glazerman et al., 2006). The shift to teaching-as-trade has served to lower the prestige and salary grade of those in the field. Employment of these strategies has served to undermine traditional schools of education and has lowered the quality of the potential teaching pool. As illustrated in this section, there has been little in terms of a political middle-ground on teacher preparation and little policy change based on consistent research based outcomes. While I hope to avoid grounding this research in either free-market policies or professionalization, an understanding of each side of the argument and the potential strengths and weaknesses they represent is important to move past politically entrenched rhetoric and beginning to identify potential paths for change in increasing the quality of public education on whole.

Theoretical Framework

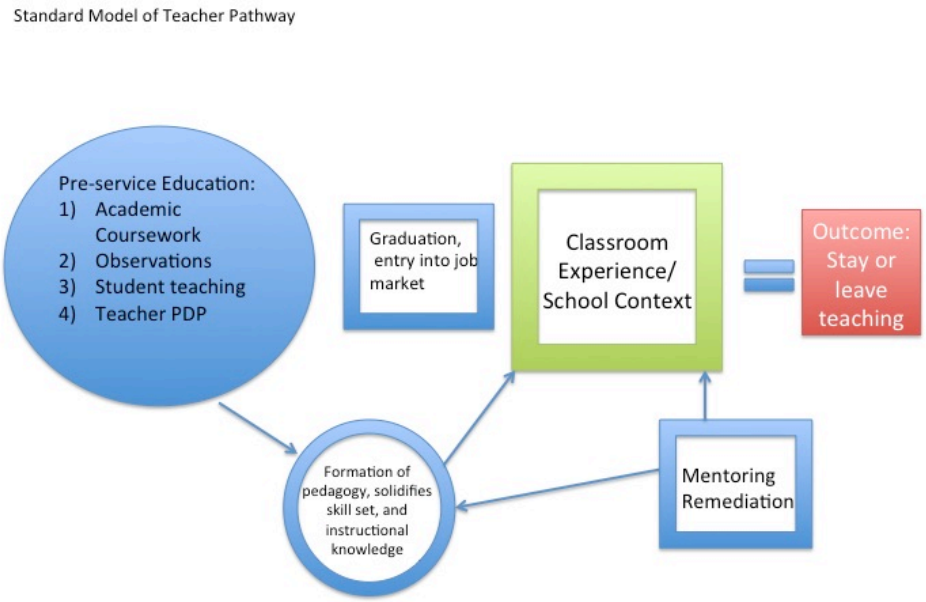
In this research design I employ a framework that includes education and sociological theory to develop the tools to conduct and analyze data. Using these frameworks, my research design and analysis are guided by best practices from relevant fields, and my results and discussion are

directed in a way that is both relevant and distanced from political and personal biases, to the extent possible.

Defining a Research Framework. In structuring the overall design of my research agenda, I employ the guidance proposed by Cochran-Smith (2005) and Michael Apple (2001). Cochran-Smith emphasizes the common baseline criteria in which research must be policy relevant, outcomes based, and derived using high standards (Fig.1). Further, she proposes that in order to ensure high quality research that is removed from political rhetoric, researchers must take into account the ways that metaphors, narratives, and literary devices are used to promote political platforms by shaping the understanding of outcomes to those platforms. In my analysis of the data I refrain from evaluative analysis of the actual programs subjects attended, focusing instead on an analysis of perception and lived experience at the teacher level. To add structure and relevance to the narratives of teachers I use Zeichner's (1983) framework of educational programs as a guide for categorizing narratives. Apple (2001) emphasizes the importance of translating research through the lived experience of participants, rather than removing the "actor" from the outcomes. My interview protocol was developed in a way that focuses on the lived experience of teachers, or their personal interpretation of their pre-service experience and the impact it has had on their view of teaching. Using this educational framework also helps to clarify the narrative of these teacher's journeys, as their own systems of belief around education bend, clash, and develop in conjunction with the orientation of their preparation programs and the realities of the classroom.

In order to develop an understanding of the "typical" system which teachers engage in to become classroom teachers, I use writings on pre-service education develop an overall model of

understanding of the role and path of teachers as they travel from pre-service education to the classroom to the decision to stay or remain in teaching (Fig. 2).



(Figure 2. Current Teacher Pathway)

In this model, while recognizing that preparation programs take many shapes, I simplify the model to include the primary common components found in most pre-service training programs: academic coursework, teacher professional development plan (needed in Wisconsin for eventual certification), observation, and student teaching. I place these components in the order of which they are commonly placed in terms of institutional focus. Pre-service education then informs the new teacher's pedagogical orientation, skill set and knowledge base. These, in turn, shape the interpretation and involvement in the lived experiences in the classroom. It is then their lived experiences in the classroom, shaped by their preparation, that lead to ultimate retention or attrition. I use this model as a guide for developing relevant interview questions and, in part, a coding scheme which is structured around understanding the sequence of experiences and the

production of an eventual outcome of attrition or retention. I employ this framework as a scaffolding for analysis rather than strict guidelines, allowing for the emergence of new theories and concepts from the data.

Chapter 3

Research Design

I use an exploratory qualitative approach to address the following research questions:

1) What impact does teacher preparation (coursework, student teaching, alternative training programs) have on new teachers' feelings of preparedness once they enter the classroom?
2) Does the experience in pre-service preparation programs impact satisfaction with the decision to continue to teach?

Qualitative Design

I used a qualitative semi-structured interview protocol to develop a narrative of teachers' lived experience in teacher preparation programs and in the classroom. In developing a coding strategy I used a partially grounded theory approach, allowing for the respondents narratives to guide the identification of themes and codes while relying on the basic model (Fig. 2) of the journey of the teacher through pre-service into the classroom to connect the data to prior research as well. The use of a qualitative design adds context to previous research findings while opening possibilities for new concepts to emerge.

I used semi-structured interviews to develop a narrative of teachers' lived experience in teacher preparation programs and in the classroom. The use of the semi-structured interview, as opposed to a structured interview, allows for the narrative of the teacher to be expressed in a way that is guided by the teachers themselves (Apple, 2001). Having some structure to the interview script also kept any individual interpretations on the researcher's part from affecting the interview narrative and outcomes.

Teacher Interviews: Developing the Interview Protocol. Final interview protocols were developed based in part on a pilot study conducted prior to this research project. The pilot consisted of interviews with two current teachers and two pre-service teachers. Interview protocols used three main themes to structure the interview: experiences before teaching, development of an identity as a teacher, and the forward projection of a personal and professional path. Semi-structured interview protocols shaped around central themes allowed for further investigation into the pre-identified themes using subject driven content. In addition to identifying these three themes, the results of the pilot project lead to the addition of other questions. Subjects were asked to discuss any student teaching that took place and reflect on those experiences. Subjects were also asked specifically to reflect on the overall continuity or discontinuity of their experiences from pre-service to their current position. Lastly, subjects were asked to identify systems of support that they had employed in difficult or challenging situations. These three components were added to the interview protocol based on findings from the pilot that indicated these components were important catalysts in a teacher's career but were not always brought up without targeted questioning. I end each interview by asking the subject to estimate the likelihood they will stay in their current career path. Based on responses in the first three interviews for this research project, I later added the question "What advice would you give to yourself before you had started, or to another individual who was starting out in education?". I found that teachers would naturally add this advice in some form during the interview, but by asking the question specifically of each subject subjects were given the opportunity to candidly summarize their feelings about teaching. Most teachers found this to be a useful exercise and appreciated the time to reflect upon their journey.

Subject Selection and Implementation. In developing the sampling framework I went through several iterations. Initially, I had intended to use a stratified sample based on teaching in a general subject for three years or less, and prior attendance at pre-service institutions. The three-year cutoff was of primary importance to the sampling framework as highest rate of attrition takes place within the first 5 years of service. By limiting the pool of potential interviewees to those at 3 years and under I was theoretically able to capture those who are at most risk for exiting. Further, since capturing the experience and influence of pre-service education is pivotal to my research questions, those who were closer in time to those experiences would potentially have more lucid and accurate memories of those experiences.

My initial attempts to recruit individuals based on attendance at preparation programs was largely stymied by the institutions themselves. Despite attempts to reach out to several programs for recruitment, programs were reluctant to grant access to their graduates. In fact, determining points of entry to recruiting potential participants proved to be one of the more difficult tasks of the research project. Many of the individuals within organizations that I approached, schools of education and school districts, were hesitant to have an outside researcher talking to their teachers. I believe this is in part a reaction to the current political climate surrounding teachers. Public outcry for increased accountability in test scores for districts and individual teachers and the notion that the public education system is "broken" has created an environment in which teachers feel unsupported and vulnerable to scrutiny. Protective actions on the part of supervisors and professionals within schools of education were not surprising and fairly consistent across organizations. In order to finally gain access to referrals I approached superintendents with full disclosure of my research questions, copies of my research proposal, and several phone conversations about the direction of my research. Eventually, I was able to

keep the baseline sampling structure of recruiting teachers that had been teaching for 3 years or less. For the overall method of recruiting individuals I used the snowball method, relying on referrals from superintendents and other interviewees. I continued to recruit new interviewees until I reached the point of saturation in my data.

I interviewed 18 individuals total, 15 current teachers and 3 former teachers (see Table 1 for characteristics). Using the snowball method, ten of the eighteen were clustered teaching within the same districts. Though not intentional in my sampling design, this clustering provided a way to control for some of the contextual and organizational variation between districts. Districts ranged in size and demographic character. One former teacher was employed in a private institution. Additionally, because teachers were geographically clustered many of them had attended the same pre-service institutions. Five of the interviewees had taught in multiple states. The sample represents 8 different preparation programs total, which include public and private universities in the same state, Teach for America, and three public and private university preparation programs in different states. Teachers ranged in subject and grades taught from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Two teachers specifically taught students in Special Education classes, the rest of the teachers taught in core-subject classrooms.

Subject Name	Certification Type and Area	Pre-Service Program	Subject Currently Teaching
Elen	Regular: Elementary Education	State University	7th Grade Social Studies
Debbie	Regular: Elementary Education	State University	K-4th grade Spanish and Social Studies
Ginger	Emergency Certification: Birth through 3rd	Alternative Prep Program	1st Grade General Education
Leslie	Regular: Special Education	State University	6th-8th grade Special Education and Spanish Immersion
Kira	Regular: Secondary History Education	State University	High School Social Studies
Jerry	Regular: Secondary English Education	State University	8th Grade Language Arts
Morgan	Regular: Secondary History Education	State University	High School Social Studies
Mallory	Regular: Early Childhood Birth – 3rd	State University	Kindergarten- Bilingual
Montana	Regular: Elementary Education, Reading Specialist	Private University	High School Reading Recovery
Matt	Regular: Secondary English Education	State University	10th Grade English
Bonnie	Regular: Secondary Science Education	State University	High School Biology, Chemistry, Specialty Science
Robert	Regular: B.A. in Math, minor in secondary education	Private University	High School Math
Rick	Regular: Elementary Education and Early Childhood	State University	Kindergarten Math
Sally	Regular: Middle School Science Education	Private University	High School Science
Karen	Regular: Secondary Science Education	Private University	High School Science- No longer teaching
Paula	Emergency Certification: Middle School Math	No Formal Education Prep	Middle School/High School Math- No longer teaching
Rose	Emergency Certification: Middle School Reading	Alternative Prep Program	6th and 7th grade Reading Remediation- No longer teaching
Kerri	Regular: Middle School Sign Language	Private University	6th – 8th grade Sign Language

Table 1. Subject Characteristics

Interviews lasted approximately two hours, with about half taking place in-person and half over the phone. The timing of the interviews for current teachers generally fell in the middle of the school year, just after winter break. This was a matter of coincidence but turned out to be ideal timing because no matter what year of teaching it was for teachers, they have all had about 6 months of experience with their classrooms and their schools and could speak fairly confidently about their experiences thus far.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews were recorded using standard procedures and equipment. When possible, interviews were conducted in a location that offered the subject privacy and provided a conducive interviewing environment. Telephone interviews were recorded using Tape A Call software and stored securely in digital format for transcription. Interviews were transcribed primarily by the author and one other University approved resource. NVivo was then used in completion of the analysis using self-designed coding trees.

The research process used to identify themes and codes comes from the work of Saldana (2009). First, two themes were identified using prior research in teacher attrition -- prior attrition indicators and methods of support. Other themes and codes were identified using a grounded theory approach, developing as the data was analyzed. Analytic memos and structural coding strategies were used in the identification of main concepts and themes. As the research process moved forward, emergent themes were noted for further analysis. These themes were then narrowed down to unique categories from which specific codes were identified.

Themes based on prior research were:

- Mechanisms of support
- Prior indicators of attrition

Emergent themes were identified as:

- Expectations vs Reality
- Becoming the teacher

Previous research on teacher satisfaction and retention has identified these concepts as being strong indicators of teacher attrition: urban schools, high percentage of low SES population, high percentage of minority students, sense of autonomy, field or population mismatch, administrative support, and pay (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Inman & Marlow, 2005; Mueller et al, 1999; Strong, 2005). These were coded in transcripts using positive or negative attribution. Teachers who displayed more negative attribution with these indicators could be thought of as a high attrition risk. Lack of support systems has also been identified as an indicator of attrition (Ewing & Smith, 2003; Stockard, 2004), however the complexity in which teachers perceived support and the effects it had on their perception of teaching and emotional state merited isolating support as a separate theme. The emergent categories of Expectations vs Reality and Becoming the Teacher were based on the evidence found in the data. An emergent theme was teachers comparing *expectations* they had prior to starting school, post-graduation and current time. These expectations ranged from interactions with students and staff, their own preparedness to handle the demands of teaching, connection to the curriculum, and the level of connection to school and the teaching profession overall. I also found that many teachers either slowly developed a concept of "teacher-self" identity or they resisted fully conceptualizing themselves as a teacher. In developing this theme of "Becoming the Teacher" I employ the theoretical structure developed by Ervin Goffman (1959). Goffman outlines a framework for understanding an individual's self-awareness into "Front stage" and "Back stage" personas. He proposes that Front stage and Back stage personalities interplay at times, but remain largely cleaved from one

another by the actor his/herself. I use codes based on this theme in which teachers display the development of a personal sense of pedagogy, use identifiers that indicate the acceptance of a "teacher-self", "aha moments", and "the flip"- in which the subjects begin to take ownership of the classroom and relationship with students as "theirs". Once analyzed, this theme became the basis for categorization of teachers in Teacher as Love of Learning, Teacher as Coach/Counselor, and Teacher as Participant. Lastly, teachers were categorized as leavers or stayers based on the response to the final question of career intentions in the future. If respondents indicated the possibility of another career, said they did not intend to stay in teaching, or said they didn't know what was next they were categorized as leavers. Those who responded they intended to teach for as long as possible, could see themselves only teaching, or said they had no intention to leave teaching at this time were categorized as stayers.

Chapter 4

Impacts of School and Classroom Context

In much of the writings on teacher attrition, the decision to stay or leave the profession is placed on the experience in the classroom. The interview transcripts were designed to also start in their current classroom and walk back through to pre-service. Then teachers were asked summary questions in order to ignite introspection and reflection on the entire journey. In order to approach the research questions, it became necessary to "walk" through the model (Fig.2) of a teacher's pathway from the classroom back through to pre-service training. Within the known indicators of attrition two additional codes emerged: Connection to curriculum and feelings of "drowning". In this chapter these are addressed after the standard indicators.

Known Indicators of Attrition

Much of the research on teacher attrition has focused on specific indicators that are statistically significant indicators of risk of attrition. Prior research has shown that teachers placed in urban schools, schools with large populations of low-income and/or minority students, difficult classrooms, and field mismatch are more likely to leave the profession after just three years (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006; Ewing & Smith, 2003). Further, low pay, long hours, and difficulties adjusting to the demands of teaching and the additional duties and requirements of the profession compound the impact of these indicators on a teacher's feeling of satisfaction with their jobs (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll et al., 2014). During the interviews subjects were asked to describe their school demographics, subjects taught, additional duties, and existence of formal mentoring or induction programs in their

district. Reflection on how teachers approach or think about additional difficulties were recorded and analyzed individually and then within the dichotomous categories of leavers and stayers.

School Size and Geographic Location. Most of the subjects interviewed were currently or had been working in schools of 600 students or more. Three of the subjects were currently working in large urban inner-city schools. Two of the subjects were working in smaller rural communities with schools smaller than 600 students. For those subjects that mentioned size specifically as a notable factor in their experiences, the impact of the size of the school seemed to be related to the size of the community they had grown up in. One middle school teacher who had come from a town with a population less than 1,000 residents and taught at a rural school of about 600 students total, said of her school: ". . . Our school's so huge. . . you literally can teach here for 3 years and not meet some of those elementary teachers because they're so far removed from you". She taught in a combined school building of elementary and middle school students. She continued on to talk about the small size of her hometown and how she had gone through a similar adjustment to the size her college after leaving home. However, this was the only time that the size of the school was mentioned. Another teacher described difficulties with size in the opposite direction, noting that it was a "difficult transition to make" from her large urban high school experience to a small rural farming area. Other teachers in the larger urban and suburban districts seemed less concerned, or did not make note of, the size of their schools beyond citing a general number of students they thought attended. The location of schools seemed to be related more to positions offered or scarcity of potential positions than intentional choices. Only 2 teachers said they were able to "select" their district because it was close to their hometown or close to friends and family. In both these cases they taught at suburban schools, however one of these teachers taught in a lower SES school.

Student Population Demographics- Race and Poverty. It became very difficult to disentangle issues that arose for teachers presented by majority populations of non-white students and majority populations of students living under the poverty level. From a sociological standpoint, we more often find the existence of concentrations of poverty in minority neighborhoods than in mostly white neighborhoods (Lee et al., 2008; Quillian, 2012). Since, in the U.S., our school systems generally operate as "neighborhood schools", teachers in schools with large populations of non-white students were also in schools with high rates of poverty. For one group, the leavers, race and SES were conflated when speaking about issues that arose with students. Most often for the leavers, discussion of behavioral issues included discussion of the impacts of race and socio-economic status. The stayer group also mentioned race and SES when talking about behavioral issues, but they more often were able to separate the behavioral issues of the student from the students' background and talk about other reasons for possible misbehaviors. The stayer group was also more likely to reflect on the difference between themselves and their students, and discussion moments of self-reflection on how those differences impact their teaching. Only one teacher in the sample reported having equity-specific training in their pre-service program, but multiple teachers in the stayer group reported engaging in intentional self-reflection and seeking out resources to engage in equity pedagogy, in which culturally responsive curriculum is intentionally included in lesson plans to engage students of diverse backgrounds (Hollins & Guzman, 2009).

The interpretation of themselves as white men and women, and in contrast to the student population they were engaged with, were mentioned more often in the stayer group. Leavers

often mentioned their student's backgrounds, but most often as a reason for negative behaviors and never specifically in contrast to themselves.

Many subjects describe the first moment they realized how different the student population is not only from themselves, but also how different their students' experience their lives as a result of poverty and racism. The moments of recognizing the difference between teachers and students was often spurred by a solitary incident that teachers found to be impactful. These moments are often described as transformative for the subjects in terms of the impact on their teaching and their understanding of their role in student's lives. Ginger describes her transformative moment teaching at an inner-city elementary school:

> When I got into it I knew I wanted to teach in-city. And it's just been really hard. And I don't think that's the kids' fault. I think it's more of this systemic issues in education. So, I don't see it as weird I guess. Like, oh when I was at my school [at another location] I was the only white person around for miles. And it was like, oh, this is what people of the opposite race feel like all the time. And it was really eye opening. And I think it was really valuable and a really humbling experience for me because I've had experiences that other people haven't because of where I grew up and the color of my skin and who my parents were I was able to do a lot. I wasn't rich, my parents were lower middle class, but I'm still white and I got pretty far. I'm college educated and I'm a teacher. That's maybe not the most prestigious thing. But the odds were not stacked against me. It's really made me think about where I come from and who I am and what values I want to bring into this world and what I want people to leave my classroom with and what I want to teach my future children that I have some day- the importance of what we actually need to be doing, instead of what we feel we should be doing in society.

Ginger's transformative moment was a reflection not only of the challenges facing her students, but also a recognition of the white privilege afforded to her her whole life. This revelation, similar to others in the stayer cohort, was not guided by instruction in pre-service education. It was self-initiated and oriented in the role of education. Some of these teachers had these pivotal moments in student teaching and some in their first assignments. This passage from Matt discusses the moment he realized how much his students' backgrounds impacted his interactions with them in the classroom. The experience, he says, ultimately helped shape his teaching philosophy and made him a better educator in the long run:

> I would have to say but it came at the end. It came at the last day of summer school. It came as the bell rang and many of these students that were just a pain in the butt the whole time. That were just constantly, would not stop talking. Could not stop talking, wouldn't do any of the work, or even any behavior problem, or even belligerent or mean spirited towards me, would come up to me on the last day and were like, would come up to me and shake my hand and say 'Thanks. I really enjoyed you as a teacher.' And I just thought 'How'? Nothing about the way you behaved the last 6 weeks would indicate to me that you enjoyed having me as a teacher. So, how does that happen then? But after that happened I started to reflect on it later that day and it started to make sense that, you know, the home lives of a lot of these kids is so bad. That there's a lot of them that don't have parents, there's a lot of them that do have parents that are not always the best parents. And maybe these students just don't know how to handle positive attention. Or they themselves don't know how to give affection, or to even interpret affection. So that was a big aha moment for me was just realizing that was there way of communicating

> that they needed something. And, you know, I didn't know that before. I just thought they were trying to be annoying. So that was a big aha moment to me.

Through his discussion of his process of becoming a teacher, Matt reflects often about learning how to understand the differences between himself and his students. It was a slow road, but one that has ultimately helped him to develop good classroom management skills and to develop his curricular "toolbox".

Only one of the leavers reported having a moment like this while student teaching in a school in Harlem. This teacher, more so than the other leavers, placed personal and emotional connection to his students as the primary role of himself as a teacher. It could be that because of this quality being central to his idea of teaching makes the difference between himself and his students worth exploring at a personal level. However, even though he appreciated teaching students that were "different than him" he did not discuss any impact of this experience on his teaching philosophy or classroom activities. Ladson-Billings (2006) discusses the potential issues that could arise when teachers do not engage in self-reflection of the differences between themselves and the student population. She hypothesizes that most teachers look at students as individually responsible for their success in school and lack "complex understandings of how individual, family, community, school, and societal factors interact to create school failure for some students" (p. 106) which leaves the teacher and students at odds, with little way to meaningfully connect through class time or curriculum. Understanding the differences within the student body is challenging for a mostly white, middle class teaching force. It becomes tricky as well, when their SES or race becomes an excuse or a reason to dismiss students rather than reflect on how to better understand or interact with them in a way that re-engages them in education.

For many of the teachers, the difference in socio-economic level was prevalent in the challenges of understanding, connecting to, and teaching their students. Of all the subjects interviewed, 17 of them mentioned at least one experience of dealing with issues related to poverty. Only one subject mentioned support from their pre-service program faculty or coursework related to understanding and dealing with issues of student socio-economic levels. Mallory, a committed third-year Kindergarten teacher, recalls her placement in student teaching in an urban school with high rates of poverty and a majority of African American students. For her this experience was transformative for her as a teacher:

> So the night before, I'm a huge planner, and so I didn't know where the school was. I lived on Park Street, which is a 10-minute drive from [the location]. But I didn't know where the school was and I didn't want to be late for my first day of practicum so I went for a drive because I want to know where it is. To be there on time and organized…I just went to drive by the night before and the whole school is surrounded with police cars. And I was like 'oh my gosh. Ok' . You always hear about [this place] on the news as being high crime. And so just pulling up and seeing the police cars just solidified that I was actually in a tougher part of the city. And I had to realize that this is the place that I am...I had this little one in my class. He was actually only 3 actually but it was 4K. He was just this teeny tiny little tiker and he was so incredibly cute. His mom was 16 and his dad was in jail. And he couldn't say any words. He couldn't say hello or any basic words, he could just say, 'shut the fuck up' and 'shit' and that's all I heard all day. And the first day I got hit with a 2x4 on my cheekbone, by him. And everyday the other kids were bleeding, hit, bruised, some kind of trauma happening from the teeniest tiniest creature that was just so cute. And that was an eye opener for me because I had cousins

> that went to that school district and they'd talk about chairs being thrown and swearing. And I would just be like "What? People are swearing in your classroom at your teacher?" I was just mindblown that that would be happening. So witnessing that especially from a 3-year old. Wow. That was just a huge moment.

Mallory needed to adjust to the challenges that the students were facing as a result of poverty. She was able to separate the student from the challenges he faced in his home life. Mallory, unlike others in the sample, had professors to help her navigate through those experiences as her pre-service program was focused on social justice. Morgan, a third year teacher, had his first assignment in an alternative school in a very high poverty urban area. During his interview Morgan repeatedly expressed appreciation for the program and the students, crediting the experience with shaping his teaching philosophy and for starting his love of teaching. Even though he expresses realization of the difficulties his students were facing, the emotional investment was ultimately too much:

> Absolutely loved those kids. They were amazing but [that tow] has a lot of other issues. It's starting to be up and coming. Right now there's a lot of poverty and a lot of gang violence. It got to the point that it wasn't unusual for me to hear gunshots. And there were a lot of students that died because of gang violence. Working in alternative ed we were housed in a building with all of the other alternative programs. So even though I didn't have that kid in my class I saw that kid, or I knew that kid, or he was this guy's cousin or he worked with this guy. So, it got really really close. And looking at that happen and seeing that happen again and again and again you almost become numb. And that was a really scary thing to me. So I was like, let's see what else is possible, let's see what else is out there.

Bonnie, a leaver, had a different perspective of how the challenges of poverty and "other than me" experiences impact her classroom. Here she speaks about her difficulty with a particular student, a Russian student who had come from an orphanage to the U.S. and had experienced many difficult, if not harrowing, situations in his life. He had been challenging for her and defiant in classes to the point where she characterized him as a "menace" in her classrooms. Ultimately Bonnie describes "swallowing her issues" in order to ultimately help him through the course. After she discusses this student she has a different kind of revelation from Morgan

> And now I think I'm a little bit more, um, I think I just understand that some students won't get it today but tomorrow we'll have another chance. I think that I see their progress as more fluid and I give them that sort of chance and that time to develop their understanding. Or not. I'm a lot better at accepting that sometimes someone won't get it and they won't try to get it and that's not entirely my, sort of, issue. I mean, I'll try, I'll try to make them care, but sometimes it just won't work.

Bonnie lacks the self-reflection and transformative experiences we see in the subjects above. When there is a significant difference in student body from the teacher, the leavers seem to accept the issues in the classroom as potentially inevitable and often a result of the student body composition. Sometimes even though some self-reflection is present, the teacher's inability to connect without some guidance ultimately can prove to be too much strain for a new teacher.

Overall, teachers in schools with high poverty rates are often dealing with family situations and student backgrounds that are very different from their own experiences and different from what they felt prepared for after graduating. One former middle school teacher, Rose, describes her decision to leave the teaching profession and how her student's challenges were compounded by other factors:

> A really high proportion of my students had parents in prison. A lot of them had witnessed major violence between their parents. Most of them had parents that hadn't graduated from high school. They were really disaffected with school. Which made sense given how old they were and they were still unable to read. . . I realized that I couldn't be effective in that environment in the long term because it was going to drive me overboard to be confronted with so many things at one time. With all that I had confronted with the needs of the students, I think I could have met those. But I was working against not just all the challenges that the students faced, a real mismanagement at the school, a disorganized school, and administration that didn't respect what I was trying to do with my students. That was really concerned with test scores. The administrator was really inflexible with me with how I could get my students to meet those scores. The school didn't value my students. I think ultimately I was working against too many things. I was depressed and exhausted and I don't think I could have done it any longer.

In Rose's narrative she indicates how other contextual factors compounded the difficulty of helping her students with challenges they were facing. For many of these teachers that grappled with poverty and the difficulties it brings, much of the struggle was an emotional investment of knowing their students were struggling outside of the classroom and trying to understand how best to help them. What is reflected in these passages is that when teachers did not either self-reflect or were not led to self-reflect, they were more likely to put blame on the student or become overwhelmed by issues of violence, lacking resources, incarceration, crime, and other challenging experiences that poverty and racism bring to students.

Behavioral Issues and Classroom Management. Behavioral issues in the classroom were one of the most commonly cited issues for these new teachers. Difficult classrooms, or difficulties with classroom management, is a primary indicator for teacher attrition and most commonly cited with placement in diverse, low-income, urban schools (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006; Ewing & Smith, 2003). The teachers in this study teach, or have taught, at a variety of schools – from urban to rural, low-income to private schools, yet all of them cite issues with classroom management as the greatest struggle they had to face when first teaching. Teachers report experiencing violence in the classroom, individual struggles with students, and lack of respect on the part of students and parents. Behavioral issues were mentioned in every interview but a total of 22 times overall, with 17 of those mentions in the interviews with leavers. Further, the two groups differ in how they interpret the source of behavioral issues and the steps that should be taken to address those issues.

Jerry, while student teaching in a large urban alternative high school, experienced one of the more intense situations of classroom management when a student overdosed on drugs in his classroom. He describes the process of calling the ambulance and calming the other students down. The experience of student teaching in that setting he says was "the second worst possible scenario" that he could experience. He expressed the idea of "not really teaching" because instead of focusing on instruction he was "constantly running around and putting out fires". One would assume that Jerry could easily have walked away from the experience with a negative view of teaching, however this is how he sums up his feelings on the experience:

> And I took it, and I took a lot of very positives from that experience. Really my only negatives were, at the end hearing, 'yeah, we needed bodies'….that's lame. That's not lame, that's a poor reason to put student teachers who had no idea what we were doing! I

> mean we were student teachers for god sake! And, I mean I can't imagine how little those kids must have learned. I mean, I wasn't real cool with the reasoning behind it. That kind of annoyed me later. But, that was the worst-case scenario. And the other teacher and I walked out of there saying, yeah, we can't run into a worse case than this. We, I mean, this was it. And we were grateful for it. Again, really grateful for the experience. Not so grateful with the reasoning behind it. And I can't tell you how much I really learned as an educator. You know, I learned a lot as a person, but I can't tell you how much I really learned as an educator in that environment. But I was really grateful for, well I can't run into anything worse than this….because the kids were honest to god good people. They had just made one more mistake than the rest of us. Really, honestly that's what it was. They just got caught one more time than the rest of them did. And they never succeeded at a damn thing. They had never been told they were worth anything. And so, yeah, it really reinforced that, yeah, I'm doing the right thing. The profession I want to be in is correct. No, I did still walk away very much loving teaching.

Similarly to the interpretation of differences in experience and other challenges teachers may face, there is a distinct interpretation expressed in Jerry's remarks. Rather than coming away from the experience with a negative view of the students or the experience, his negative focus is on feeling underappreciated, and somewhat disenfranchised by the administration of the program. Similarly to other stayers, Larry refers to his students as "good kids" for which education is a building block of later success. Later in his interview he discusses how that scenario helped him set up his classrooms later on. He turned his focus to reinterpreting the curriculum and classroom culture to work for his students in a culturally appropriate way that met as many of their needs as he could. Often for the stayers, classroom issues stem from a

mismatch in curriculum. Matt describes an unruly class that he has and his interpretation of why there are issues:

> There are times where… they're just unruly and difficult to control and I've tried everything I've ever learned to get order and get them under control. There have been times I've wondered if curriculum-wise, are we doing the right thing for them, is it too challenging. There are Friday nights where I go home and I'm reflecting on why is this not working with this group…You have to take the long-view approach. You have to appreciate baby steps and acknowledge and be grateful for the little bits of progress that you make when they happen. You're never going to have your lowest class, cognitively, just jump up and have all the students be proficient overnight. You have to work through it slowly and that takes a lot of patience as a teacher because you want to make a lot of progress quickly and easily but that's not how it works… With that same class, I have heard this from a lot of people, and I've experienced it through each of my three years, that the class that is the most frustrating is the one that wins over your heart the most.

Matt goes on to talk about connecting with other teachers in the school, and more experienced teachers, for support and ideas on bettering the management of the class. He feels that his efforts have been successful and the students have made cognitive and behavioral gains from those efforts. Similarly to Larry, Matt looks to the curriculum rather than to the student's background as an explanation of why there are classroom management issues. His "long view" approach and a focus on what the teacher is offering to the students, rather than on the student's behaviors, is similar to how other stayers describe their approach to classroom management. Again, in his interview there is the idea of all student are essentially good, and education is a resource or

building block to make lives better. For the stayers, this is a common reference to students and to the purpose of education and of the teacher.

Elen, a middle school teacher and leaver, has had issues with classroom behavior, student outburst and speaking with a lack of respect. She struggles with finding a "fix" to this issue, but similarly to many other districts, her district has adopted a specific behavioral plan. In this passage Elen describes how she's decided to implement this program and her reasoning behind embracing the protocol:

> So here's the [behavioral)]plan so fix it. And if you don't and it comes to the point that you're still not following expectations then you're going to leave. You're too loud or you're not participating, those are my two pet peeves. Are you moving around right now? Are you sharpening your pencil? No, sit down. So it was getting to the point in my, and I'm really excited to see how my survey results are [student survey given to all classes taken from a secondary resource on the internet] a lot of my students said you need to control the kids better. You need to be meaner. A lot of the kids said 'you need to be mean'. Like, I understand what you mean but I need to be more consistent. I need to let you know the expectations and follow through with everyone...And that's horrible that those kids have to deal with that kind of behavior. And it got the tipping point before this Christmas where even some of the good kids...[were misbehaving basically]. Now it's those other kids and I'm reeling them back in. They're not arguing with me. It's the kids that were talking before. And they're [the good kids] like 'why don't you have them fill this out [a fix it plan]' and I'm like 'Oh, don't worry. I copy these by a hundred'. The other day I ran out just before lunch and I literally copied off a hundred and one of the

> other teachers said ‘she's handing those out like candy’. And I'm like 'yup’. You should be whispering, you should be whispering.

Elen’s orientation and approach to the student behaviors is very different from Matt and Larry’s. For Elen, the behaviors lay with the student and not her instructional methods. She has a perception of how the classroom should run and how the students should behave that is separate from the learning that takes place within the classroom. She feels that the district behavioral plan, similarly, will help her avoid these situations in the future. Robert, a high school teacher, describes the focus of his classroom as centered on emotional connection, rather than content focused. For Robert the behavioral issues were also a result of students and not connected to his instructional practices:

> I’ve said this to all of my supervisors that the one thing I think that I bring to my culture is an honest and open classroom. I am going to be open and honest with my students. They know about my friends. They know I have a boyfriend and they like talking about them. And I think that has gotten engaged with my life and that’s made them open to talking with me about math as well. I think that my open culture climate is that of an open, honest, friendly… I am a friend as well as a teacher to them and I think that helps us have these conversations. It definitely helps that I’m younger and they think they can relate to me better than other teachers…And so getting that feeling I was ready to make connections and make those meaningful conversations happen so the students would get more out of my classroom than just credit to fill.

As an openly gay male teacher, he has experienced difficulty with several male athletes in his class. The students, he felt, reminded him of the “kids who used to pick on me” in his own high

school experience, making the behavioral issues more difficult to approach on an individual level. In approaching the issues he describes first trying to find something to "connect with them personally", but then ultimately going to another teacher for advice and resorting to calling their parents often. Robert's focus in teaching is primarily on relationship building, so the connection to curriculum or other aspects of the classroom in controlling behavioral issues is not a part of his narrative. Similarly to Elen, his perception of teaching is removed from the purpose of education and the student is at the center of the issues. Bonnie, who has also had on-going behavioral issues in her classroom describes a particularly disruptive student:

> Kind of recently in my mid-level chemistry class. I have a class of 34 students. And one of them, he is in the Special Education department. He has a detachment disorder…. He had a few years where some very necessary bonding didn't happen. And that's affected his current life. Very much so. He is a menace, I guess. And he's just, he's just, incredibly frustrating. So recently, he's just been making comments in my class, distracting everyone. He's being very immature.

She describes her interactions with the student and actions she takes to remedy the issues. She relies mostly on intervention from the school administrator and ultimately his failing her course. This student is unique in Bonnie's school, as many of her students are high-level learners and have little in the way of background issues. For these three leavers, the connection to students is not through curriculum or lesson plans. Behavior is something that the students are responsible for and misbehavior is something to be "managed" in the classroom rather than reflecting on how teaching practices can be more engaging as our stayers do.

All of the teachers and former teachers interviewed have specific instances of behavioral issues, some more intensive than others. And all of them also report a serious lack of preparation

from their pre-service programs for handling those issues. For the leavers, they would have preferred some coursework that covers specific behavioral management tools. The stayers, however, critiqued their pre-service preparation programs for behavioral management preparation twice as much as the leavers did. The following critique from Morgan is reflective of the comments from other stayers:

> I think that there's a very large disconnect between educational theory and what goes on in the classroom. The reason behind that is that there are a lot of researchers out there that spend a week, two weeks in a classroom doing a case study. Doing a lot of case studies. But in two weeks any teacher worth their salt knows that they're just starting to know those kids. They don't understand what's going on at home yet, they don't know where those kids just came from. And that could drastically change throughout the semester. And so I think that a lot of time that disconnect is sort of left out. And you have this ivory tower of academia and you have these theories that are thrown around. Oh this is the way this works and this is the way this works. Here's what's right, here's what's right, here's what's right. But it's drastically different in the trenches. With kids.

Similar to Tom's critiques (1997) of schools of education, they find the pedagogical methods out of touch with the current student population. Two other stayers specifically mention the disdain for schools of education as disconnected and seeming distant to teachers as the "Ivory Tower" narrative encapsulated much of their experience. This type of reflection is largely absent in the narratives of the leavers. For them, when reflecting on their preparation for dealing with behavioral issues, they mention less in terms of preparation by pre-service programs and more current resources, or lack thereof, to handle those issues.

Mismatch-Teaching Out of Field. Of the 18 teachers interviewed, 10 had taught out of field or out of their experience comfort zone at some point in time. For most teachers this proved to be challenging, particularly if they were teaching out of field or grade level during their first years of teaching, often leading to feelings of dissatisfaction, lack of efficacy, and feelings of disconnectedness. Of those teachers that reported mismatch of field or grade level only a few of the teachers who indicated wanting to stay in the teaching profession reported mismatch. Bonnie, a second year Science teacher at a mid-sized and relatively high SES magnet school, was placed out of field for her first year of teaching. Though she reported some positive experiences with the curriculum she had this to say about the experience over all:

> Bonnie: I'm also only certified in Biology even though I have experience in Chemistry. First off I'm teaching a class I'm not ready for. And for (my program) there's a training over summer that you take as well. And I did not get that because they hired me too late.
>
> Interviewer: How has it been teaching out of field?
>
> Bonnie: It's been surprisingly alright. I've actually been taking a liking to chemistry more than I thought I would. And…yeah. I put a lot of time into, that I know the content. And I'm actually really blessed. The first time that I teach the materials to a class that is really high functioning class. They're very kind students, a little open. So if I fumble a little bit with the material they can pick it up and make do with it. Which is nice but that's my honors level…but then I teach my mid-level class after that. And I have been struggling a little bit with that. But it's not, it's not the worst. I actually, and this is something that is still a little baffling to me, when I think of next year and schedule changes, I don't even know which classes I might not want to teach.

Ginger, a certified birth – 3rd grade teacher had only had experience in early care and pre-Kindergarten classrooms, speaks about being placed in a 1st grade classroom her second year of teaching. In addition to teaching in a large urban school in a low-income neighborhood, her problems with learning the curriculum were compounded by a lack of supports within the school. Ginger had a particularly difficult year in the school due to the threat of teacher strikes, reconfiguration of the school district, and a second year classification of the school as "needing improvement". In the following passage she explains the difference between her first year teaching and her second year in a different grade:

> It's really hard. I feel like last year when I was in Pre-K, like, I belonged a little bit more. And that's because in Pre-K you're like 'It's us against the world! We know what kids really need! They need to explore!' instead of teaching kids sight words so they can read at age 4 when it's not developmentally appropriate. Because that's not appropriate for them. And since we were in a whole separate building, we could, we had the freedom to do what we thought was right for our kids. Since this year I'm in the bigger building. I don't feel like I know the curriculum at all. I feel like I'm just wadding through this. I'm just trying to keep my head above water with everything. Um. In first grade. Because I wasn't trained on this. I have no idea. It's very nice that my principal thinks that I can do this but honestly I have no idea what I'm doing. Um, and I just feel like, my other two 1st grade teachers, they're veteran teachers and they're just kind of like 'well, why don't you know this?' you know. Not in an overt way. 'Oh, yeah, that's right. You don't know what we do". Everyone is nice and welcoming and warm. But at the same time I felt a lot more comfortable last year.

Though Bonnie and Ginger both indicate that teaching outside of their area of expertise had created difficulty, Bonnie seems more comfortable with the transition. However, Bonnie's reaction to being placed out of field is offset by the support she receives from the other Science teachers in her school, support from administration, students with high academic levels, and a suburban school with higher SES levels. Though the indicators of mismatch were both negatively impactful for Bonnie and Ginger, the impact on Bonnie was much greater. Bonnie intends to leave the teaching profession and Ginger does not. In Bonnie's narrative multiple factors are compounding on her decision to leave the teaching profession.

Sally, a high school Science teacher is teaching in Science but outside of her certification. Learning the content matter, she reports, is enjoyable and she has liked coming up with new lesson plans. She had a Bachelor's degree in Science prior to committing to a career in education. However, some of the mismatch she experiences stems more from a perceived lack of training in her traditional pre-service education program. Sally explains how she felt going through her general certification in elementary education:

> But at the beginning, it was just really like, this is all so, like, nebulous it was really difficult for me. But a lot of students seem to love that. So, all the English and history people were just really like, yeah, this is the best. And I was just like, no, this is not the best. So, a lot of our classes were mixed and we only had a few that were just science people.

Her difficulty with the mismatch in her placement is compounded by a district wide initiative to incorporate the Common Core requirements into all curricular components. In this passage she describes having to incorporate language arts into her science curriculum:

> The way things are going I don't know. I look at the requirements for what I'm supposed to teach in the common core for literacy and technical writing and I'm like ha, ha, ha, ha. They're not going to learn any science… We read. We write. We read a book. We read a report. But we do lab write ups and I have them come up with cohesive arguments with evidence and all this stuff. Reasoning. Whatever. But, oh, for goodness sakes I can't -- I still can't get all the standards if he wants to do any labs… It's just hard for them to do. I don't know. It's crazy. Yeah. So, we have some new projects and things that are -- we bought novels and do projects now and stuff. So, I mean, we're pretty in a good serious faith effort here but there's just -- there's just no way. We just can't do it all and still meet the state standards.

For teachers that have been placed in classrooms outside of their certification or outside of their preferred grade level, some of these obstacles begin to seem insurmountable without further training or support from other teachers. Support mechanisms have changed within the last decade. Support from other teachers includes support from teachers they are connected with on social media as well as those teachers in their buildings. Of those 10 teachers that had been placed out of field at some point, all report seeking advice from other teachers or searching out resources from the internet. Though placement in out-of-field assignments is generally in the control of the school districts, difficulty finding positions adds to the pressure for teachers to accept an out-of-field assignment. Six subjects reported significant difficulties finding work and of those 6, three were placed in out-of-field assignments. Of the 6 who reported difficulties finding work four report plans to leave the teaching field.

Teacher Wages. The impact of low wages for teachers have been cited in some studies as a significant indicator of attrition (Stockard, 2004). No respondents in this study indicated

dissatisfaction with their pay scale. Several subjects noted that teaching was a "solid job" which paid a "decent living" wage. That is not to say that as current teachers gain credentials and higher degrees, that the potential for an increase in earnings would not be sufficient reason to leave the classroom. Three of the interviewee stayers had indicated that they might consider a return to school for a Master's degree, but none had immediate plans to pursue that and none had any thoughts on how that would translate to their career. It would seem that the reason most teachers go into the profession is not driven by financial gain, but rather by an internal sense of wanting to help students in some way.

Extra Duties and Long Hours. Teaching often requires taking on other duties such as coaching or facilitating clubs, completing paperwork for student data tracking and reporting, participating in staff meetings and professional learning communities, and potentially other requirements for licensure. As a result, teachers often reported working long hours and logging significant amounts of personal and planning time to meet these demands. However, the interpretation of the use of their time varied by the leavers and the stayers. Mallory, a second year Kindergarten teacher describes her time investment her first year in the classroom:

> My first year I was here every single day from June 12th on end reconstructing this classroom into what I had wanted it to be. The teacher that taught here before me was here for 30 years. I swear that every year things came in and nothing ever left. So I came and you had to suck in your stomach to fit through overcrowded aisles. I thought Whoa! We learned from university to never have an over-cluttered classroom. It really distracts kids. It's not a nice clean work environment. I do really pride myself on having natural light, having open space. And I was here till about 8 or 9 o'clock September through about November of last year. Because I'd be teaching and playtime wasn't working. So

> I'd be like 'what can I do?'. So I'd be here all night designing centers. That was about until November. But about November I fell into my routine. I would spend Sundays doing lesson planning. This year I've been contract hours every single day. And I've been able to take on other tasks too.

Mallory went on to talk about her satisfaction with the state of the classroom and her ability to handle the extra tasks. She also has a very supportive administrator, who had rescinded duties usually assigned to teachers such as playground monitoring and lunchroom monitor "because she knows the teachers really don't like to do that stuff". Mallory felt that her time was well invested because it made teaching easier for her, and she wasn't facing the challenge of taking on a significant amount of other duties. Rick, a dedicated third year kindergarten teacher at a relatively low-income and racially diverse school, describes his involvement in extra duties in the school. Rick is a career-changer, coming in to teaching from a military career. He enjoys the responsibilities of leading teams and having some sense of duty to a greater organization. He has taken a leadership position in his school and participates in vertical PLC groups as well as the school Leadership Team. When asked about the time commitment of participating in all of these committees and administrative groups Rick describes both frustration and a sense of satisfaction that he has been able to encapsulate his work into a 50 hour work week:

> Rick: For vertical PLC it's pretty much making the schedule and whichever teacher who's in charge of hosting, making sure I coordinate with them what the meeting is going to be about.
>
> Interviewer: So you have the vertical PLC. A horizontal PLC, the leadership team and the effectiveness coaches meetings?
>
> Rick: Yes

Interviewer: Do you meet with all of those every month?

Rick: Ha, we meet a lot more than every month. Our PLC schedule for grade level PLC is we meet on Monday, Tuesday, Fridays every week. Then our vertical PLC, which is all the math and all the literacy teachers, is every other Thursday.

Interviewer: Oh wow. So do you have a half-day every week schedule?

Rick: Ha ha no. No….The regular PLC is during our prep period which is another sore topic, but there is a lot required…. for our collaboration.

[Rick is asked about his weekly workload] I don't do anything at home personally but if you would ask someone randomly who's the first one at the school 9 times out of 10. Out of two weeks, 9 out of 10 days I'm the first one here and I'm here significantly early, earlier than anyone other than the custodians. And . . . I think once a month I'll come in over the weekend. I'll put in some hours on the weekend. I put in 50-60 hours a week so that I don't have to come in on weekends. That's how I justify it.

Rick finds that teaching "suits him" and his satisfaction from participating in the Leadership Teams and PLC's outweighs him viewing them as a burden. Similarly to Mallory, the commitment to teaching and feeling effective as an educator is not only worth the time investment, but also mediates feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. It becomes a function of teaching rather than appearing to be arbitrary and disconnected from teaching.

Debbie, a second year middle school teacher does not anticipate staying in public education. Debbie faced significant challenges her first year. Her school did not have room to give her a classroom so she used a cart to transport her materials into the classrooms of other teachers. The school Debbie teaches in is in a mid to high-income suburban area. Though she indicates that

the administration is supportive of teachers she describes the extra tasks associated with teaching as disparate from her duties as a teacher:

> I guess it's less teaching than I thought it would be. It's more discipline, dealing with behaviors and dealing with parents. Some of the other…all the stuff that we have to do. I don't feel like I teach most of the time. All the SLOs, EEG's, PDP's. We have to do some many goals and so many write-ups and so many reflections we have to do. And it's a lot of work to keep up with all of it while focusing on teaching too. So there's a lot of stuff that goes along with it that I didn't anticipate.

Sally, a leaver, attributes her feelings of frustration with the extra requirements as a function of her organizational skills. She, like Debbie, does not view these requirements as a necessity to her effectiveness teaching:

> So something I'm bad at is time management in terms of grading and administrative tasks. I don't find it interesting. I don't like it so I tend to do fun things. I have great lessons. We do awesome labs. My class is really fun and like innovative and they don't get their papers back very quickly. [laughter] That's what I said. I do a good job. That's a pretty solid statement right there. Yeah. Like, how to order stuff. I don't know. . . so, I would say, like, the teaching stuff, how to go do stuff, [I] felt pretty solid about that. But . . . the day-to-day crap that you have to do, like the grade book and all these things. Like, what's the best -- and you talk a little bit with your proctoring teacher about things. But basically you just use their system. Right? Whatever they have you just -- 'cause that's what they've been doing and they already have it all set up and whatever in skyward or whatever they're using. And it was really -- like, I was, like, how do I make this decision on what's best? How do I -- I don't know what percentages to grade people on. . . and so

> you're. . . wandering around like a lost puppy talking to other people in your department. And be, like, so, what percentage did you assign to this category? And all that stuff just takes a really long time.

Both the leavers and stayers often mentioned that they would have preferred some preparation for the extra duties and requirements in their pre-service education. However, it begs the question – why do the leavers and stayers have a different interpretation of these extra duties? Can this be attributed solely to their pre-service education or is it something more personal and fundamental to their intention of teaching such as Goddard and O'Brian (2003) suggest? From the interview data there is a sense of disillusionment expressed by the leavers for what is required to teach, or what 'real teaching' consists of. Similarly to the other recognized indicators of significant risk of attrition, the interpretation as well as the impact of these barriers varies between leavers and stayers. For all subjects there were multiple components that were compounded upon each other – mismatch, low-SES student populations, long hours, and extra duties – yet their perspectives of how impactful and how heavy they weigh on the decision to stay in the teaching profession varied.

Drowning. A common analogy for all teachers interviewed, leavers and stayers, were having feelings of "drowning" in the work that comes with teaching. Paula, a former middle school teacher speaks about teaching a subject she had a degree in but was teaching under an emergency certification at an exclusive private school. She shares how the desire to feel successful was compounded with the workload of teaching:

> I was overwhelmed. I didn't feel like I was being very successful in the classroom. Which, test scores and outcome would say otherwise. I didn't think I was a great manager of students. And I am particularly hard on myself. I think in terms of keeping

> kids on task. I was dealing with a pretty high functioning population. And I had some intense parents. So it was those kind of management issues. I felt they were all connected. I wasn't old enough and I wasn't experienced enough to be able to have the confidence in what I was doing. I wasn't able to say "I know what's happening in my classroom and I am able to get your students where they need to go". I wasn't there long enough to know that. That coupled with where I what I expected from myself and from my students and where I thought they were, which now looking back is part of just the immaturity of the 6th grader, I was just pretty burnt out.. .

Though Rose was dealing with a high-need low-SES student population she describes similar feelings of drowning in the job:

> I felt the organization, I was running around all the time trying to put out fires. Dealing with students who literally couldn't be in class because of whatever issues and kids who wanted to be there and kids who didn't and kids who would have been there if I could have enrolled them in class. It was just too demanding for someone who needs to feel successful. It was a very high bar. What I did really well was I had students who knew they could count on me and knew I respected them and knew I thought highly of them as people. But I did have students, I didn't feel like I sent them on being more competent in math and that was really frustrating. And I didn't feel like I was set up to do that. And that was more frustrating. At that point, I was like, I had the experience that I want and now it was time to go back to graduate school.

In this passage Bonnie discusses her overall experience and the frustration of feeling like she's drowning in her workload as a new teacher, and not feeling like she stood up to the challenges of teaching in the way that other teachers have:

> I mean. I think the biggest thing in my sort of journey as a first year teacher, and this is something that I want to share with new teachers and share with old teachers too, that when a new teacher comes in and they're learning to live day by day. That was really hard for me. And it was really hard for me to hear someone say 'just take it day by day' because they said it so light, because they were used to it and I wasn't at all and I hated it. You know, I lost sight of this big picture and I still don't see the big picture as much because I am still learning to live day by day. Because I went into this first year with all this craziness, you know, when I heard someone say that to me I wasn't calmed by that at all. I'm still trying to work on how I could ease, sort of, ease someone in to being comfortable with living day by day. And I think it's different for everyone and I think I'm one type of person, you know. Maybe it's easier for someone else.

Bonnie's feelings of being overwhelmed contrasted what she envisions as a "real teacher". Her own experience in the classroom resulted in a disconnection that ultimately negatively impacted her desire to continue in the profession. Rose and Paula similarly express having a "bar" they believed they should be meeting in order to be successful as a teacher. Where these "bars" were formed for these three subjects came from a lifetime of being a student or readings in coursework in their preparation programs or other teachers in their schools.

The approach to feelings of "drowning" seems to be different for the stayer group. They take the feeling as an inevitable fact of teaching and one that will ultimately fade. Again, there is evidence that this group is different in how they view the challenges of teaching, that there is a longer-term goal, which necessitates long-term vision. Mallory describes a similar complaint as Bonnie, however her interpretation is in stark contrast to Bonnie's interpretation:

> As opposed to last year where I was just 'am I supposed to get through this stuff? Do I not try anything today?' and the other teachers are just telling me you just play it by ear. That's fine for you. You've been here for 5 years. You can play it by ear. What is playing it by ear for a first year teacher? Everything is playing by ear. This year I can play it by ear. I was playing it by ear…[My biggest take away was] love the challenging ones the most. Loving the challenging ones was a big piece. Otherwise you just get so burnt out. If you just change it and make those your reactions.

Arlene, a career changer and second year special education teacher also discusses embracing the challenging students and "embracing the challenge" to make her a better teacher the next day. Morgan discusses his first teaching assignment in an alternative middle school in a low-income area. Though he elaborates on the difficulty of embarking on a steep learning curve in a challenging environment, his ultimate take away is that he will "learn how to swim":

> I had never done project-based education before. I had sort of heard about it on the fringes. But what did I actually know about this? Not a whole lot. So I did a lot of reading, I did a lot of 'hey tell me about this, tell me about that' with the other teachers. A couple of them really helped me out. When sort of, you're in the deep in so now learn to swim. . . But I had a great time with it. I really really enjoyed it. . . It's a very rough place to teach. But on top of that learning 'here's how you deal with parents, here's how you deal with kids, here's how you deal with other teachers, here's how you keep all these different things in the air at the same time without dropping anything. It was a lot of learning very quickly.

Matt, similarly to the other stayers was overwhelmed his first year and similar to the others he also viewed those challenges as surmountable. He was replacing a long-time teacher at the

school and was worried that he wouldn't meet the "bar" that was set. However, he views the challenge as something that moved him forward in his passion to teach:

> Well first day I came in overwhelmed. Completely overwhelmed. I had a lot of stuff, older stuff, in my classroom that completely needed to go. I was filling pretty large shoes. The teacher that I was going to replace was pretty phenomenal…[he discusses the efforts put into setting up for the first day]...I mean, there are always good days and bad days. But, I absolutely, I still love that group… So, the feeling stuck. I love my classroom, my group this year too. They're just a little more challenging. They need a little bit more.

The expectations that these teachers had for themselves were shaped, in some part, by the teachers they saw around them, the experiences they had in school, and the content of their coursework – yet it seems that their self-expectations differed from the leavers. These teachers had an image of success that was based on their ability to meet the classroom every day and know that they would, at some point, "learn to swim." All of these teachers had different levels of administrative and collegial support. They also had different mechanisms outside of school to support them and different challenges in the classroom. Both leavers and stayers reported having at least one teacher in their school that they felt a supportive connection to. Many of them reported leaning on family and friends in tough times. The most apparent difference in the data between the stayers and leavers, appear to be an orientation towards teaching and the role of education that is either centered on relationships or on the role of education in the students' lives.

Administrative and Staff Support. Studies on the impact of administrative and staff support have shown that a positively involved administrator and supportive staff can at least somewhat ameliorate other negative factors in the teacher's first years of teaching (Stockard,

2004). Not surprisingly, stayers mentioned evidence of positive administrative support twice as much as the leavers, however three of the stayers reported poor administrative support and three of the leavers noted positive administrative support. When Rick, a Kindergarten teacher, mentions his administrative team he sees their relationship as one of "equals" in which the administration gives the teachers autonomy in decision making in the curriculum, their classrooms, and schools. Though he also sites the extensive demands on teach time to be involved in the school decisions, he values the outcome. As a result he also refers to the other teachers at his school as "a team" who is there for each other. This makes his job easier particularly when dealing with his "runner." He has a student that will bolt from the classroom and the school without warning. Rick says that when this happens he always knows the other staff will help him manage either his classroom or his "runner." He credits his administrative team for cultivating an environment in which this kind of teamwork is a priority. For most of the stayers, administrative support was directly tied to autonomy and often accompanied with feelings of high efficacy and respect. Mallory expresses high satisfaction with her principal. She feels that the principal is not only inviting but that she values what the teachers value in a "team level effort," even giving them a pass on recess duty because she "knows that teachers don't like freezing". In her student teaching she had an experience very similar to others who report negative or low administrative support, that of being watched and evaluated rather than being given autonomy and feeling valued. In this passage she describes how the difference in administration affected not only her teaching but also her sense of efficacy and isolation:

> This district has exceeded anything I could have possibly expected. The district I did my student teaching in is a different world. I feel so appreciated and valued here. The principal, I adore, she'll just peek her head in and wave and smile. She's always smiling.

> I remember in the other school district I was just terrified of the principal. Every time I would see them coming my stomach would be in knots. I was so afraid of them coming in the room. One of my lessons student teaching the principal came in for observation and it was my worst lesson teaching experience I've ever done. Because I was so nervous I forgot what to do. The principal here comes in and she's just smiling and giving the thumbs up…

Feeling 'watched' or not valued was the most common complaint from those teachers that reported low administrative support. Ginger's experience with her administrative team exemplifies this. Her school has been classified as failing for the second year, and so there is an extra team of administration that works together with her principal. She feels that the administration and this extra team of experts is not only disconnected from the teaching staff but also creates a tense environment and toxic work environment:

> But now we moved up to a level 2 school so we have our Network people in and out of our building all the time and they're constantly watching us and checking our lesson plans and making sure we're doing what were supposed to do and following everything that they say to a T. It's like people breathing down our necks at all times. There's a lot of scrutiny. …They'll pop in and make sure you have everything on the walls you're supposed to have. They'll make sure you're doing everything you're supposed to be doing. They'll reply, they'll go back to your principal and say, like, hey I didn't see this this and this. So you guys are getting on a whole, as a school, you're going to be knocked down so many points. And your principal will come back to you and say (changes to angry tone) 'Why wasn't your bulletin board changed? Why didn't you have your sight words up?' or whatever reason. . . And the staff culture is just kind of like,

> there is none. There's no school culture. And I really think they're trying to make it better but when there are so many constraints on everyone's time. It just feels like everyone is being pulled in a million different directions, like we can't really concentrate on that. So, there's not a lot.

Though Ginger is planning on staying in teaching, she says that the environment this year in her school is what is pushing her to look for a position at a different school. Three of those who intend to transition out of teaching all together reported positive relationships with the administration. Robert talked at length about the support and confidence he receives from his administrative staff. However, he says he rarely goes to his administrators other than for occasional advice on handling behavioral issues. He says this is because "I think that it is my classroom and I make those connections with them and they respect me more for it than if I were just to push them off onto someone else". In this passage, though he has notable support, there is still evidence of resistance to losing any autonomy in his own classroom. Matt says he appreciates his administrative staff, as they provide resources for the teachers, but notes the criticism they draw for their frequent classroom visits. Here Matt contrasts his experience teaching at a school in a different state with a different administrative and educational philosophy:

> I think the administrators, they're great. Um, as persons they give us all the freedoms that they can. They try to stay out of our way as much as possible. I just think that…he requirements on administrators in this state are different than they are on administrators in the other state. They're absolutely different. They're a little more hands-on, because they have to be. They're in the classroom more because they have to be. And whereas I

> think in the other state it was a little more hands-off approach. Let's just try and hire good people and get out of their way and let them do what they do.

Again autonomy, efficacy, and professional appreciation are the focus of positive traits for supportive administration. Rose describes her former school as a "Lemon Dance" school. The Lemon Dance is nomenclature for schools passing around ineffective teachers rather than firing them. She cites very little camaraderie between the staff, and inappropriate behavior on the part of some of the other teachers. Those teachers she was able to connect with were a vague resource because they were "all overwhelmed". This is how she sums up her experience:

> I was working against not just all the challenges the students faced, a real mismanagement at the school, a disorganized school, and administration that didn't respect what I was trying to do with my students. That was really concerned with test scores. Was really inflexible with me with how I could get my students to meet those scores. The school didn't value my students. I think ultimately I was working against too many things. I was depressed and exhausted and I don't think I could have done it any longer.

It was a combination of circumstances that caused Rose to eventually exit teaching, but the lack of support, to the point of being almost adversarial in nature, from her administrator and the other teachers was what pushed the decision for her. Administration that is not in-tune with the teacher's goals can compound the negative experiences that a teacher can go through. Prior research has shown that high levels of autonomy, support, and feelings of efficacy are strong indicators for teacher job satisfaction and likelihood of staying in the profession (Beltman et al, 2011; Strong, 2011; Renzulli; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, Liu & Meyer, 2005). I find in my data

evidence that an administration that is supportive of teachers, gives plenty of room for professional autonomy and encourages input at the school level can boost teachers' feelings of efficacy and autonomy. Further, we can determine that from passages of teachers that both felt supported and those that did not, the tone and communication of the administration also helps to set the school culture and feelings of connection to other staff.

Connection to Curriculum. Connection to curriculum was a powerful narrative in many of the interviews. The amount of control teachers have over their curriculum varied from district to district and within districts. I found evidence that teacher's feelings of efficacy in their classroom are related the amount of autonomy they have related to the curriculum they employ. Teachers that were satisfied or mostly satisfied with teaching were either given control over the content of their lessons, or wrested control over the content in "creative ways". None of the leavers reported having control on a regular basis over the curricular content that they taught. Many times the curriculum was either pre-decided by other district staff, was provided in full by the district, or was left to them by the previous teacher. Debbie's curriculum was provided to her by the other Spanish language teachers as a non-negotiable package. Though she found benefit in have a curriculum laid out for her in her first year, as it unburdened her from having to develop it herself, she also expresses disillusionment with not having control over her curriculum:

> [Speaking of her first year teaching] It was a little stressful. I t was overwhelming. It was a hard first year. I didn't really have time to think in advance and plan out a lot of things. And I had to learn the curriculum as I was teaching it. I didn't have time to look at it in advance. It was like 'look at this unit and teach it. Look at the next unit and teach it'…. [when she first started teaching] I thought that if my lessons were interesting enough, and

> like, well thought out enough I would never have to deal with behavior because everyone would be super engaged. Like, I never had to deal with behavior when I was clinical teaching, student teaching. So I just figured that would continue. And I thought there would be a little more room in how I teach and what I teach. Because cooperating teachers were always like 'teach whatever you want to teach!' but, there's a pretty set curriculum that I need to follow. There's a way my coworkers have been doing it and it's worked so I just do what they do. So, it's not as much creativity I guess, when I teach.

Debbie's experience with student teaching was a positive one. She worked well with her cooperating teachers and felt prepared for the classroom afterwards. She believed from her experience in the classroom as a student teacher that she would be spending most of her time creating lesson plans and engaging students. However, that was not her experience her first two years of teaching her own classroom. She describes the other teachers as resources and their relationship as positive, but overall she feels that they value her opinion less because of her status as a first year teacher and does not often feel as though her feedback is valued. The one measure she does have control over is the set-up of her classroom that she intentionally arranges in a different configuration than the other Spanish teachers. She says by setting up her classroom "her way" she is able to manage some of the gaps in the curriculum that she feels do not work with her teaching style. Debbie is a prime example of the negative impact that can occur when expectations do not meet with the reality of the teaching every day.

At her first assignment Paula was held to a district-wide prescribed math curriculum. She describes very little freedom to engage in the coursework despite feeling like she was well prepared with resources to do so after exiting her training program. Additionally, she found it very difficult to "function as a teacher" within the curriculum because her students, all students

with special needs, were cognitively well below the rest of the student population. In this passage she discusses the impact this had on her feelings of efficacy as a teacher, the ability to connect with her students, and overall lack of autonomy:

> So it was really frustrating to constantly deal with what I wanted to address, which was their low skills, not make them feel bad about their low skills, which I didn't know how to do, and deal with the mandate of having to be in lock-step with what everyone else was teaching. We had a district wide curriculum and you had to do what everyone else was doing down to pages. So we met as a team of freshman math teachers to literally go through what we were going to be teaching down to pages, and what we were going to skip and how. There was a woman from the district that came in who was very helpful and very supportive, but she was also 'you need to be teaching this curriculum'. This is the curriculum we are teaching and every student needs this Algebra curriculum" and I felt very stymied that I couldn't actually get at the fact that they couldn't do fractions. There were holes.

Robert, another high school math teacher at a different district describes trying to make the curriculum "his own" so that he could foster a connection with his students. The curriculum in his district was developed by a core team of math teachers and given to him with the expectation that he would follow the materials "page by page".

> For algebra, I would say for the first (part of the) year I have been going off the recommended lessons, however I have been branching out further. A lot of them are very, in my opinion, are mundane. It's lecture based. There's not a lot of room for an open dialogue with my students. So I take their structure and instead of doing a lecture we are doing a discussion-based format. We are interacting. My students collectively

> have enough background knowledge; they are essentially leading me through the lesson, if that makes sense? So I normally will have a similar lesson template-note sheet.

The administration does not frequently visit Robert's classroom so he feels confident that the changes he's made will be acceptable. However, similarly to Debbie, he expresses a feeling of discontinuity and disillusionment with the lack of control over the curriculum from what he was led to expect in his pre-service program. He says that his pre-service program gave him guiding principals of "creating classrooms that were amazing at constructivism and integration" of students into the classroom curriculum. He says though he very much embraces the guiding principals of his pre-service program, these principals are not a reality in the classroom he teaches in because of the restrictiveness of the provided curriculum. For Robert the disconnection between his expectations and lack of autonomy over the curriculum is the last straw. Even though he has high administrative support and a moderately able student population that he enjoys on a personal level, he discusses his decision to leave based on this gaping disconnection to the curriculum:

> I don't see myself teaching forever. I don't see myself teaching for the long term. I'm definitely already starting to get burnt out. If you would talk to my roommates they will tell you that more and more I'm coming home and saying 'I hate my job'. But, that stems from being stuck in the math curriculum, which is so, especially for geometry, which is so ridged. Which is not the way that I like to run my classroom.

Robert and Debbie's negative reaction to being given a structure that did match their teaching philosophy or pedagogical is not unusual for teachers. There are similar patterns of dissatisfaction and disillusionment among the stayers, but again, we see a different reaction to restrictions on autonomy from the stayers.

Morgan, a teacher in a very similar curricular situation to Robert, says he likes to "Morgan-ify" his curriculum on a regular basis. He prescribes to the philosophy of a book called "Teach Like a Pirate". He describes the philosophy as using the curricular requirements while creating project-based learning to get students active and involved in their own educational process. For Morgan, engaging the students in the curriculum is a way to "hook them" and get them coming back to the classroom asking not "What do I have to do today?" but "What is he (the teacher) up to this time?". He calls this process a "paradigm shift in their orientation towards education" that benefits the students because they engage in the educational process rather than see it as a distant removed requirement of adolescence. Morgan's approach is not promoted by the administration, nor does he discuss it with his administrators or some of the other teachers. Here he talks about how he conducts his own silent rebellion:

> Instead of saying 'what am I allowed to do' I think more about what I can get away with doing. It adds a little more intrigue to that. If you jump right in with that [teaching like a pirate]? The politics of teaching take over. You'll be getting phone calls from parents. There's nothing scarier than an angry parent and an angry administrator for a teacher. So, let's slowly build it up.

Similarly, but not as openly, Mallory also admits to making the curriculum her own, despite being given strict guidelines:

> With today's curriculum, everything I need to know and teach is in there. Which has its good and bad sides. Being given curriculum I know takes away from a teacher's creativity but it gives you what you need to go forth so you're not spending hours on it. Everyday I tweak it to be a little different. Some days if I feel my students need three days of I do three days of, some things I think they don't need and so I skip it.

In the narratives of both the leavers and stayers value the autonomy to teach how and what they feel is best for students or most aligned with their beliefs. However the stayers reported performing a quiet subversion of the standardized curriculum based on what they felt was best for their students. They continued to employ their professional autonomy despite restrictions. For each group the measure of autonomy has significant impacts on their expressions of satisfaction with the work of teaching. Even when other aspects of the job would appear to be positive, lack of autonomy in this realm of the classroom can increase feelings of devaluation, lack of camaraderie, and feelings of disillusionment. Even though some of the leavers and stayers reported that the benefit to being given curriculum the first year makes the work of teaching somewhat easier, all teachers felt that it created disconnection with students, disconnection with their own teaching style, and disillusionment with what teaching had "turned out to be."

Summary

In this chapter I presented how statistical indicators of attrition play out in teachers' lived experiences of the real classroom. What I have discovered is, though all of the subjects found aspects of their teaching situation challenging, how they interpreted those challenges was different and could be categorized by their intent to stay or leave the profession of teaching. Not only did they interpret challenges differently, thematically the stayers and leavers showed similar interpretations of each challenge to each other more so than similarities between each group. The stayers were more likely to see challenges such as student poverty, low-academic skills, and lacking administrative support as barriers to be surpassed in the long view, while the leavers viewed these same challenges as removed from their role as a teacher. The questions I seek to answer in the next chapter are 1) How much of this orientation is due directly to their pre-service

programs and 2) What were the most and least useful components of the pre-service programs in their journeys thus far and how does that help ameliorate feelings of discontentment?

Ch5

Impacts of Pre-Service Education

Student Teaching and Cooperating Teachers

There is a substantial body of work that identifies student teaching as the most significant and influential component of teacher preparation programs (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ronfelt, 2012). The data from this sample is aligned with those findings, with all but two interviewees finding their experiences student teaching to be the most useful experiences of their pre-service education. I find that while most teachers found their student teaching experiences to be the most influential components of their pre-service education, there were distinct differences in the types of experiences they had and how those translated into the classroom. For the most part, the utility of student teaching for these subjects was learning classroom management, the practical set up of lessons, and daily classroom structure. Sometimes the utility was seeing what not to do in a classroom. Mallory had a particularly negative experience with her first student teaching assignment:

> They always forewarned us that we had teachers that we would want to be like and we would take away a lot from and teachers that we learned to not be like. And so they told us that every classroom that we went into- it may be awesome amazing, it may be extremely terrible, but to know that even though it's terrible we are learning something. We are learning what we don't want to do. We don't want to scream back at the kids. I don't ever want to joke about Jack Daniels if I have a student teacher one day. A lot of what I didn't want to be like as a teacher.

The arrangements for student teaching varied from program to program. Some pre-service programs went through processes of matching students with teachers in the same field; some were by random assignment. Two of the interviewees went through an interview process with their cooperating teacher before being allowed to student teach to ensure that there was a good match. Morgan, Debbie and Kira went outside of their program's regular structure and found cooperating teachers that exemplified something in particular they wanted to learn. In most programs student teaching was preceded by classroom observations. Experiences student teaching were mostly over the last semester of their pre-service experience, but in one case student teaching was spread out over the last full year of the program in tandem with courses. For those interviewees that entered teaching through Teach for America there was minimal student teaching experience in the form of a 6 week "academy" in which they participated in student teaching and observation in summer school programs. For one interviewee, Paula, there was no student teaching experience because she entered in to teaching through a non-education program with an emergency certification.

Rick sums up why he thinks the student teaching experience is one of the most important components of his pre-service experience:

> Uh, I think I would have taken more, well I wouldn't have taken more, but I would have pushed more for more observation in classrooms as opposed to, I like calling it theory, sitting in a class and reading a book and you telling me...it doesn't really help me necessarily in the classroom now. I mean I still have the books. I can look it up and I could be all academic but I think it would have been more benefit to me to be in the classroom with kids. Even if I'm just observing a classroom…and then we meet

> afterwards to talk about what we saw, or whatever. I think it would have been far more beneficial than, just, purchasing an overpriced textbook and sitting and talking theory.

Debbie sought out an experience at a Montessori school, a pedagogy she says she connects with and wanted to learn more about. Though she thoroughly enjoyed her experience in the Montessori school she ultimately feels like it was far removed from the actual world of teaching in the public school. The experience, she reflected, added to her feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction with her current teaching position. Kira chose her cooperating teacher in part because of location, at a school she had hoped to work at, and in part because she knew him outside of school. Kira valued her experience student teaching because it reinforced her desire to be a teacher, but ultimately her cooperating teacher made her feel underappreciated and was generally dismissive. She says that her teaching style has developed in part because she realized that she wasn't fond of her way her cooperating teacher planned out classes.

Identifying with the cooperating teacher and their teaching style seemed to make the experience carry over into their classrooms in more meaningful ways. A primary thematic difference between the student teaching experience of the leavers and stayers was the intensity in which the student teacher was given aegis to create, participate, and involve themselves in the daily life of the classroom. Take, for instance the experience of Morgan:

> I learned more in that semester of student teaching than I learned in 4 years of education classes. In part because of the teacher that I had. My cooperating teacher was phenomenal. In part because I was working with students every single day and I got the entire routine. But in part because of the challenges I faced as well. You don't do the readings for a college class you can usually skate by it. If that paper is a little bit late you can usually email the professor you can usually get an extension. But at 8 am those kids

> are walking in my door, period. And I have never worked harder in my life. But I loved it. Prepping and planning and finding resources. You make a lot of mistakes along the way. But walking out of there is like, ok, put me in a classroom and let's see what happens.

Morgan put particular effort into finding his cooperating teacher. He requested an exception from his college to select a teacher that he felt had the most to teach him. He describes his cooperating teacher as a teacher with a large stature, a positive demeanor, and a passion for education. He felt involved in the decision making in the classroom and was given his own sections to teach. Rick had a similar experience with his cooperating teachers:

> They showed me strategies on how to solve problems, strategies on how to instruct, how to make my math workshops successful at a 5th grade level, and I took things away from that to put into my kindergarten level. Cause I obviously don't teach 5th grade. It was a good experience. Now the teacher that was with me, she was the teacher leader, she is now one of those effectiveness coaches.

In his narrative Rick was encouraged to be involved in the planning, decision making, and work of teaching. Elen, a third year history teacher at a rural middle school who is unsure about staying in teaching, reported that her student teaching experience was positive and was useful to her as she entered the classroom:

> But she was really great at, she didn't overwhelm me with a lot of things. Right away she said 'you can take over science since that's what you just came out of, and half way through we'll flip and you can take math. And the other times you can just observe and I'll help you out'. Discipline was my biggest thing. Coming in I had no idea what to do. I had 8th graders before but 6th graders are not the same as 8th graders by any means.

Elen had a good relationship with her cooperating teacher and still visits with her from time to time. Her experience in the classroom was fostered at all times by her cooperating teacher, which pulled them close relationally but did little to give Elen the tools she needed to improve her classroom management strategies. She describes herself as a student teacher as someone who felt they had little control over the classroom and relied on the cooperating teacher to help her bring order. As we saw in Chapter 4 she continues to struggle with classroom management. Sally describes, similarly, a positive experience that she feels that she learned from but was fostered and managed primarily by her cooperating teacher:

> And so it was really good. And she was really, really, really, like, up to date on, you know, practical techniques and, like, how to be like -- you know, one of my favorite things is -- there's probably a buzz word for this that I don't know...I really like -- that was, like, one of the big things that I took to heart -- was, like, that really appropriate responses to behavior that she had. I really like that she. . . had printed off the little schedules for me and their little names. And she actually marked -- and I've never seen another teacher do this for anyone who's not actually in the classroom as a person -- you know, an employee. She actually marked on all the little seating charts what kid had what issues and everything which was super helpful because then I could really watch for it. And take a lot more notes on, like, what she was doing for her whatever behavior. And so that was super helpful.

Sally and Elen clearly felt as though their cooperating teachers were supportive and each felt they walked away with more knowledge of classroom management. However, the narrative of Sally and Elen exemplify the experiences of many of the leavers. Their cooperating teachers

made the experience accommodating for them and facilitated many of their classes with them. They were able to observe and participate somewhat, but never to truly engage in the classroom experience or the experience of the full workload of a teacher. Fostering these experiences was appreciated by Sally and Elen, but for Debbie she felt it set her up for failure. For Kira, it made her want more control over the classroom and more autonomy in her student teaching experience.

For Rose, Paula and Ginger the student teaching experiences was limited to none. Rose and Ginger went through the Teach for America Program and Paula had no formal education training. Paula explains that she relied on the other teachers at the private school she was teaching at for support and guidance on setting lesson plans and curriculum. Ultimately she never felt as though she "was really a teacher" in that position. She struggled to keep pace with the other teachers and never felt successful in that position. Rose and Ginger had different opinions of their experience with the training from Teach for America, but the narrative of what they were able to grasp from the trainings were similar. Here Rose explains the positives and negatives of her experience:

> I felt like I knew a lot about general pedagogy after the TFA institute. And during institute, it's one of the Corps Members who've been teaching for 5-10 years, they would tell you over and over again 'look this is a lot of material we're giving you and throughout the course of the year you're going to come back to it and think oh, that's what they were talking about'. In terms of preparation I think I had the tools of what most teachers needed to have to be successful in terms of how to teach. I think that despite my curriculum-specific training, which was reading, there was a mismatch in terms of where my students were in terms of age group and what was taught. They had, there were

> classes for people who were going to teach elementary school reading, middle school reading, etc. There were cd's that were given to everyone that had lesson plans and curriculum resources which were targeted at those groups. TFA hadn't started looking at resources for students who had low skills. I knew a lot about how people learn to read the phonic argument versus whole language, I knew a lot about that. I knew a lot about teaching struggling readers. But my kids were around 12 years old and they had, some of those kindergarten skills, but most of them were 1st grade. Second grade level is independent readers. I had a couple of those students who were 2nd grade. . . That first year I was not prepared. It's not that I was unaware of the challenge. I knew my students would be low and that they would be older than what was targeted at that reading level. So I was aware that that was going to be the case but I didn't know how to meet that challenge.

Despite continuous monitoring visits from her supervisor at TFA and the 6 week institute, Rose took away content, curriculum, and pedagogy that she felt was only mildly useful to her in the actual classroom. Ginger describes her experience with the TFA program as a "horrible" experience where she felt ultimately unsupported and disenfranchised. Similarly to Rose she kept pace with the course work and was able to grasp the pedagogy content, but the preparation for the classroom was lacking. She says of her entry into her first TFA position, at a school that had failed to pay the Members and buildings that were vermin infested:

> So… they don't care. At all. About Corps members. Which was so frustrating because as a first year teacher who only had 6 weeks of training and taking certification classes and grad school level classes to learn how to teach. You're just like 'What? Why am I not getting any support from you?'

How do all of these experiences compare? Excluding the TFA and emergency certification experiences, all of the teachers felt that they were able to walk away from their student teaching experience with more knowledge of the classroom than before they had started. For those that had well-matched cooperating teachers they were able to walk away with a positive experience of teaching and in some cases a lasting relationship with their cooperating teacher. However, teachers that experienced a coddled approach to student teaching were more likely to feel unprepared for the realities of the classroom. Teachers that experienced a more hands-on involved approach were more likely to look at teaching as an involved process in which the teacher is a participant in the classroom.

A quantitative study of 204 new teachers by Oh and colleagues (2013) found that those that received student teaching experience were more likely to be satisfied with teaching and felt more prepared to enter the classroom. They also found that classroom management, lesson planning, and teaching techniques were the primary skills new teachers reported gaining during their student teaching experience. Though I find similar results in this study, the intricacies of how cooperating teachers shape the pedagogical orientation of new teachers is more apparent. Cooperating teachers treated their student teachers differently as some using the experience as more of an induction to teaching and others seemed to want to give more of a soft introduction to teaching, with the student teacher participating less in the actual organization of the classroom and execution of lessons. Though these cooperating teachers intentions were just as good they did not serve their student teachers well in preparing them for the actual work of teaching.

Coursework

Coursework was not mentioned often as one of the more useful experiences of pre-service training. However, there were a few specific examples of courses that teachers felt were

applicable and continue to be useful to them now. The courses of note were all targeted at teaching high need populations in some form. One teacher describes the instruction and support of a particular professor in understanding childhood trauma as very helpful for herself and her cohort:

> We had a professor at our college, he was just fantastic...his specialty was childhood trauma. And we had childhood trauma through him. We had the most riveting class. We would sit there for his time and it was never a lecture. I never think he had a lesson plan, he was just telling a story and he would just dive into this story and we would all just be mesmerized by the story. It was the best class my whole cohort took. Because it was just so eye opening. It was just brilliant to think about how he thought about kids. I talked to him a lot about my student too, about the trauma he was experiencing at home and he was really helpful with that. But there were 25 of us and all 25 of us were in the District and all 25 of us had a student who was just of a similar background. Mine was one of many. We were all consistently talking about our ideas and our kids.

Only one other teacher noted a course as one of the more useful take-aways from their pre-service experience. Rick discussed a class he took which focused on working with students with learning disabilities. He felt that the content of that course continued to be a resource to him as he navigates the needs of his own students. Also, similarly to how he felt about his administrative team, he appreciated that the teacher talked to the students on "a real level" rather than taking the "Ivory Tower" approach to teaching his classroom. Another high school teacher Robert found the majority of the coursework in his preparation program "inspiring" to him as a future teacher – focused on whole student learning and project based curriculum – but ultimately proved discordant with his current teaching position. Robert is in a district in which he is

required to use a highly structured curriculum with little flexibility for autonomy. The discordance between what he was prepared to expect in his pre-service training and what he experienced teaching ultimately contributed to his sense of disillusionment with teaching.

Many of the subjects described a disconnect between the coursework and the applicability of that content in the classroom. Jerry's comments on such discordance was typical of the responses given by many of the subjects:

> I would say very little of what I actually learned in my coursework carried over. I would say a majority of what I learned and what I walked away with happened when I was in the classroom. I don't think it should be that way but I don't know how to fix it. The stuff I learned in my coursework and my pedagogy classes was very, 'here's what would work in a very upper level, AP, suburban classroom. Where none of the kids would ever say 'hey go fuck yourself'. That's when that would work. So you could come up with all of these detailed lesson plans. I was a binder kid! I had all these binders with my lesson plans and they were all shiny and my student teaching experience just erased them. The students, 100% on me, I don't blame one of those kids for not responding to the bull crap I walked in there with. Because it was. It had no merit on their lives. I had kids wondering where they were going to sleep that night and I was mad at them because they didn't do the Great Gatsby reading. It was completely out of touch from what I was walking in to.

Elen also describes a short term subbing position she entered in to after graduating. The students were high need and composed of a significant number of immigrant families.

> Worst position I could have gone in to. Brand new. I would come home and cry to my poor roommate. I don't like teaching anymore. I don't know how to fix it. And it was

> so heart wrenching because I didn't know how to help the kids. All they wanted was the consistency and the person to be there and tell them what to do. And I didn't know how to make that happen.

Though she went through her preparation program successfully, earning high grades and honors, she felt inadequately prepared to approach teaching *in that scenario*. She felt as though the experiences she's had in the classroom were not aided by her coursework. The student populations were too different from what she says she was prepared to handle. In both of her teaching assignments so far, one working with a high need immigrant population and one working with low-skill students, she struggles to match the curriculum with their needs.

The most common suggestions given by the teachers were to give additional courses on classroom management. One teacher suggested specific training with certifications for some of the behavioral management systems employed by local school districts. Having courses that were more applicable to diverse populations was the second most recorded suggestion for improving the pre-service course work. Elen, like many of the leavers, struggles consistently with classroom management, something she felt was one of her greatest weaknesses as a teacher. Surprisingly, very few teachers had experienced any coursework focused on classroom management even though most felt that that skill was primary for a successful day teaching. Elen had this suggestion to offer for pre-service programs:

> We never had, I'm sure we had a seminar or one class dedicated to classroom management and behavior and discipline, but I feel like that could have been a class every single semester...or at least just one class about that would have been great.

Two of the high school science teachers, Sally and Karen, critique their pre-service program because they felt there was not enough specific coursework on how to teach math and science.

They each had degrees in the sciences prior to pre-service teaching, but both of them criticized their programs for not giving them enough tools to specifically teach math and science, but rather that the programs focused on general pedagogy and relationship building. Sally sums up the feelings expressed by her and Karen as Science teachers in the general education classrooms:

> Because science is a lot different. All of our examples were about history projects and English projects. And, of course, we'll talk about literacy and history of science but it's very different than running a lab. We learned how to be culturally responsive teaching and stuff. It's just like the examples they gave were not so anything I could ever apply in my classroom.

In a study of 31 Science teachers Roehrig and Luft (2006) find that this is a common experience for math and science teachers. They also found that science teachers that had both coursework in science based teaching and extensive student teaching were more likely to be comfortable in the classroom and more likely to use inquiry based lessons. This lack of preparation for teaching the content put Sally and Karen at a disadvantage when they entered the classroom and ultimately created feelings of diminished success in implementing curriculum.

In the literature directed at potential change for pre-service education, course content that is out of touch with the student body and out of touch with the reality of the educational system is a common critique. In his book "Redesigning Teacher Education" Alan Tom (1997) discusses the critiques of schools of education and the reform measures that have been employed and are being advocated for. He advocates for a reform which strengthens the content knowledge of teachers on pedagogy, teacher specific practice, and core competencies interwoven with strengthened student-teaching programs. The reflections of the teachers in this study support the idea that indeed core competencies need to be stronger and teacher specific practice, such as behavior

management and meeting the needs of low-skill level students to bring them to proficiency. However, the course content should not only include models of practice with diverse populations but also coursework on modifying curriculum and lesson plans for a wide range of student populations. Many teachers lack exposure to these skills and relied instead on other teachers, former professors, and the internet to find resources and coping strategies.

College Professors, Cohorts, and other Supports

The participants relied on a variety of support sources, from co-workers to friends to social media. The support that they sought was mostly geared at finding solutions for dealing with behavioral problems, modifying curriculum, lesson planning, and navigating paperwork. However, particularly for those who moved away from family, social support was sought to help adjust to often being in a new town and adjusting to the overwhelming workload and finding a work-life balance. Those teachers that actively sought support from colleagues in teaching were better able to manage feeling overwhelmed or lost their first year. As in most professions, the more support mechanisms you have, the less devastating those really hard days can seem.

Four of the teachers reported having close relationships with their former cooperating teachers. Robert's cooperating teacher is across the hall from his classroom and he reports "popping in" to her classroom at least weekly to give quick updates on his courses and seek her feedback on issues he might be having. Robert is hesitant to reach out to others in his cohort or the administration, relying instead mostly on personal friends for other support. Rick's former cooperating teacher works in his building as an Effectiveness Coach. He says they are still in regular contact and she continues to be a great resource for him when he's facing challenges.

Connections to individuals in pre-service programs were few in number, but those that reported strong connections to their cohorts were more likely to report feeling competent in the

classroom. They also reported that they felt comforted by the awareness that "it's not just them," which alleviated some of the feelings of distress and drowning. Mallory went through one of the first true cohort configurations in her program and reports that the cohort was and remains extremely close, personally and professionally. Although she speculates that their personality matches may have had a lot to do with their closeness, she speaks to them constantly and relies on them as a daily system of support:

> I loved my cohort. The 25 of us were fabulous. We were the first official cohort (in the program). Others hadn't been a true cohort. We were called cohort One. All of our professors said we set the bar exceptionally high as a cohort. And so cohort 2 came in and I guess it was not going well. People in confliction a lot. People arguing about things. Where we were the best of friends….We have a FaceBook Page so all 25 of us are on there….. And they share their ideas as well. Even just supporting each other. Some people will just post 'Having a bad day. Needing some support today'.

Four other teachers reported keeping in contact with their college cohorts through FaceBook and Instagram, yet none reported the extent of network as Mallory had. For some, their cohort mates were seen as competitors in the job market, which became a source of animosity. Animosity was particularly stinging for those that were seeking jobs in the same areas as others in their program and who were unsuccessful at obtaining work in the areas they desired.

Connections to professors were also rare and were described as relationships of admiration. Only three stayers reported having continued connections to former professors. Kira reflected on one teacher in particular that also assisted her with pulling together her professional portfolio and assisting her with her job search:

> I mean, he thought that was really respectable and brave to come back and do that (referring to coming back as a non-traditional student). And on an academic level, he made sure that he was always available for me when I needed, when I had questions, or just he would email me probably once a week just to make sure, are you good, do you need anything from me, you know, you're a busy lady, he would always say, you're busy, I just wanted to make sure you're all caught up. And I always was. But just to know that he had my back and was always really interested.

For the two other teachers who felt connected to their former professors, both felt that the professors were "real" with them and gave them concrete knowledge they could use in their everyday practice. Neither reported returning to those professors for guidance once they left their pre-service program.

The majority of teachers reported using social media, such as Facebook, to keep in touch with cooperating teachers, former cohort members, and other teachers they had met along the way. Two of the individuals interviewed used Tumbler blogs to connect with other teachers and "bounce ideas around" for curriculum and lesson plans. Jerry describes how his connection to the online community helps him through the tough moments of teaching:

> It's kind of a community of teachers from everywhere. Every subject matter. And it's sometimes, a lot of the times it's kvetching, not gonna lie. But it's a lot of sharing resources. It's a lot of resources. It's a lot of hey this works for me, does this work for you? I've gone on there a number of times and said hey I need a way to teach this. How am I not thinking this through? And it gets reblogged and I get a deluge of messages of hey, have you tried this? Have you tried this? And I look for it and go back and. So it's

been very, very interesting, and it's great because I don't have friends in my town. I don't have a lot of people to bounce things off of. It's a very big community on Tumbler.

For many new teachers this was the same sentiment. They used social media to connect with cohort mates or other teachers just to share stories and resources. Six of the subjects specifically mentioned using Pinterest as a source of ideas for lesson planning and classroom set up. None of the teachers mentioned being referred to these resources through their pre-service programs and most that kept touch with college cohorts on social media noted that the cohort established those groups themselves.

Teachers that felt closely connected to their co-workers and administrative team were also those that reported satisfaction with teaching and with their current position. Rick refers to the teachers in his school often as "a team" and says he knows that "they have my back and I have theirs". Though, admittedly, sustaining the level of teamwork that exists at his school takes extra time from their schedules, he believes it's worth it in the end. Arlene, like most teachers in this study, not only feels disconnected from the other staff, she feels as though "they don't really understand what her goals are" in the way she runs her classroom. That feeling of disconnection and devaluation of her skills as a teacher have her considering moving within teaching to another school. Rick reports often relying on his fellow teachers for guidance and moral support. For those teachers that felt they could turn to co-workers, they were more likely to feel efficacious in the classroom and more content with their teaching assignment. Many of the leavers did not report having co-workers they felt they could regularly turn to, but the majority of stayers did have those supports.

Teachers' sense of camaraderie within a school seems to be based on the efforts of the administration to build those relationships. The payoff for teachers is additional support to face

the challenges of the classroom. Teachers without these supports often seek out an individual teacher within the school, or go outside of their workplace to find support. College cohort mates provide a sense of belonging and support that seems to be unique to that configuration. Providing new teachers with multiple means of support and camaraderie could be important for retention in a singular position, but seems not to affect feeling satisfaction with teaching overall.

Reinforcement or discordance of prior orientation/pedagogy

In his categorization of pre-service training Zeichner (1983) groups teacher trainings in the personalistic, behavioristic, traditional-craft, or inquiry based methodologies. He posits that training in one of these four styles develops teachers that are either focused on development of self, delivery of pre-determined content, or involvement in the curriculum and active control of the classroom. Based on my data, despite the "type" of pre-service institution these teachers attended they all entered into teaching and the study of education with a pre-conceived notion of how the role of the teacher plays out in the classroom and I believe these preconceptions are an important factor in their eventual satisfaction with the work of teaching. Teachers that experience a "match" of pre-service philosophy and their own orientation had that orientation reinforced, rather than developed by the program.

Using Zeichner's categorizations of teacher training, I develop categorizations of orientation to teaching and orientation to the purpose of education (Table 2). Those categories of teacher are 1) Teacher as learner 2) Teacher as coach/counselor and 3) Teacher as participant. Each of these traits became apparent throughout the interview process and are evident in the data presented.

Zeichner Classification	**Conception of Teacher**	**Conception of Education**	**Teacher (S=Stay; L=Leave)**
Personalistic	Teacher as Learner	Education because of a love of learning	Karen (L), Sally (L), Montana (L), Paula (L),
Behavioristic/ Traditional-Craft	Teacher as counselor/coach – Teacher as vessel	Educational content not as important as relationships	Elen (L), Robert (L), Arlene (S), Bonnie (L)
Inquiry Based	Teacher as Participant	Education as transformative or a gateway	Debbie (S), Ginger (S), Leslie (S), Kira (S), Jerry (S), Morgan (S), Mallory(S), Matt (S), Rick (S), Rose (L)

Table 2. Mapping of Teacher Typography to Categories of Preparation

There are, of course, commonalities between all of the subjects interviewed. They all care about their students and all have a sense of altruism about teaching. However, there is clearly a pattern, with few exceptions, to how a teacher's educational orientation and pedagogical beliefs match to their intent to stay in teaching. These patterns overlay into their teaching style and how useful they felt their pre-service programs were in preparing them for teaching.

Those teachers that entered into teaching because of a **Love of Learning** did not express a desire to stay in teaching for the long term. Often they experienced feelings of failure at "being a teacher" to the standards at which they thought they should. Sally says she teaches "because I like to share knowledge. And I like to have everyone learn and I hope I can expand their horizons and views on the world". All of the teachers in this category gave similar responses when questioned about their motivations for becoming teachers. They went into teaching because they enjoy the inquiry, the exploration of knowledge, and want to share that with others. Interestingly all of the teachers in this category were Science or Math teachers. For all of these teachers the content delivery was much more important than building student relationships and

often these teachers were shaken by behavioral difficulties in the classroom. These teachers felt surprised by the fact that students would not be as engaged in learning as they themselves were. Lack of autonomy in curriculum was difficult for those that experienced it. Montana, who uses a scripted curriculum, says that she feels that she's not "really teaching" but rather just dealing with paperwork and behavioral issues in her program. Sally, who has more freedom over her lessons, enjoys her students but says that her favorite part of teaching is "really fun labs" and wishes some days that she could shut her classroom door when class is over rather than continuing to interact with her students. The craft of teaching was not a focus of their pre-service training. With an orientation towards education that does not center on the student, these teachers generally enjoyed their pre-service training but felt ultimately unprepared to engage with the actual practice of teaching. With the exception of Paula, who had no pre-service training, all of these teachers ultimately expressed disappointment with their pre-service programs for not having more courses on teaching in their actual subject.

Teachers in the next category, **Teacher as Coach/Counselor**, saw a relational duty rather than the transference of knowledge. They saw education as secondary in their work as a teacher and did not press the importance of education in the lives of their students. In fact, three of the teachers in this category were coaches of some kind before they went in to teaching. This statement by Elen is typical of those in this category. Elen says of her decision to teach:

> So I went to a really small school. I graduated with a class of 24 kids. As I was growing up, my parents got divorced when I was 4 and I don't really remember it. But when I was growing up those teachers I remember as people who were the consistent adults in my life. My dad was always super supportive, but I knew that coming to school I always had that support system. As I got into high school I remember taking those silly surveys.

> What would I be good at? A nurse, a librarian, or a teacher. I was like, ok, I don't think a librarian is a viable job for me. I don't handle anything with blood well. I don't think I could be a nurse. I could be a teacher...So as I was going through school and realizing that I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be that support system for kids. I can be that other adult in their life...I always had my friends parents, and coaches too. The coaches in high school had meaning. My mentor on Monday was talking about how coaching and teaching are exactly the same. You have to do the prep work that goes with that. There are so many parallels. And I was thinking that yeah, my coaches were pretty awesome too. They could all be teachers.

For teachers with this orientation, the format of their traditional pre-service programs worked well with their orientation. The programs were theory and pedagogy heavy and did not require intensive study of subject content or practical teaching methods. The traditional-craft approach taught them to see themselves as a vessel of curriculum, leaving the role of the teacher to cultivating relationships with students. This matched well with their beliefs that the connections made with students outweighed the necessity of content in their courses. For Elen, switching core subjects was a positive thing for her because she could focus less on the content and more on the student relationships:

> Coming in to social studies is way less pressure [than math]. I can just give these kids open note tests. Like, I don't expect you to memorize these dates and names and things. Unless you're going to be on Jeopardy or some quiz show, it doesn't matter that you know these things. It matters that you know where this country came from and why and where it's going. Those are the big ideas I want you to take home. And being a social studies

> teacher I feel like I can be more of a, the social part of it, be good people. Do well in the world, be nice, and make a change. I like that. In the future I hope I can still do that.

Robert's narrative was almost solely focused on building relationships with his students. His perspective mirrors Elen's when he talks about the biggest contributions he makes for his students:

> And they respect me for it because I'm not just some math teacher trying to teach them math, I'm some math teacher trying to help them with their overall life. They definitely respect me for that which I do enjoy being able to help them that way.

Teachers with this type of orientation to teaching often talked about feeling overwhelmed with the work load and had difficulty navigating behavioral issues in their classrooms even though all of the teachers in this group were in schools that had fewer challenging attributes. These teachers were also taken by surprise with the lack of autonomy they had with their curriculum, as each of their districts used prescribed curriculum for their courses. Despite this they also all reported feeling grateful for the prefab curriculum as it made the actual practice of teaching the content matter, the less valuable aspect in their view, much simpler. When describing difficulties in the classroom this group often laid blame with the students and were not likely to take a long-term view of challenges. The teachers in this group put most of their efforts in to building personal relationships with students and felt a sense of failure when unable to make those connections happen. For them, the classroom was not about learning gains for students, and so content of their lessons was negligible. Similarly to the Love of Learning group, the realities of day-to-day duties of teaching often left them feeling ineffective and disappointed with the actual practice of teaching.

The last group, Teacher as Participant, varied in their relationship to the content of what they taught yet all expressed their belief of education as being a transformative element for students and that, for them, is what made teaching worth while. Jerry explains why he continues to teach and intends to teach despite the challenges of teaching in an inner-city school with many issues outside of the classroom:

> The idea that education is this gateway for a lot of these kids. The idea that the biggest thing holding these students back in front of me, aside from the enormous amounts of racial inequality in the country… I can't overcome that. You know, I'm one guy. Aside from the entire country, education is the one thing that can get them out of whatever situation they are in. And going to community college, or graduating high school, that's their key out for a lot of these kids. You know, some of them have no interest in ever leaving. Some of them are very happy being lower generals in whatever gang they're in. You know. But it affirmed for me that the kids that want an education but are struggling, and are told they're not worth anything. This is why I'm here. Because if I can give this kid the stepladder to climb out of this pit, then I've done my job.

Often these teachers mention feeling that even though teaching is a 'noble cause,' it is often devalued by the public. They are not the only group to mention feeling devalued as a teacher, but devaluation of education comes up more in their narratives than any other group. However, this group is often ready to combat the narrative of devaluation with a strong feeling of the value added that an education gives students. Mallory describes interaction with her father, who believes she made a mistake going into teaching and instead wanted her to go into business:

> It's so frustrating how devalued teachers are. How are we going to have a future doctor or future president if we're not teaching them now. It's like we're raising the future but

> how are we not being valued as people who are raising the future? I gave these kids the gift of literacy. How are we devaluing these teachers who are giving these kids literacy? Now they can go out in the world and they can read. It's so important. My dad just thinks that teachers have the best jobs on earth. They just get to play with kids and have the best benefits. So when he comes in to volunteer I give him my most challenging group. He actually went home to my mom this year and said 'Wow, this really is a hard job' and my mom said 'I think we made a difference in him'. We're actually teaching them things. We're giving them values, teaching them to think, teaching them to read. Whenever he asks how my day is I make sure to tell him the challenging things. The other day I had three kids projectile puke down their friend's backs as they walked in to school and it was crusted in their hair and the other kid slipped on it in their socks and I was trying to start the day. And he's like 'what?!' and I was like 'Yep, dad.' and I was also trying to teach them while navigating this. So you have to understand I have nineteen 5 year olds that I'm trying to solve these personal problems and then I'm like- lets do some adding!

This group approached other challenges in ways that set them apart from the other groups. They were more likely to discuss challenges with students in terms of how the curriculum can better serve to engage students. Here Morgan discusses working with a student he's had consistent issues with academically and behaviorally:

> I've got a kid. His name is Winston. He's actually a pretty bright guy if you can get him talking. Unfortunately he not a very...shall we say academic student. He doesn't turn in a lot of homework. Getting him to class can be an issue. Getting him to focus in class can

> be a real issue. And so I'm looking at this kid and he's sort of spinning his wheels in class. So I'm like, ok, what the devil can we do?

This kind of approach to students that are challenging is common in this group. They uniformly discuss their challenging students as "good kids" at heart that are facing challenges outside of the classroom or internally. They are less likely to blame the students for their actions and more likely to look for other resources, such as coworkers and administration, to help them navigate situations. Jerry characterizes his positive attitude toward his experience student teaching in a very challenging environment as such:

> Oh yeah. Yeah, because the kids were honest to god good people. They had just made one more mistake than the rest of us. Really, honestly that's what it was. They just got caught one more time than the rest of them did. And they never succeeded at a damn thing. They had never been told they were worth anything. And so, yeah, it really reinforced that, yeah, I'm doing the right thing. The profession I want to be in is correct.

Even though this group is overall placed in schools with higher poverty rates on average than the other two groups, they approach the challenges that come with working with those student populations with a different perspective than the other groups. That's not to say that this group doesn't express feeling overwhelmed with teaching, but rather they approach the feelings of being overwhelmed or challenged with a long-term view of problem solving. In this passage Ginger, who is teaching out of field in an inner-city school and has little support from co-workers or administration says this of her position:

> I need to be here and I need to be here for my kids even though it sucks for me sometimes. Most of the time I do love it and I do enjoy it even though I feel really overwhelmed and, like, just, I don't know what I'm doing. I feel like I'm trying to make

> a difference. And I feel like trying is enough, especially when these kids don't have anyone who's out there trying for them.

The successes that this group focuses were also different in orientation than the other two groups. They overwhelmingly identified successes as student growth, whereas the Love of Learning group saw successes in interesting lesson plans that went well, and the Teacher as Coach/Counselor group saw successes as connecting in a meaningful and personal way with their students. For this group a sense of autonomy over their classroom is of utmost importance to feelings of efficacy. This group also reacts differently from the other when they feel that autonomy is limited. When these teachers are faced with a school situation where their autonomy in curriculum is limited, they preform quiet acts of subversion. Morgan works in a district where they are supposed to be using a scripted curriculum. However, for Morgan teaching is about the content knowledge he is giving his students and he disagrees with the way the scripted curriculum lacks student engagement. He sums up his insistence on Teaching Like a Pirate as such:

> It's harder to pull off in the more traditional classroom. There's a growing period. I haven't quite pulled out the full repertoire yet. There's a growth period. I'll get to know you, you get to know me. Lets do this slowly so I don't get fired….Instead of saying "what I'm allowed to do" think more about what I can get away with doing. It adds a little more intrigue to that.

A common sentiment is that they teach what works for the students and what they know works to "hook" the students with learning rather than following a scripted curriculum. In this way, this group expresses comfortability and confidence in their ability to teach and generate learning gains within their classrooms. Many of these teachers went to the same pre-service institutions

as those in the other categories. Two of them participated in the same cohort model in pre-service. However, teachers in this category were more critical of their pre-service programs for focusing on pedagogy and being out of synch with the realities of the classroom. Even though they were not trained in the Inquiry Based style, these teachers sought out experiences and resources that support that style of teaching. They were most likely to be happy with the practice of teaching even if they were dissatisfied with their current placement.

The orientation of the teacher towards education and the role of teaching impacts how they approach challenges and how they interpret their experiences teaching. Their prior beliefs about education are either reinforced or challenged by their pre-service training. Once they have transitioned from pre-service to the classroom, those beliefs are reinforced or challenged again by the structure of the district, the curriculum, and the student body. When these pre-conceived notions, whether strongly developed prior to pre-service training or during that training, are mismatched with how the districts approach the practice of teaching teachers are less likely to feel satisfied with their role as a teacher. Further, if their pre-service education has not given them a realistic perception of teaching, or has not adequately prepared them to function in different educational environments, teachers are more likely to feel disillusioned, devalued, and defeated.

This contribution to our understanding of the experience of teachers is important because identifying primary indicators of attrition once a teacher reaches the classroom is not enough to understand why teachers make the choice to leave or stay. I would argue that pre-service training has a heavy role to play in setting expectations and reinforcing beliefs, which impact a teacher's sense of efficacy and satisfaction as much or more than contextual school variables.

CH 6

Conclusion

In order to understand how applicable the initial model (Fig. 2) is to the data I "walked" backwards from the classroom experience to pre-service experience. By looking at the data in this temporal fashion I address a major component in the argument of deregulation, that pre-service education plays little role in the classroom experience, little in how prepared new teachers are, and little in the decision to stay in the teaching profession. If this narrative is correct, then I would have found that those common indicators of increased risk of attrition have the most impact on the lived experience of these new teachers. What I found was, like most issues in education, it is more complex than that simple narrative.

Indicators. The common indicators of attrition did not always impact teachers in the ways that would be expected based on quantitative research findings. Teacher pay, school size, and urbanicity did not seem to impact the teachers in an overwhelmingly negative or positive way. Most teachers reported thinking of teaching as a "good solid job with a decent living wage." However, this could be because only a few of these teachers had families and none of them had their own children while employed as first year teachers. Discussion of the financial impact for teachers seemed to be more often related to the decision to go back to school to increase their credentials. School size and urbanicity seemed to be most related to their own background but did not play out in any significant way in their feelings of preparedness or contentment with teaching.

Student demographics were inexorably tied with mentions of behavior issues and could either positively or negatively impact teachers' feelings of connection to their students. How they interpret the actions of their students was different based on their orientation to education and the teaching profession. For teachers whom believed education was a gateway for students, the idea

that their students were "different than me" with different lived experiences became a reason to invest more energy into connecting to, understanding, and modifying teaching activities to better fit the classroom population. Curricular content was the basis of connection to students for those who placed value on education rather than emotional connection. Further, teachers that had an understanding of student differences did not place blame on the students for their actions, but rather took into account the social world that the student lived in. They sought to modify curriculum to make it more meaningful and engaging based on the student background. Those teachers that struggled with student behavior and were oriented to the relational aspects of teaching, talked about their "problem students" backgrounds as well but did not discuss how education or the experiences they had to offer could or would impact that student. Rather, they often acknowledged the student's SES or race and saw the student's background as a static item they could not impact. These teachers, if unsuccessful in connecting with their students, did not look to develop a curricular connection but rather accepted failure of those challenging students. These teachers felt less efficacious in the classroom overall and less ready to handle the needs of students. Those teachers that struggled with their students and did not feel they had adequate resources were those that reported wanting to leave the teaching field. Thus, orientation to education served to ameliorate the impact of student poverty or demographic differences for teachers.

In general, teachers often didn't feel prepared by their pre-service programs for the challenges their students were facing in life and academically. Those teachers that struggled also felt that they had trouble modifying the curriculum because of a lack of skills and background knowledge. Two of the teachers reported that they received some instruction in modification of coursework and a class where diversity issues were discussed. Many of the teachers critiqued

their pre-service programs for focusing too much on pedagogical models and theory and not enough on applicable and useful skills for modifying curriculum for diverse student populations. Teachers often relied on other coworkers and senior teachers for resources to address diversity and supplement what they did not feel they received in their pre-service training.

The "sink or swim" idiom held true for all of the teachers interviewed. Common were discussions of marathon work sessions and struggles to balance life and work. Feelings of drowning were not related to school or student characteristics. They were commonly related to handling the extra paperwork and duties placed on them by the district or administration. Teachers often expressed some dismay at their lack of preparation to complete all of the required paperwork and participate in multiple committees, such as Professional Learning Communities, IEP committees, leadership councils etc. Many reported that they knew teaching would be "a hard job" and a lot of work, but how the feelings of "drowning" impacted the teachers was different based on the orientation of teachers to the practice of teaching. The stayers saw the challenges of teaching as having solutions and were more likely to look at overcoming those challenges in the long run. They were more likely to recognize small successes, which would offset feeling overwhelmed. Many teachers, both leavers and stayers, noted that some preparation for addressing student data, participating in committees, and completing district paperwork for student learning plans would have been useful in their pre-service programs.

Lack of support from administration was often coupled with feeling "watched" or constantly evaluated. For teachers who had little administrative support feelings of devaluation, lack of autonomy, and lack of efficacy were common. This did not always translate into ultimate attrition from teaching but it was related to transfer to another school or district. For the teachers that had little administrative support and were still satisfied with teaching as a profession, the

orientation to education as transformative and a service to students served as a buffer to attrition. A positive relationship with administration was most often described in terms of a high level of autonomy to run the classroom and curriculum they way teachers saw best for students. Being given autonomy and control over the classroom was related to feeling respected, high levels of professionalism, feelings of efficacy, and satisfaction with teaching overall.

Teaching out of field had a negative impact on the subjects that experienced it. Teaching a different subject or grade level than the teacher felt comfortable with or was certified for was often related to feeling ill-prepared, drowning, dissatisfied with teaching, and a lack of being valued as a professional. Teachers that were asked by administration to take on classes or grade levels that they were not trained for or comfortable with expressed feelings of frustration with the administration, and feeling like the administrators didn't value the specific skills they brought to their classrooms. Rather than any alignment to pre-service programs, such as discontinuity with the needs of districts, teaching out of field was most often a result of hiring practices of schools. Often, schools would hire teachers a few weeks before, or in some cases days before the beginning of school, leading to a feeling that the school just "needs bodies" to fill space in the classroom rather than being hired on because of educational expertise. Orientation to education did not buffer teachers from the negative impact of teaching out of field.

Lack of autonomy over the content of curriculum was the most cited reason for dissatisfaction with teaching. Teachers who received pre-packaged curriculum, some so structured as to "not really need a teacher", felt disconnected from their classrooms, students, and teaching as a profession. For teachers in the Teacher as Coach/Counselor group, having pre-packaged curriculum was a good "crutch" for dealing with the pressures of the first year. However, even

those teachers that viewed it as a crutch reported often feeling like they're "not really teaching". They felt disillusioned with teaching and struggled with the content.

Bacharach and colleagues (1987) describe the ideal teaching situation as being based on "a conceptualization of teaching as a decision making process" in which the teacher's use of professional judgment is valued. Teachers that lacked autonomy over the curriculum felt as though their pre-service programs had prepared them to be involved in the creation of lesson plans and curricular content, but the reality of their classrooms involved highly scripted curriculum over which they had little input. This led to teachers feeling a lack of professional respect, a lack of competence in the classroom, and a sense of disillusionment. For most, the decision to leave teaching was often because teaching was "not what they had expected" coming out of pre-service. For a few however, the orientation of Teacher as Participant, buffered them from the negative experience of having to follow packaged curriculum. Buffering sometimes took shape in a quiet subversion of the pre-packaged curriculum for the "best interest of the students". There were two examples of these teachers in the Teacher as Participant group. Neither were first year teachers, and both had high feelings of efficacy as teachers, which most likely contributed to their confidence to engage in subversion of the scripted curriculum. Both teachers reported positive relationships with the administration and other teachers. For one of the teachers the focus on pedagogy and theory in pre-service education was mismatched to how he felt it best to engage with students and develop good curriculum. Rather he referenced exposure to more adaptive theory after leaving pre-service.

In summary, indicators of attrition were more or less impactful on a teachers feeling of efficacy and satisfaction often based on their prior orientation to education. The exception to this was being placed in an out-of-field assignment, which had a negative impact on all teachers

despite orientation. Lack of autonomy had the most impact on a teachers decision to leave teaching, but could be buffered somewhat by orientation. For those who experienced pre-service training that prepared them for professional autonomy and did not work in a district that afforded them autonomy, their dissatisfaction with teaching was highest. The impact and interpretation of challenges presented by student and school attributes could be buffered or enhanced by pre-service expectations and prior orientation towards education and teaching pedagogy. Teachers who felt education was a transformative or a gateway for students were more likely to feel satisfied and prepared to handle the challenges presented than their counterparts who viewed teaching as counselor/coach type role, where curricular content was less important than the connection and emotional support for students.

Pre-service Education and Prior Orientation. Each participant was asked to reflect on their pre-service experience and to identify either the primary useful component or the most poignant critique now that they have had experience in the classroom. From the leavers, "teaching is not what I thought it was" was the most common response. They often spoke of idealized scenarios in their coursework and their student teaching experiences. Lack of preparation for the amount of "extra work" in paperwork, lesson preparation, student data gathering, reflections, assessments and so forth were also mentioned as adding to the sense of disillusionment. Even for those that felt somewhat successful at teaching and felt they had a grasp on pedagogy, they felt unprepared for the "work" of teaching. Stayers also had stories of being surprised by the realities of teaching, but interpreted those experiences differently, using them instead as learning points in their journey to become the teacher. However, in both groups there were critiques of disconnection of curricular content from "the trenches" as Robert calls it. This reflects Tom's first three critiques of Schools of Education (Tom, 1997):

1) Classes are pedagogically focused, insubstantial, and inadequate for preparing teachers for the classroom

2) Courses are impractical and not grounded in a scientifically substantiated "best practices" model of teaching

3) Courses are centered around the "university life" and not representative of what teachers will be dealing with on a day to day basis

Three of the stayers specifically critiqued the mismatch between pedagogy being taught in education classes and the modern classroom. They saw it as something that is theoretically interesting but lacked application in the classroom in any real sense. It is important for training programs to realize that evolutions in technology and sociological events have indeed impacted student's lives, even if racial tensions and economic inequalities have remained somewhat stagnant. Some teachers criticized the task of attending courses while doing their student teaching, saying they "didn't really feel like they were teaching". They felt that by putting the student teaching experience at the end of the college year, where most major coursework assignments are being required, created a disembodiment from their experience student teaching. Overall, most stayers expressed a desire to have exposure to more observation time and an extended period of student-teaching experiences. The leavers expressed appreciation of their experiences student-teaching, but in some cases those experiences were thought to be a false reflection of the real work of teaching.

Overall few teachers felt they connected well to professors, and often reported classes being led by graduate students. Those that did connect to professors connected in part because the support that was given was useful and had practical applications in the classroom. Science teachers were the least satisfied with coursework, as they felt there was little in the way of

content knowledge specifically for teaching math or science. One science teacher criticized the curricular content in her pre-service experience as being "too kumbaya", full of positive stories and songs, but did little in the way of informing her work as a Science teacher and little to prepare them for the difficulties and failures they would experience in the classroom.

Discussion and Recommendations

In this research I set out to answer the following questions:

1) What impact do novice teachers believe preparation programs have on feelings of preparedness once they enter the classroom?
2) How does the experience in pre-service preparation programs translate into the lived experience in the classroom and does that experience impact the decision to continue teaching?

From the data gathered from 18 current and former teachers I find that teacher preparation programs can have an impact on feelings of preparedness in the classroom, but that both traditional and alternative programs fall short in that regard. Teachers who attended alternative preparation programs felt less prepared to handle the challenges of the classroom. Training programs were often seen as out of touch with the expectations of districts, particularly in terms of autonomy given to teachers over the curricular content. There was dissatisfaction with a lack of training on classroom management, strategies to modify coursework to meet student needs, and the focus on older pedagogical models. Prior orientation to education and the profession of teaching was important in feelings of efficacy in those first years of teaching, regardless of what training program a teacher had attended. Pre-service programs could negatively impact the experiences of teachers if teachers felt that the pre-service program was mismatched with the

experiences in the classroom. Expectations of teaching formed in pre-service had significant negative impacts for these teachers and heightened the chance of attrition.

Personal characteristics, such as family background and career paths, did not seem to impact attrition. In both the leavers and stayers, there were subjects who said they had always wanted to teach. In both camps as well, there were those entering teaching as a second career. None of the subjects had parents that had been teachers or worked in schools. Subjects in both groups expressed dismay at the public devaluation of teaching, and facing parents that no longer supported the opinion of teachers over their students. All felt these added to the difficulties of teaching. Subjects in both groups felt that students needed teachers and that teaching was a noble cause.

I would argue that a prior orientation to education and the job of teaching served as a buffer for negative experiences and the usual indicators of attrition. I posit that there exist three categories of teachers based on intention: Teaching for Love of Learning, Teacher as Coach/Counselor, and Teacher as Participant. In the first two categories teachers enter in to pre-service with the orientation of teacher as a vessel for curriculum. Teachers for The Love of Learning have the primarily goal of passing along that love to their students. Teachers with the Coach/Counselor orientation placed little value on the content matter taught, but rather viewed the emotional support they gave to students as the primary goal of teaching. Those who had the Teacher as Participant orientation felt that education was a transformative or a gateway for student's success and their primary goal as a teacher was to engage students in curricular content. For the Teacher as Coach and Teacher as Participant, the connection to students was very important, but only in the Teacher as Participant group did they express that the education the

student was receiving, the actual knowledge and content being taught, as being of primary importance.

If we look again at the Zeichner models of education, these three categories seem to support different models of education. The Love of Learning teachers were more focused on expanding their content knowledge and personal growth, supporting the Personalistic approach. This approach is not commonly found in traditional schools of education so it is not surprising that two of the subjects in this category were at the same private institute and the third came out of field through emergency certification. Teachers as Coach/Counselor align most closely with the Behavioralistic and Traditional-Craft training approach, in which developing curricular content is not the primary goal, but rather imparting technical skills to deliver content is primary. Most teachers in this category attended traditional Schools of Education. Their primary critiques of the actual programming were around lacking preparation for the behavioral issues in the classroom and lacking exposure to the 'realities' of teaching. This group for the most part found their pre-service experience pleasant, with the exception of one who went through T.F.A.. The orientation of the Teacher as Participant matches most closely to the Inquiry Based style of training, in which the teacher is both developing teaching skills and developing a 'teacher as researcher' methodology to teaching. Inquiry based learning has been as buzz word in teaching in the past but has fallen out of favor as more districts are turning towards pre-assigned and pre-scripted curriculum. Interestingly, this group had the most scathing critiques of their pre-service education. The programs they attended matched most closely to the Traditional-Craft methodology, with a focus on pedagogy and the student-teaching experience. This group found the most value in student-teaching and critiqued heavily the pedagogical focus of their pre-service programs. They were also the only group that took steps of 'quiet subversion' in their

classrooms when faced with lack of autonomy. Those that were most happy with their placement were in schools with challenging demographics, but had the support from administration to work largely autonomously. There has been some discussion of the possibility that an orientation to social justice or a desire to help people increases the likelihood of retention (Goddard & O'Brien, 2003), I would argue that the Teacher as Coach/Counselor and Teacher as Participant groups both exhibit these qualities, but only the Teacher as Participant group expresses the belief that education is the means to social justice. For the Teacher as Coach/Counselor group, teachers are the means to help students through emotional support rather than through education.

It is here that I return to the model of a teacher's education that has been established by prior research and political proponents of public education (Figure 2). Based on my data I propose that the model is flawed in that it fails to recognize prior orientation to teaching, it values the experiences of per-service in the opposite order that teachers value, and it fails to recognize how the difficulty of the job search pushes teachers into out-of-field assignments. Instead, I propose that the model of a teacher's pathway is more accurately depicted in Figure 3, below. Teachers of both groups found their experience student teaching and observations to be the most useful once they entered the field. Their coursework was the second most impactful, with the critiques that it is often out-of-touch with the realities of the classroom, and particularly out-of-touch with those teaching Science and Math courses. Most in the study had stories of difficulty finding teaching assignments and were often hired late in the summer or accepted positions out-of-field or mismatched with their experience. I find that the group of stayers faces the same challenges once they reached the classroom (the primary focus of Model 1 for attrition), are given mentoring and induction at similar rates (which was low overall), yet they interpret those

challenges and challenging experiences differently. I argue that the factors in the model prior to the classroom experience have a much greater impact than has previously been credited.

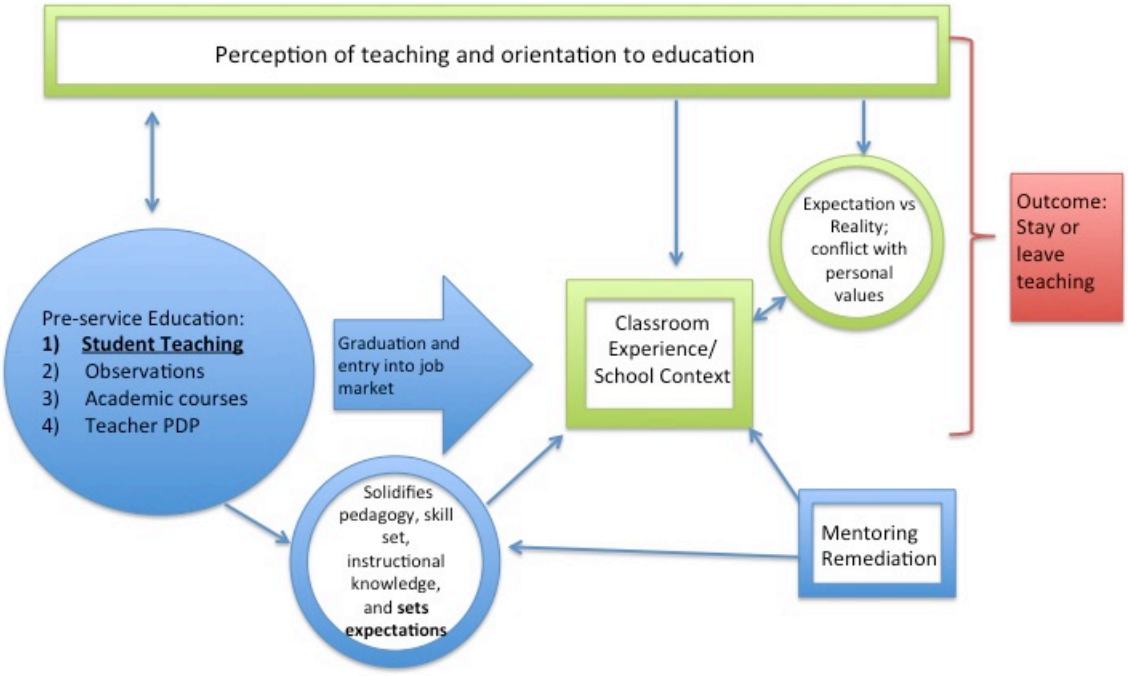


Figure 3. Modified Teacher Pathway

So what does this mean in terms of shaping pre-service education? It means that per-service programs are indeed impactful on a teacher's decision to stay in the field of teaching, but we need to re-think pre-service experiences in order to raise retention rates and develop high quality teachers. In her 1997 report to the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, Linda Darling-Hammond outlined an agenda for schools of education to strengthen the quality of program for pre-service teachers that includes:

1) Longer clinical experience periods

2) Stronger core curriculum focused on pedagogy in the classroom

3) Curricular focus on developing teachers as researchers

4) Strengthening the supportive pipeline from graduation to in-field service

My findings support components of these recommendations.

Finding 1) Clinical periods of student teaching and observation expose teachers to the realities of teaching and should be expanded to include more classroom time for pre-service teachers. In addition to supporting Darling-Hammond's recommendation I strongly suggest that cooperating teachers go through a more rigorous selection process and receive training to effectively mentor new teachers. I find that those student-teachers that had cooperating teachers who integrated them into the actual duties of the classroom, supported their learning in pedagogical and curricular knowledge, modeled effective behavior management strategies, and gave student teachers autonomy in their classrooms provided student-teachers with valuable skills and methodologies in which to use in their own classrooms. For those student-teachers in which the cooperating teacher had a more intrusive role, as mentor/instructor, making the student teaching experience less work in the classroom and more focused on simple observation or reflection, the student-teachers had positive experiences but for the most part did not feel that the experience prepared them for the realities of the classroom.

Finding 2) If courses are to focus more heavily on pedagogy, we must adopt a more modern approach to interpreting pedagogy. For those teachers that felt successful in the classroom and intended to stay in teaching, the pedagogical focus was outdated and unhelpful once they reached the classroom. Cochran-Smith (2003) makes the case that teacher education can be understood as social, ideological, rhetorical and political practice. The experiences of the teachers interviewed in this study support that. They leave pre-service education to enter into a classroom where they are dealing with the politics of schools and school districts, racism, classism, sexism and the effects of such, and above all the challenge of educating students that are existing outside

of school in a world made more complex by those very elements. In addition to a revamping of pedagogy, I would strongly suggest that more courses be added to pre-service programs on behavioral management strategies, cultural competence, social-psychology of adolescents, courses on sociology and the challenges of poverty, and a focus on course for strategies to adapt curricular content for low-level learners or those with learning challenges.

Finding 3) For those teachers that intend to stay in the field of teaching an inquiry based learning approach was consistently preferred. Even for the leavers, the desire for using a teacher-as-researcher model was high and disappointment with the real experience of schools was poignant. I believe that the benefit to changing teacher education in a way that focuses on developing the crucial skills that teachers need to differentiate curriculum, create adaptive strategies that work for students, and support student learning gains will translate into more stayers in schools with challenging populations because those teachers that have a Teacher as Participant orientation will have even greater skills and knowledge once they reach the classroom. That said, I believe that changing pre-service education to support teachers as researchers, as professionals whom experience professional autonomy as we see present in so many other professional fields, is meaningless in the face of districts that restrict teacher autonomy and insist on rigid, pre-formed, pre-scripted curriculum. Teachers placed in this position have two choices – they can deliver the curriculum and struggle to connect with both the content and their students, or they can perform acts of quiet subversion. Teachers must have professional autonomy in the classroom and they must simultaneously be prepared to use that autonomy. Many per-service programs currently operate in the behavioral and Traditional-Craft methodologies, offering skills for teachers based on an assumption of teacher as a vessel for curriculum rather than an active participant. Aligned with my recommendations for course

work, pre-service teachers need to be given the skills to act professionally in the classroom as active and engaged participants. A traditional-craft or behavioral model of pre-service education will not prepare teachers to engage in the actual craft of teaching. Rather, it prepares teachers to be counselors and coaches to their students rather than educators. A teacher as researcher instructional approach has been criticized as being "too much work" for new teachers, only adding to the heavy load they encounter in their first years teaching (Roehrig & Luft, 2006). I would argue that by re-orienting pre-service programs to a teacher-as-researcher model, those that are potentially unprepared for the challenges of teaching will be vetted from programs due to the realistic difficulties of attaining the level of knowledge and skill that it takes to be a successful teacher, thus potentially reducing the initial rates of new teacher turnover. Essentially, we must create programs in which the expectations of teachers match that of the taxing quotidian tasks of classroom teaching in a variety of social-structural contexts. By raising the expectations in pre-service programs, those who should transition out will do so during training rather than once they've reached the classroom.

Finding 4) Teachers absolutely need more support in entering the teaching profession. Difficulties finding positions led to teachers accepting assignments that were a poor fit or missing valuable training because of being hired on close to the start of the school year. Concurrently, districts and schools need to address the actions of late hires and prepare for secondary inductions for new teachers that were hired on too late to attend initial induction programs. Missing induction did not appear to impact the decision to stay or leave the field of teaching, but it did impact the feelings of efficacy in the classroom, at least for the initial first few months. Preparation programs can assist senior students in beginning the career search

earlier in the year, providing support with developing a professional portfolio, and helping teachers tune their interviewing skills.

In the model proposed by Cochran-Smith she emphasizes that the conversation around pre-service education must be based in research findings and distanced from ideological battles yet approached as a policy problem. Once we have achieved that we can address the questions of professionalism vs deregulation, subject matter vs pedagogy, and diversification vs selectivity. Based on my study of pre-service teachers I believe that by re-orienting the political and research conversations towards the development of pre-service programs in conjunction with alignment to school district practices, we can again move forward in addressing the pressing issues of teacher retention and teacher quality. It is important to recognize research that ties the attrition problem to teacher quality, in that the longer a teacher is retained the better prepared they are to generate student learning gains (Ewing & Smith, 2003; Hollins & Guzman, 2009). Our current Schools of Education are evolving at too slow a pace to prepare teachers for the social, educational, and increasingly disruptive context in which students are growing and learning. In a slow transition to alignment with real schools they risk putting teachers at a disadvantage immediately. What's more, programs which aid the deregulation of teaching practice, such as Teach for America, leave teachers woefully underprepared for the difficult teaching assignments they are placed in by treating teaching as a simple skill which can be mastered in a short period of time. They do not allow for the development and maturity of new teachers, or prepare them to take a long-term view of addressing challenges. Again, setting teachers up for failure in the long run. Support and training for teachers once they have entered the classroom, based on my limited findings, has little impact in their lived experiences in the classroom. By the time teachers have reached the classroom their orientation towards teaching has been solidified. This orientation is what can

potentially buffer them and aid them in developing their teaching skills, address problems with a long-term approach, and making it past the crucial first few years. Therefore we must return to a focus on developing a pre-service model that is culturally responsive, inquiry based, aligned with current relevant practice, and delivers a high-quality and realistic period of in-class training prior to graduation. In conjunction with changes to the pre-service model we must focus our efforts on legislation that encourages teacher autonomy, supports development of administration, and returns to recognizing the professional stature of educators. Educating students with pre-scripted curriculum is disservice to both students and the educator as they lack a means to engage with the act of learning.

Weaknesses and Recommendations for Future Research

Using a qualitative framework is both useful and easily critique-able. The words of a well-respected professor always come to mind when the weaknesses of qualitative research are discussed: "What? Are these the four most important white girls to ever go through school?". I returned to this quote often as I thought through my findings and my research design. Qualitative research, especially small-scale research such as this, certainly cannot claim to have broad based applicability. However, I would argue that qualitative research adds a depth of understanding to large-scale quantitative studies. I believe that this study adds context to much of the research findings on attrition that have been presented in past years. It is clear that contextual factors can be indicators of attrition, but how teachers experience those contextual realities and why they are impactful is more complicated than numbers would indicate. A larger scale qualitative research program on attrition would add much to ensure applicability of these findings across contexts. However, qualitative research on scale is costly and time consuming.

Alternatively, a large scale quantitative study could be conducted using more 'fine-grain' questions than has been in past research programs.

In addition, the sample population in this study lacks diversity in the racial and economic backgrounds of the teachers interviewed. It would be difficult to say that these findings would be applicable to the experience of an African American or Hispanic teacher. In fact, the additional pressure of racial bias in schools for the teacher could make the challenging first year experiences more difficult. It is impossible for me to say if that additional difficulty would outweigh the impact of orientation towards education. A study of minority teachers and teachers of varied income backgrounds would be useful in adding this context.

The findings from this study add context to the understanding of reasons of attrition, how pre-service experience translates to classroom experiences, and gives an additional consideration in the pipeline between pre-service education and the classroom. It is my hope that these additions to the context of research will help re-shape the conversation around the importance of teachers and the training and preparation in developing high quality, dedicated teachers.

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