Voices from the Field: Perspectives of First-year Teachers on the Disconnect between Teacher Preparation Programs and the Realities of the Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore common themes emerging from lived experiences of first-year secondary school teachers regarding their expectations of teaching prior to entering the teaching profession, as well as the realities in the classroom environment. In addition, factors influencing their decision to stay or leave the profession of teaching were also explored. A modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with in-depth, semi-structured interviews was employed to explore the lived experiences of 20 first-year teachers in the Delta, North Okanagan-Shuswap, and Kelowna school districts in British Columbia, Canada. The implications derived from this study suggest that curriculum developers of preparation programs and school district leaders can help improve retention and lessen disconnect by providing first-year teachers with the survival skills necessary to meet the demands of the classroom. The knowledge gained from this study may offer a clear understanding of reasons first-year teachers experience disparities between expectations of teaching and realities of the classroom, and how such disparities affect retention rate.

Keywords: first-year teacher; classroom management; support; disparities; new teachers; disconnect; expectations; realities

Introduction

Teachers enter the education profession and are attracted to teaching as a career because of what they view as the role of the teacher (Anhorn, 2008). Culross (2007) stated what motivated her to stay in the teaching profession was her love for continuous learning and teaching. Educators experience contentment in their role as a teacher because of the compassion they have for teaching students and the subject matter (Loui, 2006). Despite the fulfillment and satisfaction many teachers experience in educating children in the classroom, Roulston, Legette, and Womack (2005) posited 33% of teachers resign from the education profession within the first three years of teaching. An abundance of past and current literature supports that 25 to 50% of novice teachers leave the education profession within the first five years, showing an ongoing trend of the problem (Bang, Kern, Luft, & Roehrig, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Massengill, Mahlios, and Barry, 2005; National Education Association [NEA], 2006; Painter, Haladyna, & Hurwitz, 2007; Schulz, 2005; Yost, 2006).

Once beginning teachers enter the classroom, the expectations of what they perceived the education profession to be and the realities faced in the classroom can be different (Melnick & Meister, 2008). The education profession is a far more complex career than new teachers realize (Cookson, 2005). Teachers who enter teaching as a career should revisit why they enter into the profession in the first place.

According to Murshidi, Konting, Elias, and Fooi (2006), "when beginning teachers enter the teaching force, they often encounter a reality shock as they confront the complexity of the teaching task. The reality of the actual teaching situation sometimes differs so much from what the beginners were expecting" (p. 266). Novice teachers do not necessarily realize how complex the teaching profession can be. In their first year, many beginning teachers describe this period as a time for survival. Many researchers labeled the first-year of teaching as a "sink or swim" scenario (Amoroso, 2005; Cobbold, 2007; Hill, 2004; Howe, 2006; Lundeen, 2004; Street, 2004). Novice teachers are expected to figure out how to survive the classroom challenges and the daily interactions with administrators, colleagues, and parents. When new teachers arrive into the classroom, a harsh reality occurs because they had unrealistic expectations of the teaching profession prior to entering the classroom (Lundeen).

Theoretical Framework

In the education profession, a high attrition rate of novice teachers leaving the profession poses a problem for school board personnel who are responsible for hiring, supporting, and retaining teachers (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Liu, 2007). Several areas need further exploration to discover reasons for challenges new teachers experience in the first year of teaching. Since high attrition rates in the profession is a "longstanding" problem, understanding novice teachers' expectations of the profession and how these expectations relate to their actual classroom experiences is important (Ingersoll, 2004).

In the first few years of their careers novice teachers face several difficulties (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Herrington, Herrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2006; Killian & Baker, 2006; Liu, 2007; Roth & Tobin, 2005; Santavirta, Solovieva, &

Theorell, 2007; Yost, 2006). As the education profession changes, so do expectations, leadership models and theories, and teacher development (Anhorn, 2008; Melnick & Meister, 2008). The expectations of the education profession change at a rapid rate (Ingersoll, 2001). Teachers who do not receive assistance, knowledge, training, and support during their first year may experience a sense of abandonment and confusion (Ingersoll, 2001a). Novice teachers begin to see their role as not clearly defined.

Early career attrition rates link to a plethora of issues novice teachers experience in their daily teaching practices, which can cause burnout. An abundance of literature was explored for this study, which stated the following as issues associated with high teacher turnover rates, including (a) increased paperwork, (b) lack of resources, (c) feelings of isolation, (d) low salaries, (e) lack of parental support, (f) large classroom sizes, (g) lack of student achievement, (h) lack of administrative support, (i) lack of recognition, (j) student attitudes, (k) increased accountability, (l) job dissatisfaction, (m) burnout, and (n) stress (Anhorn, 2008; Kokkinos, 2007; Liu, 2007; Quinn & Andrews, 2004; Roth & Tobin, 2005; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005; Yost, 2006). A struggle transpires because novice teachers must cater to classroom students with diverse needs, report and assess students to the best of their ability, deliver quality lessons with various teaching strategies, and employ a range of management strategies to solve aberrant behaviors (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). For these reasons, attrition rates are a mounting concern for administrators.

Historically, a link between teacher preparation programs and educational research exists, which affects whether teachers felt prepared to teach in the classroom (Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007; Bruneau, Hoz, & Silberstein, 1997; Schulz, 2005). The role of faculty in teacher preparation programs is to train successfully and prepare new teachers to meet effectively the demands of the classroom (Beck et al.; Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). In a previous study on novice elementary school teachers, discontent in continuing to teach was experienced because "there was a disparity between their teacher education programs and the "real" teaching world" (Barrett Kutcy & Schulz, 2006, p. 78). The authors found teacher preparation programs did not prepare new teachers for such disparities nor were they equipped to teach in their first classrooms.

Curriculum developers of teacher preparation programs emphasize the theoretical component and lack the key components that can improve a teacher's practice and student learning (Beck et. al., 2007; Bransford et al., 2005; Brzycki & Dudt, 2005; Schulz, 2005). From the findings of their study, Melnick and Meister (2008) reported "Doing school" cannot be simulated in the university classroom, and one intensive field experience cannot equip pre-service teachers with the essentials to succeed in their own classroom" (p. 53). Such reasons may contribute to teacher dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout (Kokkinos, 2007; Santavirta et. al., 2007). Preparing novice teachers to be successful in the classroom cannot only be the sole responsibility of teacher preparation programs (Murshidi et al., 2006).

Methodology and Procedures

Many beginning teachers are leaving the education profession at a startling rate. According to Brooks-Young (2007), "For an alarming number of new teachers, the school gates have been a revolving door" (p. 44). The problem is dropout rates for teachers within the first few years of the teaching profession are high (Bang et al., 2007). According to Bartholomew (2007), "it takes three to five years for a new teacher to master the art of teaching and the craft of

the classroom. This is about the same timeframe when 40 to 50 percent of new teachers exit the profession" (p. 33). Feelings of unpreparedness, burdensome workloads, unrealistic expectations, lack of collegial and administrative support, alienation, and excessive paperwork are some of the reasons contributing to a first-year teacher's decision to remain or leave the education profession (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005; Guarino et al., 2006; Schlichte et al., 2005).

First-year teachers have an inclination to leave the teaching profession at higher rates than veteran teachers (Hill, Peltier, & Thornton, 2005; Liu, 2007). When new teachers enter the classroom, they experience disparities between their expectations of their role as a teacher and actual realities faced during their first year (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore common themes emerging from the lived experiences regarding disparities between secondary school teachers' expectations of the teaching profession and realities they face upon entering the classroom during their first year. Reasons influencing first-year secondary school teachers' decision to stay or leave the teaching profession were also explored. The data collection in the study included semi-structured face-to-face interviews involving secondary school teachers with one year or less teaching experience in the Kelowna, North Okanagan-Shuswap, and Delta school districts in British Columbia (BC), Canada. Associated interview questions, which relate to the central questions, served as a contextual frame of reference.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process took place in six secondary schools in the Delta, Kelowna, and North Okanagan-Shuswap school districts in BC, Canada. Data collection occurred via semi-structured interviews involving 20 secondary school teachers who have taught for one year or less. Only those first-year secondary school teachers with permanent or temporary teaching contracts and teach grade 8 to 12 secondary school courses were included in the study. From all three school districts, 55 first-year teachers were potential research participants for this study. Using a convenience sample, the target sample population was 20 teachers. Out of the 55 potential research participants, the research study included 36% of the population.

For the convenience sample, administrators administered packages containing information for this study to first-year secondary school teachers. Packages were administered until the population of 20 first-year teachers was reached. Initial contact occurred by email to first-year teachers. All potential participants received a package.

Over an eight-week period from May 10, 2009 to July 5, 2009, dates and times for the interviews were scheduled and conducted. Due to the varied schedules of each participant, interviews were conducted at various times and days of the week. All interviews were conducted in a mutually agreed upon time and location, were digitally recorded, and notes were taken.

Informed consent was attained prior to the commencement of the interviews. Prior to the start of each interview, each participant was cordially greeted and the digital recording device was tested to ensure that it was properly functioning. Using an interview script, interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, source of data collection, participation risks and benefits, the digital recordings of interviews, voluntary participation and withdrawal, confidentiality of the interviewee, and how long the interview will commence.

The interviews followed the same sequential order as written on the research instrument. First, demographical information was obtained to qualify appropriately research participants. Second, open-ended questions related to the central research questions were asked in the same

order. Questions did not need to be repeated; in some cases, the probing technique was used to obtain responses. No leading questions were asked.

To capture the essence of the experiences of participants, open-ended interview questions were employed to examine common themes or patterns that emerged. Responses from interview questions provided a better understanding of the disparities novice secondary school teachers experience and teacher attrition and retention rates. The steps involved in conducting interviews guided the interview process.

Since the interview questions were open-ended, they allowed for a variety of answers. When multiple respondents gave the same or similar answers to the questions, patterns began to surface. Such patterns emerged based on the frequency of the same or similar answers. Frequent answers that are similar or the same, which formed the themes that illustrated the essence and perceptions of first-year teachers, were organized into categories.

A review and analysis of the data took place to identify common themes and patterns that emerged from the conversations of interviewees. To examine the data, a Moustakas (1994) modified van Kaam method and a manual process were employed. In the manual process, extrapolating and analyzing the data from the interviews involved coding and categorizing words and phrases into their respective themes and patterns (Moustakas).

Construction of themes and patterns that emerged from the data through transcription of digital recordings occurred. By presenting the qualitative phenomenological data in such a way, a more thorough comprehension of the problem under examination transpired. The results added to the existing body of literature and reflection of the findings could assist educational leaders in providing provisional recommendations (Moustakas, 1994).

Analysis of the data allowed for meaningful themes and patterns. Organization of the data occurred in categories. Connections among the categories uncovered common themes and patterns. Through the deconstruction of recorded interviews, reconstruction of the data pieces into meaningful data categories and patterns occurred to find common patterns (Moustakas, 1994).

To ensure accuracy of the findings, transcribed interview transcripts were sent to participants for member checking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The emailed offer to review and validate the transcribed interviews occurred upon receiving the transcribed interview. The study participants who did not review the transcripts stated they were honest with their views and were confident in the accuracy of their recorded and transcribed stories.

Findings and Discussion

Core themes and patterns were developed by thoroughly examining the transcripts to discover the lived experiences and perceptions of participants in this study. Developing themes from the data consisted of answering the research questions and framing a deep explanation of the phenomenon of the lived experiences of first-year secondary school teachers. Composite descriptions provide meaning to the themes. The eight core themes are presented in table 1.

Theme One: Love for the Profession

Study participants (100%) expressed a love for working and inspiring students, and making a difference in students' lives as reasons for entering the teaching profession. Participants (95%) indicated the vision that drove them to choose teaching as a career was due to a teacher during their schooling who acted as a role model, connected with students, and presented the learning material that engaged students. Such teachers helped shape participants' approach to addressing students and the mandated curriculum. Acting as a role model for students, illustrating a passion for teaching through the coursework, making curricular lessons relevant and meaningful, building a classroom atmosphere of communication and trust, and fostering a student-teacher relationship are important skills for success within the teaching profession.

The theory of motivation applies to this theme, because when the teacher-student relationship is developed, communication is established, a relationship exists, trust is built, and a sense of accomplishment is experienced to teach successfully in the classroom (Robbins, 2005). Such motivators contribute to higher levels of self-efficacy. Higher levels of teacher self-efficacy may contribute to higher levels of performance efficacy, contentment in the teaching assignment, positive relationships with students, and less stress.

The perception theory is highly applicable to beginning teachers, as those who were inspired by a previous teacher may have high expectations of what it is to be a teacher and through such experiences, may develop an idealized view of how a teacher should act and perform in the classroom (Evans & Tribble, 1986). Supported by existing literature, the need to make a difference and build connections with students supports the idea that a novice teacher's morale affects the learning of students, which contributes to job satisfaction, higher retention rates, and success in the classroom (Anhorn, 2008; Culross, 2007; Ingersoll, 2004; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Massengill et al., 2005; Murshidi et al., 2006).

Theme Two: Rewarding Career

Participants (100%) agreed teaching is a rewarding career and 50% indicated an interest in teaching in the subject specialty area of expertise. Based on participant responses, the career is rewarding when the teaching acts as a driving force to help students become productive citizens in society. Consistent with the literature, a teacher's morale affects the learning of his or her students (Johnson, 2006; Kinsey, 2006). When a teacher's morale is high, the career is more rewarding.

Participants experience fulfillment and joy because of the knowledge, experience, and resources gained from the undergraduate degree obtained in their teachable subject area. This can lessen the strenuous workloads in the first year and novice teachers can achieve success in the classroom. Consequently, more time can be spent on the other demanding areas of teaching.

When first-year teachers teach multiple courses not within the realm of their comfort and experience, a disparity occurs because preparation programs only prepare new teachers on how to plan lessons within the specialty area of the undergraduate degree obtained. The practicum component should allow pre-service teachers to teach a variety of courses outside the specialty area because the teaching load will be appropriately aligned with the teaching assignments given to first-year teachers.

Faculty members who design curricula in preparation programs should account for the

current issues and experiences novice teachers face in the classroom to gain a better sense of how to help prepare new teachers. The hope is to match the curriculum to the expectations of new teachers such that the reality of teaching is not overwhelming to the point where a disparity exists. A disconnect is one cause of high novice teacher attrition.

Participants (60%) believed collegial support and camaraderie of veteran teachers are areas where first-year teachers feel a sense of belonging. For successful classroom teaching, novice teachers must have a supportive community of colleagues to exhibit feelings of satisfaction (Anhorn, 2008). Consistent with the literature, a strong social support network may contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy, less feelings of stress, and higher retention rates.

Collaboration and support from veteran colleagues enables first-year teachers to endure a sense of acceptance as a member of the learning community. Self-esteem encompasses the need to know the importance of being a staff member in the school and classroom. Of all teachers, first-year teachers need the most support because support will build familiarity with how to instruct classroom students.

Building positive relationships with colleagues will help create a coalition that will provide emotional support and influence first-year teacher retention, job satisfaction, and good teaching (Anhorn, 2008; Schlichte et al., 2005). Mentorship programs will help new teachers receive the survival tools and mechanisms that professional development and preparation programs may not provide. The suggestion of mentorship and induction programs are useful techniques is assisting new teachers in the classroom because they will have better preparation and knowledge of the instructional curriculum and feel less isolated in the classroom.

Theme Three: Disconnect Exists

Study participants (100%) expressed a disparity exists between expectations of the education of profession and the actual realities in the classroom during the first year. Prior to entering the classroom, 75% percent of participants believed all students would understand the lessons taught in the classroom and parents would naturally support the first-year teacher during student misbehavior situations. Participants (55%) believed students would naturally be motivated to learn. Evans and Tribble (1986) posited the notion of perceived problems by novice teachers might not encumber effectiveness because perceptions may be faulty. Participants (100%) acknowledged faulty perceptions about the profession occurred due to the inadequacies of preparation programs in preparing new teachers for the classroom realities.

Many participants expressed the desire and motivation exhibited in school is not the same as exhibited by the students they now teach. The notion that "when I was in school I respected my teachers and I had the drive to want to do better than just a passing grade" as expressed by one participant and shared by many participants was an expectation. Participants (55%) had no expectations of classroom management because they did not realize classroom management would be an issue. Classroom management is linked to the fundamental role of being a teacher and when not managed effectively, might cause teachers to burnout.

Participants indicated preparation programs are not providing pre-service teachers with the skills to manage a classroom. Providing workshops and seminars on classroom management at the start of the school year will allow first-year teachers to have a clearer understanding of what to expect in the classroom. Such professional development opportunities will lessen the

disparities new teachers experience during the first year; and gain the skills needed to manage a class and achieve teaching success.

Study participants (100%) indicated teaching is a lot more work than expected. Fifty-five percent stated a lack of support as another reality, indicating a disconnect exists, specifically in the areas of the practicality of teaching, student learning, apathetic students, workload, support, parental contact, documentation, record keeping, and classroom management. Consistent with the literature, when a disconnect occurs, new teachers feel isolated, which leads to feelings of frustration, dissatisfaction, anxiety, stress, isolation, and low self-efficacy (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Although the experiences were pleasant, participants reported unfamiliarity with the school and increasing demands were not what they expected in the first year. Educational leaders and faculty members should provide induction workshops/orientations to assist new teachers in creating successful learning and teaching environments. Induction programs conducted by educational leaders will help build on the existing teacher preparation programs, and ultimately, maintain higher retention rates, and help new teachers build familiarity in gaining increasing knowledge about the school system, which could reduce stress and anxiety. Participant recommendations in this study mirrored McCormack, Gore, and Thomas' suggestions (2006), as both parties believed the initial year of teaching is the most important part of a beginning teacher's professional growth; it directly affects career satisfaction and length.

Theme Four: Student Learning

Each participant was clear that students do not learn the same and to plan a lesson effectively means to incorporate individual learning styles to meet students' needs. Higher student achievement results in incorporating differentiate instruction and inclusive teaching practices. A generic lesson plan would only meet the needs of some learners in the classroom. The remaining students would lack the motivation and drive to learn because of the learning needs being unfulfilled. Participants noted all students have different learning styles and educational needs. Teachers must employ various learning strategies to effectively reach each student and maximize learning.

The definition of differentiated learning not only implies but also states emphatically individualized learning is important for student success. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory postulates that the basic, lower needs of individuals must occur before higher needs (Hayhoe, 2004; Maslow, 1954). If students cannot understand the lesson or complete the task, their sense of self-worth, security and safety, and self-esteem may deter them from becoming self-actualized.

When students become self-actualized, the first-year teacher also feels a sense of self-fulfillment, meeting the higher needs on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy. Feeling self-fulfilled is an expectation for new teachers because student learning is the core principle of teaching in the classroom. Effective lessons can contribute to higher novice teacher retention due to the feeling of accomplishment being achieved in meeting students' needs. In accordance with the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), maintaining positive student-teacher relationships will enable students to have a higher quest for learning, which elevates a novice teacher's feelings of fulfillment in the first year.

Understanding how to create a lesson plan to meet the diverse learning needs is essential for beginning teachers to reach out to all learners in the classroom. Having resources to adapt

and modify lessons relating to the learning targets will help to individualize learning. Educational leaders and faculty members should be at the forefront of this movement by providing release time, allowing first-year teachers to work alongside veteran teachers. This will give novice teachers an opportunity to learn how to create lessons and units that enhances student learning. Consistent with the literature, permitting new teachers to collaborate with veteran colleagues to develop curricular materials and providing the release time for new teachers to observe other classes are important for professional development and growth (Anhorn, 2008).

Theme Five: Preparation Programs

Participants (100%) indicated teacher preparation program theoretical courses were irrelevant for classroom teaching in the first year and did not tie theory into practice. Each participant implied classroom management courses in preparation programs are necessary. Resources and strategies on management are necessary to help first-year teachers survive in the classroom. Classroom management and teaching are interconnected and one facet cannot exist with the other. Research suggests the foundation of good teaching is applicable to effective classroom management (Anhorn, 2008; Melnick & Meister, 2008).

Curriculum developers should reconsider the relevance of theoretical-based classes in assisting teachers in their instructional endeavors. According to Kagan (1992), the notion that the theoretical framework in education programs somehow creates the foundation of formal theory that will nurture as teachers establish themselves needs to be re-evaluated. Moving away from the theoretical approach and towards acquiring insights into the job of a classroom teacher is a necessary attribute for implementing theory into practice (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

The methodology skills learned in preparation programs considered successful strategies for participants (75%). Demonstrations, manipulatives, technology, teaching resources, teaching ideas, feedback, role-playing, peer collaboration, and sharing of resources were informative and helpful strategies. Since the methodology courses in preparation programs align with the teachable subject area, the readily available resources will benefit first-year teachers because they will gain survival tools to teach the mandated curriculum.

When the lesson plans are already prepared, first-year teachers will develop the confidence and comfort to be able to stand up and teach in front of students, contributing to higher retention rates and feelings of job contentment. Reflecting on the knowledge and theoretical portions of preparation programs is important for putting theory into practice. As stated by Bruneau et al. (2006), a transmissive teaching approach does not benefit nor allow new teachers to become acquainted with the complexities of the profession.

Preparation ties into classroom management (Anhorn, 2008). When the novice teacher is prepared, the lessons run smoothly and students are more prone to actively participate and listen. When first-year teachers feel confident that students are behaving appropriately, they will find better ways to present the material for students to learn. To illustrate, when presented with a variety of resources, new teachers will gain a myriad of ideas to create lessons according to student needs.

Faculty members employed in preparation programs should reconsider the current program courses. Adequate teacher training for classroom management and teaching will better influence first-year teachers' decision to remain in the profession, a recommendation provided by study participants. Embedding classroom management strategies in practical experiences will

provide the real- world application to learning good classroom management, which is a suggestion provided by Freeman and Knopf (2007) after the findings from their study illustrated novice teachers felt unprepared to manage a classroom. Numerous strategies exist and can assist new teachers in developing better classroom management practices.

Theme Six: Practical Elements

Study participants (90%) wished curricular content in preparation programs provided pre-service teachers with practical activities relevant to classroom teaching. Ready-to-use strategies, real-world applications, and classroom management are activities participants wished they had learned. Pre-service teachers need role-paying scenarios to help establish an idea and practice what they had learned such that they become familiar with the types of situations they may encounter upon entering the classroom. A collaborative effort between education faculty and teachers can help move towards an instructional model that provides the quality teaching experiences that teachers require (Bruinsma, 2006; Schulz, 2005). While it is not possible for preparation programs to discuss all aspects of the teaching, the theory that relates to practice will help novice teachers develop intuitive skills in dealing with classroom-related issues.

According to one participant, "while practical skills are easy to pick up and seem easy, they take time to learn and I wish I was given the strategies beforehand. It would reduce the number of mistakes a new teacher makes in addition to the problems encountered." Continued professional developmental opportunities providing teaching strategies will help new teachers gain skills not taught in teacher preparation programs. For instance, providing a workshop on how to set up effectively a classroom will be beneficial. New teachers will become comfortable teaching if they have the appropriate skills and resources gained through professional development, which will contribute to novice teacher retention.

Theme Seven: Burdensome Workloads

New teachers are expected to perform many of the same tasks as veteran teachers. This is evident in the teaching assignments given to first-year teachers. Consistent with the literature, participants believed high attrition rates of new teachers occurs because typically, new teachers are given the most difficult teaching assignments, receive little support, are expected to coach extracurricular activities, are assigned to disadvantaged schools, and have more classes to prepare for than experienced teachers (Kinsey, 2006). Given such a workload, stress is inevitable (Hayhoe, 2004). A reduction in the existing strenuous workload will be more manageable for new teachers.

According to participants, multiple and new courses not taught previously affect a new teachers' decision to remain in the profession. New teachers have to self-teach to learn the new material and are not equipped with a complete set of lessons to teach for the entire year. This is time-consuming because for each course, new teachers are expected to create tests for each unit, prepare daily lessons, report student achievement, and mark tests, projects, and assignments. Fifty percent participants believed much of their personal time is consumed by teaching because they sacrifice personal time to prepare for the next day's teaching, which affects retention rates.

Theme Eight: Stress and Burnout

The daily expectations of teaching in addition to teaching multidisciplinary courses outside of the specialty area can become a hard, unmanageable load for new teachers. Participants believed a direct correlation exists between motivation and job satisfaction. Such a correlation mirrors Betoret's (2006) and Huysman's (2008) research on burnout dimensions in teaching. Both researchers stated high stress, lack of motivation, and high stress lead to burnout.

Stress is one of the leading causes of teacher attrition (Betoret, 2006). Consistent with the literature, the factors contributing to teacher stress and burnout, include (a) the teaching load, (b) lacking management strategies, (c) working with low achieving students, (d) increasing employer demands, (e) handling angry parents, (f) understanding pacing of lessons, (g) utilizing varying teaching methods, (h) working with mainstreamed students, (i) supervision expectations, (j) job insecurity, (k) apathetic students, (l) lack of respect, (m) lack of time management, (n) expectations from administration, (o) lack of support and resources (p) difficulty in being able to multitask, and (q) working in isolation can contribute to teacher stress and burnout. All such concerns transpire in the first year of teaching (Anhorn, 2008). Past studies have mirrored similar frustrations new teachers experience for not receiving the adequate support mechanisms to teach successfully in the classroom (Betoret; Murshidi et al., 2006).

Fuller and Brown's (1975) model relates to teachers' concerns about the situation and tasks and its relation to concerns about students and less on concerns about the self. When novice teachers are confronted with a variety of concerns relating to the situation, tasks, and students simultaneously, they will experience burnout. Stress and burnout contribute to feelings of discontentment to teach and are reasons why 33% of first-year teachers exit the education profession (Hill et al., 2005; Roulston et al., 2005).

Consistent with the research by Haberman (2005), productivity, performance, task, and attitude link to burnout. Such factors are associated with the fact that teaching is a multi-faceted profession. Participants in this study and past literature indicated in the education profession, maintaining teacher job satisfaction is a concern for educational leaders (Kinsey, 2006). Providing workshops specifically designed to assist, support, and educate novice teachers on how to manage the teaching load is necessary for several reasons.

First, professional development provides support for new teachers that would otherwise not occur because teachers work in isolation. Second, professional development is an avenue to gain skills not learned in preparation programs that could be successful and beneficial for the current and future classroom. Third, professional development acts as a forum for novice teachers to meet other new teachers who share similar experiences. Fourth, through a collaborative workshop, many teachers can use role-playing scenarios to work together in solving the daily dilemmas, areas participants indicated they wished they had learned and would have better prepared them to teach.

Conclusions and Recommendations Based on Core Themes

The New Teacher Support (NTS) model recapitulates the core themes elicited from this study and presents value to understand how to develop and set up first-year teachers for success (see Figure 1). The model illustrates how curriculum developers and educational leaders can better support first-year teachers. The purpose of the model is to bridge the gap and minimize the disparities between first-year teachers' expectations and the actual realities experienced in the classroom.

The model consists of three components and the components cannot exist without the other. To illustrate, the recommendations implemented by curriculum developers in teacher education programs need to supply the foundation for success of the support provided by school district administrators and leaders. Ultimately, the survival skills provided by faculty members and school district leaders will serve as valuable resources for new teachers.

The first component includes recommendations by participants on the strategies, courses, and skills faculty members of preparation programs should consider when designing course curriculum. As illustrated in the NTS model, incorporating inquiry and reflection practices into the curricular courses in preparation programs will encourage intellectual development and improve teaching practices in the classroom. This component of the model was created because of the suggestions provided by participants when asked questions specifically relating to preparation programs.

The second component, Administrators/Educational Leaders of School Districts, includes the goals leaders should incorporate to further support first-year teachers upon entering the classroom. Through continued professional development focusing on first-year teachers' needs, the skills learned in preparation programs can be emphasized and new strategies, resources, and skills can be gained.

In the NTS model, continued professional development throughout the first year will help to diminish the disparities experienced by first-year teachers. This will supplement the existing knowledge first-year teachers gained from preparation programs and will continue to help to shape their current teaching pedagogies. Because new teachers need the most attention and support at the beginning of their careers, induction programs can help build on the existing teacher preparation programs. Since a disparity exists, redefining the teaching pedagogies is beneficial as new teachers transition from preparation programs into the classroom. Changes in pedagogical thought through development designed for first-year teachers will help them better meet the daily teaching demands of the classroom.

The third component is the outcome when the first two components are utilized. Consistent with previous literature and theories on self-efficacy, motivation, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, perception, job satisfaction, attrition, problems in classroom teaching, and stress, first-year teachers who are taught the survival skills prior to and upon entering the classroom will likely stay in the profession. For example, if preparation programs tie theory courses into the realities of teaching prior to entering the classroom, first-year teachers will have guidance in what to anticipate prior to entering the classroom.

When new teachers walk into the classroom, administrators can supplement this support by encouraging new teachers to engage in professional development opportunities. Professional development opportunities should be designed specifically to provide a variety of survival skills and approaches to successful teaching. Adequate professional development opportunities will ultimately heighten new teachers' commitment to school and classroom teaching, feelings of preparedness, motivation, self-actualization, and self-efficacy.

As the model illustrates, a partnership between teacher preparation programs and schools can provide a purpose and direction to both faculty members and teachers in teaching in the classroom and providing the survival mechanisms. Curriculum developers and school leaders should instruct and assist new teachers and speak to those concerns. A collaborative effort between educational faculty and school district leaders will help move towards a model that provides quality-teaching experiences that novice teachers require for effective teaching.

Significance to Leadership

Scholars and practitioners will benefit from the results of this study as the information provided described strategies and resources that will affect the retention rates of first-year secondary school teachers, how prepared they will feel in the classroom, and the skills needed to succeed in the classroom. Results in this study provide educational policymakers with information to support the financial need for any professional development activities that correspond to the specific skills novice teachers wish to learn. From the results of this research study, educational leaders can discover strategies and tools to help those new teachers in the classroom, those who want to become teachers, and those who train and hire new teachers. For school board personnel hiring first-year teachers, potential results will be of particular importance as the cost of rehiring is burdensome. According to Cavanagh (2005), the nationwide cost of replacing beginning teachers in the United States (U.S.) who leave the profession or change schools is approximately $5 million annually.

Effective school district leaders understand the importance of supporting new teachers through effective professional development because it increases new teachers' opportunities for success in teaching (Gilbert, 2005). Such information is of importance to educational leaders who are responsible for creating induction programs and orientations that specifically meet the needs of first-year teachers and assists them in feeling prepared to teach in the classroom. The results can be of interest to faculty members in post-secondary institutions, as an analysis of the data provided important information aiding in the development of program curricular planning. The results is of interest for schoolteachers and administrators because the lived experiences of study participants provided a better understanding and insight into why new teachers leave the education profession.

Adequate support mechanisms for appropriate training and management are important for the success of first-year teachers. Educational leaders and administrators who aspire to work with new teachers in becoming familiar with school culture, in helping to solve the daily dilemmas of teaching, and in shaping first-year teachers' teaching philosophy will contribute to first-year teacher success. When district leaders are visible through being at the forefront of providing support, first-year teachers will experience higher levels of self-efficacy.

School in-services conducted by administrators, providing release time for novice teachers to work with veteran teachers, and school district professional development opportunities will provide new teachers with a myriad of choices on how to specifically prepare first-year teachers. They need to be provided with professional development opportunities to help them receive adequate resources in becoming a seasoned teacher. Administrative support will influence both career satisfaction and retention of beginning teachers, as the initial year of teaching is the most important part of a novice teacher's professional growth (Quinn & Andrews, 2005).

Limitations to this Study

In this study, the following limitations are applicable:
1. The study was limited to 20 first-year teachers in three school districts in British Columbia, Canada. The sample size was limited and beyond the researcher's control.
2. Only secondary schools in the Delta, Kelowna, and North Okanagan-Shuswap school

districts were involved in the study. The results may not accurately represent school districts in other parts of the country.

3. It was assumed that participants would respond without preconceived biases when completing the survey. Therefore, the study is limited to teacher honesty in response to the interview questions.

4. Generalizability is limited due to a homogenous sample and time sensitive and natural settings that are subject to change.

5. Data collection and analysis was limited to a 3-month timeframe. A longer length of time may have improved the depth of thematic analysis.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings from the study the following recommendations are suggested. Since this study was limited to only three school districts in BC, Canada, it is recommended that future research be conducted in additional school districts across the country with a larger sample size. This would allow future researchers to gather information that is more detailed from a variety of geographical areas and may lead to an in-depth understanding of first-year teachers' expectations of teaching prior to entering the profession, as well as their actual experiences in the classroom.

Due to the relatively small geographic area used in this study, the limitation of the study to secondary school teachers, and the number of participants, a suggestion for future research is to repeat the study in elementary and middle school in other areas across Canada. A repeat qualitative phenomenological study with the same group would also determine if changes have occurred over a certain length of time. Future researchers could also conduct the same qualitative study asking the same questions with a larger sample size in the same school districts, which would provide comparative perceptions and innovative insights.

Studies to determine the effectiveness of mentorship programs on first-year teachers would also add to the insights that may be shared across those who already have mentorship programs in place. As the problems that first-year teachers face on a daily basis continue to be the reality of classroom teaching, studies which examine mentorship and first year classroom teaching should be conducted to identify the effectiveness and challenges and how they contribute to first-year teacher success in the classroom. A recommended area is to conduct comparative studies showing the impact of mentorship programs on first-year teachers and first-year teachers who are not involved in a mentorship program.

Future research in teacher preparation programs and first-year teacher preparedness in schools should be conducted to establish statistically the significance of whether preparation programs are meeting the needs of first-year teachers is another recommended area. Longitudinal studies to determine the lasting effects of new teachers' views of the education profession as they progress further into the career should also be conducted. The results of such studies would provide information on whether first-year teachers become better acquainted with the profession with time and experience. Future research comparing first-year teachers with veteran teachers should be conducted to see whether a difference exists in terms of the expectations of the teaching profession and the realities of the classroom.

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Table 1

Core Themes and Patterns from Interviews

| Theme and Pattern	Description
Love for the profession	Love working with students and making a difference in students' lives
Rewarding career	Inspiring students to succeed in school and life through subject matter and relationships
Disconnect exists	Clear disconnect between the expectations and realities of classroom teaching
Student learning	Meeting all learners' needs via inclusive teaching practices and differentiated instruction
Preparation programs	Theory courses irrelevant, methodology courses relevant, and management courses necessary
Practical elements	Emphasis on strategies and skills necessary to survive in the first year classroom
Burdensome workloads	Various expectations on first-year teachers and teaching outside regular school hours
Stress and burnout	Result of the demands placed on first-year teachers
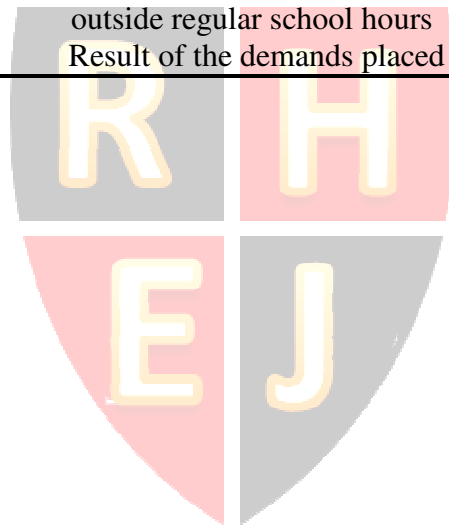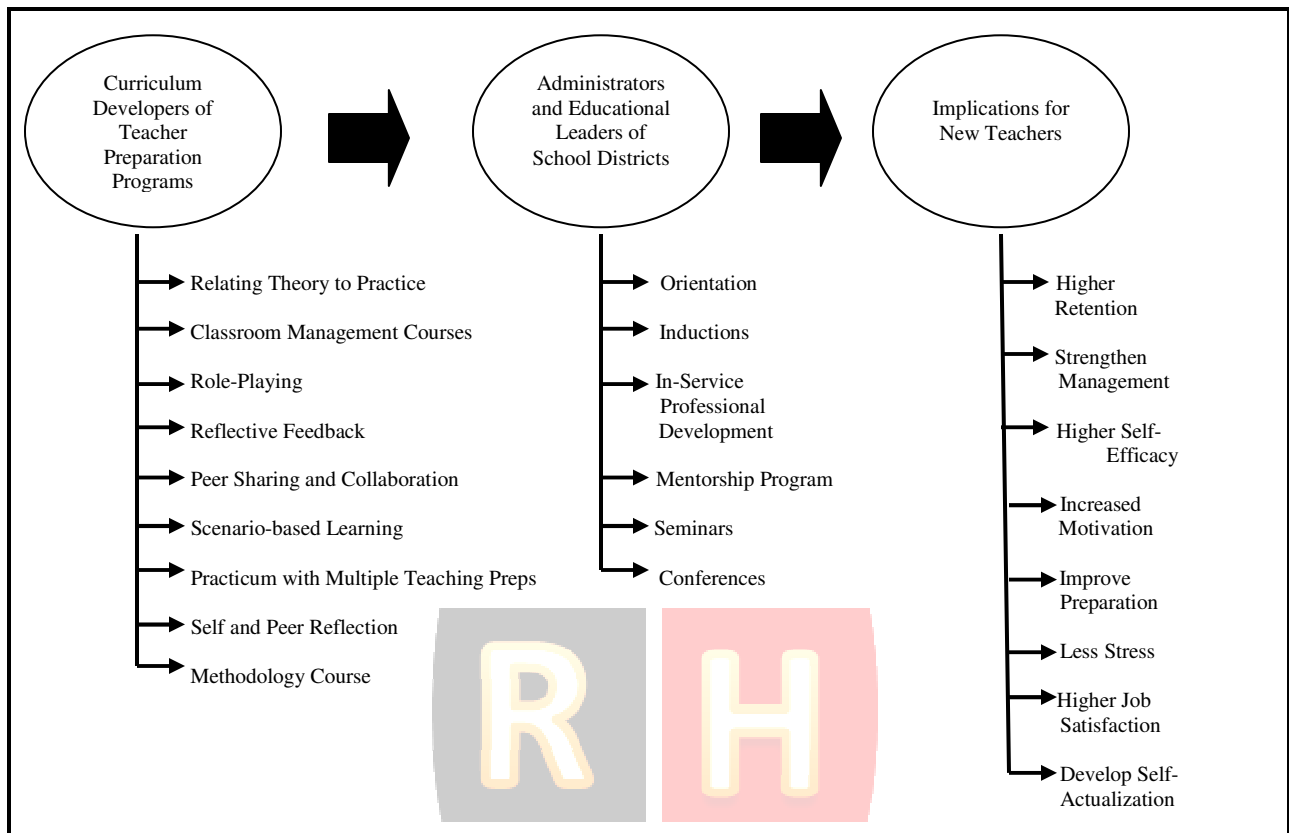
Figure 1. NTS model of preparation for first-year teacher development.