

BEGINNING TEACHERS: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND JOB
SATISFACTION

by

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Abstract

This qualitative, multiple case study aimed to better understand beginning teachers' expectations of the profession, and the role that expectations play in overall job satisfaction. The need for the study is rooted in the reality that schools are faced with the problem of high rates of beginning teacher turnover that impacts school budgets and student achievement. In order to better understand the factors that lead to teacher turnover, the study focused on job satisfaction and used Oliver's Expectation Confirmation Theory (1977/1980) as a framework to guide the study.

The study included five teachers in New England with one to three years of teaching experience and explored their expectations of teaching, how their expectations matched up to the reality of teaching, and the impact that expectations played in their job satisfaction. Data was collected through the use of a survey, focus group, interviews, document review, and member checking. Findings indicate that teachers prioritize their expectations and that those expectations do influence job satisfaction. Additional findings indicate that beginning teachers expect to: enter the profession prepared to fulfill the requirement of the position, have the ability to make a difference, and be provided with support from their colleagues. The researcher recommends that institutions that prepare teachers and administrators rethink their curriculum and that schools provide more support for beginning teachers.

Keywords: beginning teachers, expectations, job satisfaction

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The current rates of teacher turnover strain school budgets and limit potential student achievement. To address the issue, there is a need to understand the real-time expectations of beginning teachers while they are still employed, not after they have left. To date, however, research in this area, most notably from the U.S. Department of Education, has tended to focus on individuals who have already resigned, and whose perspective would likely be altered.

This qualitative multiple case study seeks to explore the expectations of beginning teachers (e.g., teachers with one to three years of experience), how those expectations compare to the reality of teaching, and if discrepancies impact the level of job satisfaction reported. The goal is that findings from this study will provide superintendents, administrators, and universities who train administrators and teachers with insight about discrepancies between expectations and the reality of teaching so that support is provided in an effort to increase job satisfaction and retain beginning teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Research shows that teachers experience higher rates of turnover than other professions (Ingersoll, 2002). Turnover is especially high for beginning teachers, 13 percent of whom do not return to the classroom after the first year of teaching (Neason, 2014). The rate increases over time, with 20 percent leaving their positions in three years (Brown, 2003), and an alarming 40 to 50 percent leaving after only five years in the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Ingersoll (2003) pointed out that approximately half of those resignations are individuals moving from one teaching job to another and the other half consists of individuals who leave the profession either permanently or temporarily. According to Ingersoll, “Not all turnover is bad by any means”

(Phillips, 2015, para. 17). Some individuals are not suited for teaching. Whether individuals are asked to leave, leave on their own, or move to a different school, school districts suffer financially and lose an experienced teacher.

Recent findings show that school districts nationwide are paying a hefty price when teachers leave, and that price is growing every year (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). In 2005, the Alliance for Excellence in Education estimated the annual cost of teacher turnover in the United States at \$4.9 billion. Almost half this amount, \$2.2 billion, was spent on teachers who left the profession, and the other half was spent on teachers who moved from one school to another (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2005). Just two years later, findings from The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) indicated that the United States spends over \$7 billion annually due to teacher turnover. When teachers leave, there is an unavoidable cost – money is spent on recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

Perhaps the greatest concern is the fact that urban schools – already struggling with daunting funding problems – experience some of the highest rates of turnover (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2005; Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Haberman, 2004; The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The result is all too obvious. “Low performing schools rarely close the student achievement gap because they never close the teaching quality gap – they are constantly rebuilding their staff” (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007, p. 4). Student learning suffers whenever inexperienced teachers leave the profession before they develop the skills to become effective teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003), and schools fill positions with “a continuous string of short-and long-term substitute teachers” (Terry & Kritsonis, 2008, p. 3). In

New York City, a study conducted by Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) indicated that student achievement in math and English language arts suffers as a direct result of the high rate of teacher turnover. The study also suggested that a high rate of turnover affects the morale of teachers that stay and may have an impact on school culture and collegiality (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

Current Supports for Beginning Teachers

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that teaching has always had “high levels of attrition among newcomers” (p. 202). As a result, programs have been created to prepare individuals for the profession and to support beginning teachers when they enter the classroom (Andrews & Quinn, 2005). First, individuals wishing to enter into teaching are guided through either a bachelor’s or a master’s teacher preparation program with the goal of earning a certificate in teaching. Second, after an individual is hired, some schools offer the support of a mentor through an induction program. These two supports exist today in varying formats. Some schools have developed programs that include a number of supports, while other schools have yet to develop a mentor program. Additionally, it should be noted that methods of preparing teachers and transitioning them into the profession have changed dramatically over time.

Teacher preparation. During the colonial period, people did not receive training before becoming a teacher (Fraser, 2007). In fact, few teachers remained in the profession longer than five years (Fraser, 2007) as teaching was viewed as a stepping-stone to prepare men for white or blue-collar jobs and women for motherhood (Ingersoll, 2003). In the later 1820s Common School Era, academies were established and were the first institutes in a line of organizations that aimed at preparing teachers for the classroom (Fraser, 2007). This work was furthered through seminaries created by Emma Willard, Zilpah Grant, Mary Lyon, and Catherine Beecher, and as a

result, by 1850 teaching became a female-dominated occupation (Fraser, 2007). These seminaries “articulated teacher education--alongside preparation for motherhood--as a primary mission” (Ogren, 2005, p. 17). Once again illustrating that during the early stages of education, teaching was not meant to be a life-long profession.

Normal schools became very popular toward the end of the 19th century and provided instruction in content knowledge, the art of teaching, classroom management, and an opportunity to observe and practice teaching (Fraser, 2007; Ogren, 2005). Through normal schools, the emphasis on preparation shifted to include an understanding of children and their development as well as knowledge in the subject area (Labaree, 2008). By the 1860s, the curriculum became more in-depth and included theory and the art of teaching (Ogren, 2005).

Requirements for teachers have become more rigorous over time. Between 1929 and 1939 there was a dramatic and fast increase in the requirements of teachers (Fraser, 2007). By 1937, 41 states required that teachers earn a high school diploma and 35 of the 48 states also required education beyond high school (Fraser, 2007). In the 1950s, the Fund for the Advancement of Education, a project through the Ford Foundation, focused on rethinking teacher education and supported a five-year program at the University of Arkansas as a method of preparing teachers (Fraser, 2007). By adding the additional year, teachers gained practical experiences observing veteran teachers and developing their teaching practices while under the guidance of an experienced teacher (Fraser, 2007). According to Fraser (2007) a master’s program provides “far more time spent directly in schools, observing teachers and teaching under supervision, than was possible in any existing undergraduate curriculum” (p. 199). This shift, the pairing of pedagogy and practice, is thought to help preservice teachers gain a better understanding of the profession (Clark, Byrnes, & Sudweeks, 2014; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Fraser,

2007). In contrast to the master's program, alternative forms of preparation have also been introduced such as the National Teacher Corps that began in 1966 to help disadvantaged schools in the United States (Fraser, 2007).

Mentoring. To ease the transition into teaching, some schools provide support through mentors and induction programs in order to retain qualified beginning teachers and to help teachers become effective practitioners as soon as possible (Andrews & Quinn, 2005). It is estimated that mentoring programs could lower attrition rates from 50 percent to 15 percent within the first five years of teaching (Brown, 2003). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that programs that include a higher variety of supports (e.g., access to a mentor, connections to a network of teachers, having a reduced number of preparations, etc.) typically yield a higher rate of teacher retention.

Induction. An induction program incorporates a mentor as a key facilitator and incorporates a variety of advisors throughout the district who assist the beginning teacher via common planning time, feedback from observations, support with curriculum, a transition period that includes a reduced teaching schedule, and classroom support (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). "Quality induction provides a bridge between teacher preparation and practice that supports the distinct learning needs of new teachers during their initial years of teaching" (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 3). While these programs vary from school to school, they often include workshops, opportunities for collaboration, orientation seminars, and mentoring (Smith, 2007).

Induction programs are rooted in the practice of mentoring, which was first used by businesses in the 1980s in an effort to retain new employees (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). In K-12 schools, mentoring became a popular idea in the mid-1980s (Brown, 2003). By 1986, 17 states were piloting programs for mentoring, and 14 states were developing programs,

and by 1987, there were only three states without mentoring programs (Brown, 2003). In 2008, 25 states required new teachers to participate in a mentor or induction program (Wood & Stanulis, 2009) and programs reached 91% of new teachers (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012).

Web-based Induction. New forms of induction programs utilize the Internet. These programs increase participation due to the ease of accessibility (Donne & Lin, 2013). The first web-based induction programs utilized the Internet, e-mail, listservs, and CD-ROMS. E-mail, as a method of mentoring, has saved districts money and connects teachers who are geographically isolated (Bang, 2013). More recent programs have followed the lead of hospitals, businesses, and universities, and these new programs have incorporated wikis as a component of induction (Covert, 2011). These programs are successful as beginning teachers can gain insight from a variety of mentors ranging from other beginning teachers to the superintendent (Taranto, 2011).

Need and Purpose of the Study

Despite the supports of teacher preparation and mentor programs, the attrition rate remains high for beginning teachers (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). Data from the 2012-2013 school year confirmed that among beginning teachers, 13 percent left their school and 7 percent left the profession (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). There are a variety of reasons that contribute to teacher turnover; however Richard Ingersoll stated, “the primary reason they leave is because they’re dissatisfied” (Neason, 2014). Ingersoll, an experienced researcher on beginning teachers and turnover, believes that an increase in support will help to retain beginning teachers (Ingersoll, 2012). Additionally, Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) suggested that an understanding is needed of beginning teachers’ expectations of the profession and how those expectations impact their decision to remain as a teacher. As a result of Ingersoll’s findings and

the suggestion of Kyriacou and Kunc (2007), this study focuses on the role that expectations play in a beginning teacher's level of job satisfaction. This study seeks to further Ingersoll's findings through an in-depth exploration of the relationship between expectations of beginning teachers and their reported level of job satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is considered to be a “systematic way of thinking through and articulating what you plan to study and how you plan to study it” (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 3). Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) believed that for beginning researchers a theoretical framework is especially helpful as it provides clarity and focus on “which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and . . . what information should be collected and analyzed” (p. 20). A theoretical framework completes the research design as it provides strong guidance in determining what data needs to be collected and the strategies for analyzing the data (Yin, 2014).

Beginning Teachers and Learning

This study of beginning teachers is rooted in adult learning theory. According to adult learning theory, also referred to as andragogy, adults acquire knowledge differently than children. As a result, as adult learners mature:

- their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being;
- they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning;

- their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and
- their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness. (Knowles, 1960, pp. 44-45)

Therefore, it is to be expected that teachers, as students of education, will evolve throughout their experiences. While completing a teacher preparation program, individuals are exposed to a variety of situations to practice teaching, but much of the learning for new teachers happens as they progress through the first few years teaching on their own.

New teachers need to be guided in their learning about the profession. Feiman-Nesmer (2001) stated that new teachers need to be supported through educative mentoring – a practice by which mentors “attend to beginning teachers’ present concerns, questions, and purposes without losing sight of long-term goals for teacher development” (p. 17). Educative mentoring is grounded in the work of Dewey (1938) as it incorporates the need for experiential learning that produces growth. In this regard, it is the role of the professors during preparation to help guide preservice teachers in the acquisition of knowledge about content, pedagogy, and the skill sets necessary for teaching. Upon hire, it becomes the role of the administrators, mentors, and veteran teachers to provide support to beginning teachers. While teachers may have experienced a preparation program, according to Feiman-Nesmer (2001):

No matter what kind of preparation a teacher receives, some aspects of teaching can be learned only on the job. No college course can teach a new teacher how to blend

knowledge of particular students and knowledge of particular content in decisions about what to do in specific situations. (p. 18)

While preparation programs support the development of teachers, there are certain aspects of teaching that can only be learned in the classroom and thus, further understanding can be facilitated through guidance from a mentor.

Educative mentoring is helpful in supporting beginning teachers but is also something that today's new teachers expect ("Generation Y teachers looking for change," 2008).

Generation Y teachers, who were born between 1980 and the early 2000s and are also referred to as Millennials, look to teaching as a long-term career but report supportive administrators are more important than an increased salary ("Generation Y teachers looking for change," 2008).

Additionally, Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) found that a comprehensive teacher training followed by intensive mentoring helps to produce teachers who receive positive evaluations.

Job Satisfaction

A variety of theories have been constructed to explain job satisfaction. This study is grounded in Locke's Range of Affect Theory (1976) which states that job "satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a job" (Kumar & Singh, 2011). Therefore, as Ingersoll suggested, satisfaction is achieved when one's expectations of a job are met or exceeded (Neason, 2014). In contrast, when one's expectations are not met, job dissatisfaction occurs. This theory is in line with Oliver's Expectation Confirmation Theory (1977/1980), often referred to as the Expectations Disconfirmation Theory, which was used as a guide for this study.

The Expectations Confirmation Theory (1977/1980) (ECT) traditionally has been applied in marketing; however, this research will apply the theory to beginning teachers' expectations of

the teaching profession. ECT has also been used in studies about Information Systems, online education (Chou, Lin, Woung, & Tsai, 2012; Shih-Wei, Hui-Tzu, Yu-Chieh, & Chun-Tung, 2010), and experiences in higher education (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006).

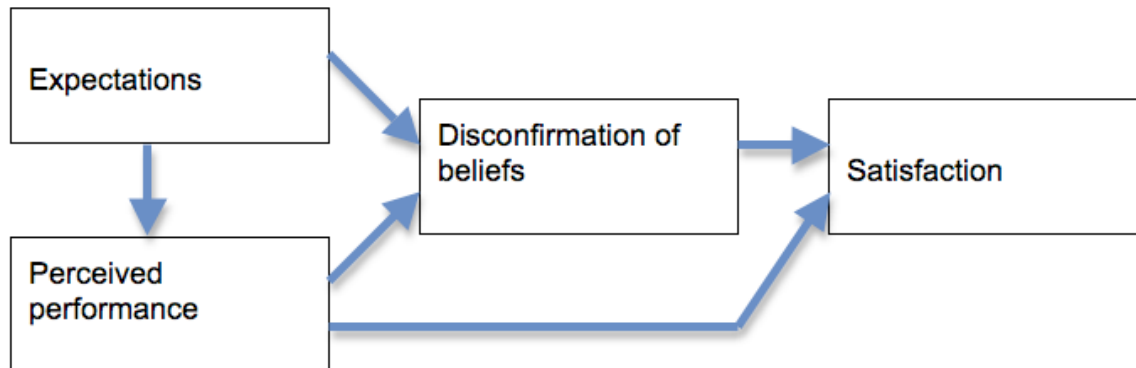


Figure 1 Oliver's Expectations Confirmation Theory

According to this theory, preservice teachers will have developed expectations of teaching based on their prior experiences. As they enter into a teacher preparation program, the expected outcome is that upon graduation they will be ready for the classroom. This expectation is furthered through advertising that a graduate will be eligible for state certification upon successful completion of the preparation program.

Expectations play a major role in determining satisfaction as they “are thought to create a frame of reference about which one makes a comparative judgment” (Oliver, 1980, p. 460).

Oliver (1980) wrote that expectations have two roles. “First, they serve to provide the foundation for attitude formation and, second, they serve as an adaptation level for subsequent satisfaction decisions” (p. 461). This study will start with beginning teachers' reflections about their expectations of teaching.

Perceived performance is directly related to expectations of a product, as it is the

individual's perception of the performance of a product; however, for this study, the product is the actual experience of teaching. These perceptions are often subjective in nature. "Although performance perception ratings may, in part, be based on objective criteria, one's overall assessment of many products usually involves a number of subjective attributes including those that are objective but are judged subjectively as a practical matter" (Oliver, 1977, p. 482).

Disconfirmation of beliefs is when an individual uses his/her original expectations to rate the experience of teaching. If teaching exceeds those expectations, a positive confirmation occurs leading to feelings of job satisfaction. On the other hand, if the experience does not meet the expectations of the individual, there is a negative disconfirmation, which leads to job dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1977). According to Oliver, feelings of dissatisfaction lead a consumer to not purchase a product again. For purposes of this study, the assumption is that feelings of dissatisfaction will lead to a teacher leaving the field, contributing to the overall rate of teacher turnover.

According to Lehman's (2000) findings "preservice experiences and expectations were not significantly related to job satisfaction, leading to the conclusion that efforts to improve first-year teacher job satisfaction should focus on post hire experiences rather than pre hire preparation" (p. 27). Lehman (2000) found that teachers have expectations about professional support, collaboration, collegial relationships, and instructional effectiveness. As a result of Lehman's (2000) findings, this study will not include preservice teachers and will focus on those teachers who are in the beginning stages of their career.

Definition of Terms

Beginning teacher: a person who has been a classroom teacher for one to three years.

Disconfirmation: the extent to which expectations are met – a positive disconfirmation occurs when expectations are exceeded, and a negative disconfirmation occurs when expectations are not met (Oliver, 1977).

Expectation: “a belief that something will happen or is likely to happen” (Merriam-Webster).

Job satisfaction: an employee’s response to his or her organization that is determined by a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Scholl, 2003).

Induction program: this program is a separate program from preservice training and in-service training and can include elements such as workshops, collaboration, support systems, orientation seminars, and mentoring (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring: guidance provided by another teacher (typically a veteran) to assist a beginning teacher (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Reality shock: “an usually high number of problems encountered in the first year as compared to subsequent years of experience” (Marso & Pigge, 1987, p. 53)

Research Questions

The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore how beginning teachers’ expectations of the teaching profession impact their current level of job satisfaction. As satisfaction is a predictor of employee retention, the study is guided by the question: How do job expectations impact beginning teacher satisfaction and turnover?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the expectations of the teaching profession held by beginning teachers?
2. What discrepancies, if any, exist between expectations and the experience of teaching?
3. What impact, if any, does a disconfirmation of beliefs (positive and negative) have on beginning teachers’ levels of reported satisfaction?

Significance of the Study

Many studies have focused on the difference between teacher expectations and the reality of teaching. This study will add to the literature as it focuses on beginning teachers' expectations of teaching and the role expectations play in overall job satisfaction, which is a predictor of job retention. The findings from this study should help schools design programs of mentoring and induction, and encourage colleges and universities to prepare administrators for assisting new teachers.

This study is significant as it explores the topic from a multiple case study approach and provides an in-depth look at the experiences of beginning teachers and their expectations. While previous studies have looked at teachers' expectations of the profession and job satisfaction, no single study has connected the two topics. Overall, this study seeks to help alleviate the national issue of beginning teacher turnover and provide schools with suggestions as to how they can work to retain beginning teachers.

General Procedures

The study aims to understand the expectations of teaching held by beginning teachers, their experiences, and the role of expectations in determining a teacher's level of job satisfaction. The study includes teachers who completed a bachelor's degree in education between 2011 and 2014 and are employed as full-time teachers. While all participants are graduates of the same School of Education in New England, their degrees were in one of three areas: early childhood education, elementary education, or special education. The bachelor's program required student teaching and resulted in state certification. The qualitative study used purposeful sampling to select participants, which took place throughout the various stages of research.

First, an electronic survey was sent via email to the graduates and to identify individuals who met the requirements of the case. The researcher sought only full-time teachers who completed their bachelor's between 2011 and 2014. Next, the sample was narrowed to include teachers from a variety of settings (i.e., public, out-of-district placement, and charter).

One focus group, which included four teachers, was held to identify the variety of experiences with met and not met expectations. Additionally, due to conflicting schedules, three additional individuals were interviewed separately using the focus group questions. Using data from the survey and from the focus group questions, participants were selected based on their diverse background in terms of entrance into teaching, their expectations of teaching, and their experiences as a teacher.

Once participants were identified, interviews were conducted using the interview guide approach. The interview guide approach helped the researcher to ensure that the same topics were explored with each participant but allowed the researcher flexibility to further explore the topics through follow-up questions (Patton, 2014). Additionally, this approach allowed the researcher to frame the questions in a way that allow the interview to work more as a conversation than a simple exchange of questions and answers (Patton, 2014). The researcher developed questions surrounding the identified themes, however the way in which each question was approached during the interview varied due to the nature of each individual conversation.

Interviews served as the means to collect data on the beginning teachers' experiences with teaching and their level of satisfaction with the profession. Information on school setting was acquired through document review prior to writing about each case. Member checking after interviews allowed participants the opportunity to provide clarification and confirm the accuracy of the data.

Chapter Summary

In summary, in order to understand the high rates of teacher turnover, researchers have studied teachers after they have left the classroom but have not placed an emphasis on studying teachers prior to leaving the profession. While the opportunities for preservice support through teacher preparation programs and post hire support through the use of induction programs and mentors exist, the rate of teacher turnover still remains high (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). This turnover has a great impact on both budgets and student learning. In order to alleviate this burden, more research needs to be conducted to determine the role that expectations play in an individual's level of job satisfaction. Through exploring beginning teachers' expectations of teaching, the researcher gained knowledge to help schools build support systems that address teacher expectations and help build programs that prepare administrators. If schools choose to use this information, it may increase the retention of new teachers.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

One of the biggest issues facing schools today is a lack of teacher retention; “Researchers estimate that over 1 million teachers move in and out of schools annually, and between 40 and 50 percent quit within five years” (Neason, 2014, para. 2). High rates of turnover amongst beginning teachers are problematic as they result in financial burdens for school districts and have a negative impact on student learning. Shann (1998) found that job satisfaction directly impacts teacher retention. Therefore, there is a need for researchers to study beginning teachers and the factors attributed to job satisfaction.

As our economy shifts from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age, it is important to consider different theories regarding job satisfaction. Previous studies on teacher’s job satisfaction used Herzberg’s (1964) Motivator-Hygiene Theory, resulting in a gap in the literature that views teacher satisfaction from an expectations point of view. Echoing the beliefs of Richard Ingersoll (Neason, 2014), who identified the importance of expectations in job satisfaction, Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) stated, “At a time when teacher retention is an area of concern, it is becoming increasingly important to understand how beginning teachers’ expectations about teaching as a career impacts on their decision to remain in the profession” (p. 1253). Therefore, this study examined the topic of job satisfaction by exploring beginning teachers’ expectations and the role expectations play in their reported level of job satisfaction.

Selection of the Literature

The research used for this literature review includes empirical studies from online databases including Dissertations & Theses Full-Text, ERIC (Education Resource Information Center), and SAGE. The key terms used included: *expectations*, *novice teachers*, *beginning*

teachers, teaching, and job satisfaction. After reading through articles accessed through database searches, additional relevant articles were found through checking reference lists. Fifteen articles were selected that were published between 1987 and 2014.

The database searches demonstrated that research has not been completed on the topic of teachers' expectations about the profession and the role of expectations in job satisfaction. As a result, the review of literature will be separated into two categories: (a) teachers' expectations versus the reality of teaching and (b) teachers and job satisfaction. The review of literature will identify the common findings presented throughout the articles to gain an understanding of the methodologies utilized by previous researchers and to summarize their findings.

Expectations vs. Perceptions of Reality

Multiple studies have demonstrated that a disconnect exists between the expectations of preservice teachers and the reality of the teaching profession (Chase, 2006; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Hebert, 2002; Marso & Pigge, 1987). Marso and Pigge (1987) studied novice teachers' expectation of teaching compared with their on the job experience using quantitative methods that were limited to a survey that used a five-point Likert scale. Their findings indicated that all teachers, even those who completed extensive preservice observations and field experiences, experienced a reality shock when they entered the profession. The researchers believed that this may cause beginning teachers to either adjust their expectations or to leave the profession.

Chase (2006) conducted a qualitative study on urban teachers' expectations and how their expectations compared to their perceived experience with teaching. This study resulted in detailed findings due to both the methodology and data collection, which included in-depth interviews and focus groups. A total of 11 participants were included, and the findings indicated that learning to teach is a developmental process where teachers shift from focusing on

themselves to focusing on students. The researcher's findings confirmed previous research stating that the reality of the classroom does not match novice teachers' expectations.

A study completed by DiCiccio, Sabella, Jordan, Boney, and Jones (2014) aimed at examining a beginning teacher's expectations and experiences in the classroom. A phenomenological case study was conducted that followed a first-year teacher who was completing a Masters of Arts in Teaching degree. This case presented the extreme difficulties faced by the teacher and the discrepancies that existed between expectations and the perception of reality. While the study produced in-depth findings, it was limited to one individual.

Using the findings from Chase (2006) and DiCiccio et al. (2014) themes were developed to focus the review of the literature. Chase found that beginning teachers had expectations of the following: management, support from administration and colleagues, classroom teaching, and mentoring and induction. DiCiccio et al. identified five themes: personal expectations for success, expectations of teacher responsibilities, instructional expectations, classroom management expectations, and expectations of teacher education. The topic of teacher preparation was eliminated due to the lack of visibility in other studies and the lack of application to the current study. The following themes around expectations will be discussed: personal expectations, expectations of teaching responsibilities, expectations of administration, expectations of professional support, and expectations of the classroom environment.

Personal expectations. Beginning teachers set high expectations for themselves (Chase, 2006; DiCiccio et al., 2014; Marso & Pigge, 1987). Hebert (2002) conducted a case study that included four first-year teachers and focused on expectations about relationships with students, other teachers, and administration. Hebert found that over the course of the first year in the profession, teachers changed their expectations about what they would be able to accomplish as

teachers. As a result, special education teachers felt they would be more successful as regular classroom teachers because they felt “disillusioned about their own abilities and preparation with respect to special education and believed that they could be good teachers but only in regular classrooms” (Hebert, 2002, p. 170). In contrast, DiCiccio et al. (2014) found that when high personal expectations are not met, turnover occurs.

Expectations of teaching responsibilities. According to Kyriacou and Kunc (2007), it is difficult for new teachers to anticipate the amount of work that is required in the teaching profession. For beginning teachers, expectations of the job vary from understanding the amount of time needed for preparing lessons and grading assessments (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007) to assuming a teaching position will be limited to one subject area or grade level (DiCiccio et al., 2014). Kyriacou and Kunc collected data from 300 student teachers during the process of completing a postgraduate certificate in education. Data from Kyriacou and Kunc includes an email in which one teacher wrote, “I am surprised there are so many things (apart from teaching) to do, for example, break duty, bus duty, meetings, cover, etc.” (p. 1251). The researchers also found that beginning teachers did not expect that grading would be a huge time commitment. These lessons can be explained through the concept of reality shock that is defined as experiencing “an unusually high number of problems encountered in the first year as compared to subsequent years” (Marso & Pigge, 1987, p. 53). Marso and Pigge found that the workload required of teachers was the number one cause of reality shock.

Expectations of administration. Novice teachers reported that they expected support from administration through providing supplies, access to professional development, and opportunities to interact with colleagues (Chase, 2006). Chase also found that new teachers believed that administrative support of teachers regarding discipline issues could “positively

impact students' behavior in the classroom" (p. 123), and support from administration should support the teacher's authority over students. However, Chase reported that teachers felt administrators were inconsistent and undermined teacher authority.

In Chase's (2006) study, teachers voiced that administration did not meet their needs. These needs included: basic supplies needed for their classrooms, opportunities for professional development, inconsistent or inadequate support, unclear expectations from the administration concerning professional responsibilities and student learning, and a lack of follow through with student discipline.

Expectations of professional support. According to DiCiccio et al. (2014) novice teachers expect that they will be assigned a mentor and that this relationship will ease their transition. The reality is that expectations of mentors are not always met due to a lack of commonality; some mentors do not teach the same subject or grade level as the novice teacher and, therefore, cannot support teachers with content issues (Chase, 2006; DiCiccio et al., 2014; Hebert, 2002). This discrepancy resulted in teachers feeling hesitant to ask for help and feelings of loneliness (DiCiccio et al., 2014). Data from Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) demonstrated that if there is a mismatch in personality between the mentor and the beginning teacher, it is difficult to create the trusting relationship that is necessary so that the mentee does not feel inadequate in asking for support.

Beginning teachers also have expectations about the relationships they will establish with other teachers in the building. Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) found that beginning teachers struggled with what they perceived as a lack of commitment from their counterparts. The lack of support from colleagues resulted in many beginning teachers feeling isolated (Chase, 2006).

Expectations of the classroom environment. Based on experiences during teacher preparation, novice teachers expected their role in the classroom to be a deliverer of content, not to include a great deal of classroom management (Chase, 2006). As a result, beginning teachers were overwhelmed by the task of classroom management (Chase, 2006). Hebert (2002) noted that one teacher “expected respect, but the ‘reality’ was that the students sometimes seemed disrespectful” (p. 71). Both of these studies confirmed the idea of reality shock (Marso & Pigge, 1987).

According to Chase (2006), beginning teachers also expected students to enter the classroom ready to learn. They were shocked by the complex role of providing care for students and being viewed as a role model and trustworthy adult whom students could approach to discuss their “struggles, hopes, and dreams” (p. 126). Chase also found that beginning teachers felt they needed to “compensate for perceived lack of parental involvement, guidance, and stability in their student’s lives, teachers believed it was necessary to take on the roles of parent, counselor, friend, and mentor” (p. 103).

Teachers and Job Satisfaction

Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) noted in their analysis that entering the profession of teaching is similar to entering into a marriage.

On the one hand, there are those who work hard at their marriage to sustain it and who react to failed expectations by seeking out new sources of satisfaction. On the other hand, there are those who just say ‘I have had enough of this, I want to get out!’ (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007, p. 1252).

This analogy speaks of the reality shock noted by Marso and Pigge (1987) demonstrating that some teachers adjust their expectations. The analogy also provides an explanation for the high

rates of beginning teacher turnover and supports the need to understand teacher satisfaction through expectations.

Expectations influence satisfaction (Morgan & O’Leary, 2004) and satisfaction has been found to be a predictor of retention (Shann, 1998). However, studies have placed a large emphasis on external factors rather than an in-depth look at the expectations of teachers. Past studies utilized quantitative methods, typically a survey or questionnaire, and therefore, lack a detailed understanding of teacher satisfaction. In reviewing the literature, demographic, personal, and environmental factors were studied in order to determine the factors that impact satisfaction.

Demographic factors. Studies demonstrated that demographic information cannot be used as a predictor of job satisfaction (Giacometti, 2005; Morgan & O’Leary, 2004; Tillman & Tillman, 2008). Giacometti (2005) found that “leavers and stayers did not differ on age, gender, race, grade level of teaching assignment, marital status, current salary, final grade point average, route to teaching, location of school district, or geographic region of the United States” (p. 84). Similarly, Morgan and O’Leary (2004) discovered that gender, degree (bachelor’s or master’s), experience, grade level, and grades earned in college courses have no impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, Tillman and Tillman (2008) concluded that salary and length of service do not have an impact on teacher satisfaction.

Personal factors. Bogler and Nir (2014) found that the most significant predictor of satisfaction was teachers’ perceptions about their ability to meet the demands of their job. These findings are consistent with Giacometti’s (2005) quantitative study that included 347 novice teachers and studied factors that relate to teacher satisfaction. The study found that emotional factors, such as anxiety (i.e., joy of teaching, confidence, making a difference in the lives of children, commitment, burnout, frustration and stress) played an important role in the decision

for a teacher to leave. As a result, Giacometti suggested that programs be created to address the needs of new teachers.

Shann (1998) studied 92 urban middle school teachers to determine the factors they perceived to be the most important in their job and their level of satisfaction with each of those factors. Through a quantitative study that used interviews and a questionnaire to collect data, Shann identified that out of 14 aspects, teacher-student relationships were ranked as the most important and was also the aspect that gave teachers the highest level of satisfaction. Derlin and Schneider (1994) also found that students play an important role in teacher satisfaction.

Bogler (2001) studied 745 Israeli teachers using a quantitative questionnaire. Findings indicated that teachers' perceptions of their profession play a significant role in their job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001). This satisfaction was dependent upon factors such as occupational prestige, self-esteem, autonomy at work, and professional development.

Environmental factors. School climate has a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction (Thekedam, 2010). Morgan and O'Leary (2004) completed a study in which 468 beginning teachers responded to a quantitative questionnaire. Their findings demonstrate that school climate does play a factor in satisfaction as teachers reported that the perceived level of support (i.e., collegial and collaborative interactions) was the most important factor in their level of job satisfaction.

According to a study by Shann (1998), school setting plays a significant role in teachers' levels of satisfaction with teacher evaluation, teacher-teacher relationships, and curricula within the school. In high-achieving schools, the administration made sure teachers knew they were doing a good job and as a result, evaluation was not a high indicator of job satisfaction because they received informal feedback throughout the year. The impact of administration demonstrates

the ability for school climate to shape the experiences of beginning teachers (Shann, 1998). Tillman and Tillman (2008) also found that supervision has an impact on teachers' levels of satisfaction.

Additionally, Price (2012) uncovered that the role of the principal has a dramatic impact on teacher satisfaction. In his study, findings suggest that principals have a great deal of influence on the levels of teacher satisfaction within their buildings. Bogler (2001) found that teachers prefer transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership. As defined by Burns (2003) a transformational leader aims to encourage improvements through change by creating a collective identity and building self-worth, whereas transactional leadership focuses on the exchange of compliance with rewards and maintaining status quo. In order to increase teacher satisfaction within schools, principals need to understand their impact on teachers (Bogler, 2001) and should share power over decision-making, create a common set of expectations, and establish trusting relationships (Price, 2012). Based on their findings, Derlin and Schneider (1994) suggest that "principals would serve teachers well by creating supportive work environments in which systems are in place to involve teachers in identifying strategies for enhancing student achievement and determining the goal and direction of their school" (p. 87). Overall, studies indicated that principals have a great deal of impact on school climate, and school climate is a factor that influences job satisfaction.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of beginning teachers' expectations on their reported level of job satisfaction. This study will further the literature through studying job satisfaction through a different lens and through placing an emphasis on expectations as a means to explore job satisfaction. Studies demonstrate that beginning teachers enter the profession with

personal expectations, expectations of teaching responsibilities, expectations of administration, expectations of professional support, and expectations of the classroom environment. When these expectations are not met, teachers either adjust their expectations or leave the profession. Studies on job satisfaction explain that the best predictors of job satisfaction fall into three categories: demographic factors, personal factors, and environmental factors. These studies have examined expectations and job satisfaction in isolation. However, Ingersoll (Neason, 2014) indicated that retention of beginning teachers is dependent on teacher satisfaction, and Morgan and O'Leary (2004) suggested that expectations are an important factor in satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore the role that beginning teachers' expectations of teaching plays in their level of reported job satisfaction. The researcher questions if understanding beginning teachers' expectations will allow district and building level administrators to build the necessary support systems for beginning teachers in order to increase job satisfaction and decrease the rate of teacher turnover. This study addressed one central question: How do job expectations impact beginning teacher satisfaction and turnover? This question was answered through sub-questions: (a) What are the expectations of teaching held by beginning teachers? (b) What discrepancies, if any, exist between expectations and the experience of teaching? (c) What impact, if any, does a disconfirmation of beliefs (positive and negative) have on beginning teachers' levels of reported satisfaction? The three sub-questions were answered using data collected from a survey, a focus group, interviews, and through member checking.

This chapter details the study's research methodology and includes discussions around the following areas: (a) rationale for research approach, (b) description of the research sample, (c) summary of information needed, (d) overview of research design, (e) methods of data collection, (f) analysis and synthesis of data, (g) ethical consideration, (h) issues of trustworthiness, and (i) limitations of the study. The chapter culminates with a brief concluding summary.

Rationale for a Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative approach best fits the research questions as it provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Creswell (2013) identified that a qualitative research design allows the researcher to explore the topic in the natural setting, collect multiple forms of data, and also empowers individuals to share their stories. Additionally, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated, “Qualitative research is suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants” (p. 27). A qualitative study supported the researcher in discovering the different perspectives surrounding expectations and the role they play in job satisfaction within multiple school settings.

Prior research on both beginning teacher expectations and teachers’ perceptions of job satisfaction has typically been conducted using a quantitative approach. Studies on job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Bogler & Nir, 2014; Derlin & Schneider, 1994; Giacometti, 2005; Morgan & O’Leary, 2004; Price, 2012; Shann, 1998; Tillman & Tillman, 2008) utilized a survey as a key instrument to collect data, limiting the depth of knowledge and seeking to understand the relationship between variables but not the phenomenon itself. In contrast, Merriam (1988) emphasized that qualitative research is unique as it assumes that there are multiple realities. Qualitative methods also allow for the use of a variety of data sources and rich, descriptive findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). According to Merriam (1988), “Survey research typically assesses a few variables across a large number of instances, whereas a case study concentrates on many, if not all, the variables present in a single unit” (p. 7). As a result, a case study design produced the most in-depth findings on teacher expectations and satisfaction.

Rationale for Case Study Methodology

Case study design is appropriate when studying contemporary events and when it is difficult to separate “the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context” (Yin, 2014, p. 16) and allows researchers to study a phenomenon systematically, especially “when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for study” (Merriam, 1988, p. 7). Case study is preferred when the researcher has little or no control over behavioral events, and experiments cannot be conducted (Yin, 2014). Case study design is used to explain, describe, illustrate, or enlighten (Yin, 2014) and is referred to as descriptive research (Merriam, 1988). According to Yin (2014), case studies are explanatory in nature and have a unique strength due to the use of a variety of evidence including documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations.

This study utilized a multiple case design in order to “show different perspectives on the issues” (Creswell, 2013, p. 99). Yin (2014) stated that this design is considered to be more compelling than a single-case design and will be used to demonstrate contrasting results. This perspective “acknowledges multiple realities having multiple meanings” (Yin, 2014, p. 17). This allowed the researcher to discover and explain multiple truths to the phenomenon using a relativist perspective.

Research Sample

This study used a purposeful, or criterion based, sample. In an effort to utilize a consistent variable, participants for the study include graduates of a Bachelors of Education program from a university in New England. Participants completed the degree prior to taking full-time teaching positions and have between one to three years of experience in the classroom.

It should be noted that while the graduates completed several of the same courses during preparation, this does not necessarily mean they entered the teaching profession with the same set of expectations. Expectations are grounded in a variety of learning experiences, including K-12 experiences, as well as job placement. Additionally, participants were selected from different schools within different districts to account for the impact of school climate, which plays a significant role in the teaching experience. A single case study would not demonstrate the role of climate, nor would a multiple case study that occurred at one school or at several schools within the same district.

The researcher contacted the Office of Institutional Advancement at the university to send out an email containing the electronic survey to individuals who completed the program between the years 2011 and 2014. The survey, included in Appendix B, was used as an instrument to collect data on basic demographic information and helped to narrow the sample. The email was sent to 157 individuals a total of three times. The first and second emails were sent out a week apart and the third, and final email, was sent out a month after the initial email.

Due to a low rate of response, three professors from the School of Education at the university were contacted to reach out to former students. Contact from professors, via email and social media, was instrumental in additional participant recruitment. As a result, convenience sampling occurred due to the ties that the professors had with students. While a convenience sample is not the optimal method of sampling as it only includes individuals who are “easily recruited and willing to participate” (Johnson & Christensen, 2013), the researcher was unable to obtain the necessary number of participants without this form of sampling. Therefore, the participants are not representative of the general population of graduates (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Additionally, snowball sampling was used as at least two of the graduates

who were contacted by professors shared the researcher's contact information with other graduates. Snowball sampling involved participants reaching out to additional people who met the requirements of the case (Johnson & Christensen, 2013).

A total of 23 individuals completed the survey, a 15% return rate. This low response rate is skewed towards individuals that experience job satisfaction. The survey included a question that required individuals to respond to a statement about feeling satisfied with their teaching position. Nine of the teachers strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their job, seven agreed, six disagreed, and one teacher strongly disagreed with the statement about job satisfaction. Only one of the individuals who reported a level of dissatisfied with their job included the necessary contact information in order to further participate in the study.

Unfortunately, the individual was not employed as a full-time teacher and consequently did not meet the requirements of the case. Therefore, the individuals included in the study all reported they were satisfied in their position and as a result, the data does not identify the perspective of individuals who experience dissatisfaction with their teaching positions.

Using the responses from the survey, seven individuals were selected to participate in either the focus group or a one-on-one interview using the focus group questions. Participants were selected based on their varied backgrounds in terms of school settings (i.e., school type, grade level, and subject taught). According to Stake (2006) "when cases are selected carefully, the design of a study can incorporate a diversity of contexts" (p. 23). Stake suggested that the purpose of a multiple case study is to look at how the "phenomenon performs in different environments" (p. 23). As a result, heterogeneity sampling was used as a means of participant selection in order to ensure a wide range of variety in terms of environment.

Using the data from the survey and the focus group questions, five participants were selected using heterogeneity sampling, also known as sampling for diversity, for a follow-up interview. The teachers selected reported a variety of expectations and differing experiences with the degree to which their expectations were met. This method of purposeful sampling was used to represent a “broad spectrum of ideas” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. 50). Therefore, the participants were selected as a result of their diverse expectations and diverse experiences with not met, met, and exceeded expectations of teaching. The five teachers each completed a 60-minute interview and were consulted through member checking to ensure the accuracy of the narrative.

Overview of Information Needed

This multiple case study includes five beginning teachers throughout New England. In order to discover the role that expectations play in the level of reported job satisfaction, three research questions were considered to gather the necessary data to answer the overarching question. The information necessary to answer the questions fell into three categories: (a) contextual, (b) demographic, and (c) perceptual. This information included:

Overview of Information Needed

Table 1

Type of Information	What the Researcher Required	Method
Contextual	Data of school setting	Interviews with teachers, Document Review
Demographic	Educational experiences (K-12 and higher education), age, gender, ethnicity, teaching experience, and current teaching position	Survey, Interviews
Perceptual	Participants' expectations of	Survey, Interviews

	teaching, experiences with teaching, and their reported level of satisfaction	
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Overview of the Research Design

The research for this study was conducted using the following steps:

1. Prior to the collection of data, a review of literature was conducted to discover what previous researchers had concluded on the topics of beginning teachers' expectations vs. the reality of teaching and the factors that impact teacher satisfaction.
2. Following the proposal defense, the researcher obtained IRB approval from Southern New Hampshire University. The IRB approval process involved outlining all procedures involving ethical considerations necessary for protecting participants' confidentiality and informed consent.



Figure 2 Sequence of Document Collection and Analysis

3. Potential research participants were contacted via email and completed an electronic survey to collect demographic and perceptual information.
4. After analyzing the surveys, seven individuals were selected to participate in an initial interview. Four participated in the focus group, and three teachers were interviewed one-on-one.

5. Using heterogeneity sampling, the first round of data was analyzed to select participants based on their unmet, met, and exceeded expectations.
6. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide approach (Patton, 2014). Each interview lasted approximately 60-minutes.
7. Document review was conducted to gather additional details about the school setting and demographic information about the school and students.
8. The researcher coded the interviews and a report was written for each case. Each participant reviewed the report for accuracy and to identify any concerns.
9. Lastly, a cross-case comparison occurred through the creation of a word table.

Data Collection Methods

According to Creswell (2013), "A qualitative researcher engages in a series of activities in the process of collecting data" (p. 146). For purposes of this study, data was collected over a series of phasing including a survey, a focus group, interviews, document review, and participant review. Numbers in the chart correspond with questions listed in Appendix B.

Question and Data Source Alignment

Table 2

	What are the expectations of the teaching profession held by beginning teachers?	What discrepancies, if any, exist between expectations and the experience of teaching?	What impact, if any, does a disconfirmation of beliefs (positive and negative) have on beginning teachers' levels of reported satisfaction?
Focus Group	3	4	5, 6, 7
Interview	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10	11, 12, 13, 14

Phase I: Survey

The Office of Institutional Advancement at the university was contacted in order to gain access to alumni email addresses. Over the span of one month, an email containing the survey was sent out on the researcher's behalf three times. The researcher also contacted three professors at the university's School of Education to reach out to former students.

An electronic survey was used to collect demographic information (i.e., educational experiences (K-12 and higher education), age, gender, ethnicity, salary, teaching experience, and current teaching position), and perceptual information (i.e., level of satisfaction in their current position). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), "Relevant demographic information is needed to help explain what may be underlying an individual's perceptions, as well as the similarities and differences in perceptions among participants" (p. 105). This data aided in providing background information about each participant to situate their experiences in the context in which they occurred.

Phase II: Focus Group or Interview

Focus groups allow for the collection of a great deal of data in a short period of time and can be a way to identify whether or not there is a shared view or a great diversity of views (Patton, 2014). Additionally, focus groups produce data that stems from group interaction, and this form of data is less accessible in a one-on-one interview (Liamputtong, 2011).

One 60-minute focus group was conducted using the Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group (Eliot & Associates, 2005). Liamputtong (2011) wrote that groups of four to six participants create an environment in which all participants can have an active role in the discussion. Eliot and Associates (2005) suggested that researchers limit the number of questions

to eight and that the questions be written based on three different types of questions: engagement, exploration, and exit. Questions used in the focus group are included in Appendix B.

Due to the hectic schedule of beginning teachers, the researcher offered to interview individuals who could not make the focus group. One-on-one interviews were held with three teachers. Two interviews occurred using Adobe Connect and one interview took place over the phone. While this was not an ideal method of collecting initial data about each participant, it was necessary to offer this option in order to recruit participants.

Phase III: Interviews

“One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (Yin, 2014, p. 110). According to Patton (2014), interviews are used to collect data that cannot be observed such as feelings and thoughts and allow a researcher to enter into a person’s perspective. Interviews were conducted using the interview guide approach (Patton, 2014).

The interview guide approach involves an outline of topics to be covered during the interview and allowed the researcher to decide the sequence of the questions and the wording during the interview (Patton, 2014). The outline allowed for a somewhat systematic data collection between participants and allowed for gaps in the data to be closed (Patton, 2014).

Interviews lasted approximately 60-minutes in length. The questions are included in Appendix B. Three interviews took place via Adobe Connect, which allowed for videotaping, and two were conducted over the telephone. All interviews were recorded with a Livescribe Echo smartpen. While the researcher understands the importance of face-to-face interviews, using technology allowed for the inclusion of participants that were located in different parts of New England and permitted the researcher access to participants with hectic schedules.

Technology provided flexibility in data collection as some interviews occurred during the school day while teachers had lunch or a planning period. Additionally, several interviews were rescheduled and occurred at a later time or on a different day due to teachers being pulled into meetings. Technology allowed for easy rescheduling due to the ease of access.

Phase IV: Documents

According to Merriam (1988), documents are an underused source of data in qualitative research. Documents are important pieces of data as they “can provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources” (Yin, 2014, p. 107). Documents such as school websites, demographic information about students, and testing scores were used to both corroborate ideas that surfaced during the interviews and to provide more contextual data about each case. Contextual information is important as each case can “be influenced by context, so contexts need to be studied and described, whether or not evidence of influence is found” (Stake, 2006, p. 27). This contextual information helped place the individuals in their specific situations and provided more detail as to the teaching environment in which they were employed.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Data from the focus group and interviews were audio recorded, and interviews that occurred using Adobe Connect were also video recorded. The information was transcribed with the assistance of Dragon Naturally Speaking and then coded. The same coding methods were used for the data from the focus groups and the interviews. The following describes the processes used to code the data.

Based on the recommendation of Saldaña (2013), the transcriptions were organized into a three-column template. The first column included the raw data, the second was for preliminary codes, and the third column contained final codes. The data was printed and coding was

conducted on paper. Saldaña (2013) suggested that beginning researchers conduct coding on paper so that mental energy is spent on the data rather than learning coding software.

Additionally, Saldaña (2013) stated that coding on paper gives a researcher more control and ownership of the work.

The researcher completed several rounds of coding and started with pre-coding by bolding text (i.e., phrases and sentences) that stood out. First Cycle codes were applied to the data to summarize chunks of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). First cycle coding started with Structural Coding, also referred to as Utilitarian Coding, that involved applying “a content-based of conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question” (Saldaña, 2013, 84). This coding helped to organize the participant’s expectations of teaching, experiences as a teacher, and level of satisfaction. Using the bolded passages identified during pre-coding, first cycle coding also included in vivo codes. In vivo coding identified words or phrases that were repeatedly used by participants. Emotion codes were also applied as they provided “insight into the participants’ perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 75). Attribute coding helped to identify the school setting of the participant, the teaching position, and participant demographics. Provisional codes were applied using ideas that developed as a result of the literature review (Saldaña, 2013). These codes included personal expectations, expectations of teaching responsibility, expectations of administration, expectations of professional support, expectations of the classroom environment, and school climate.

The researcher then completed Second Cycle coding, a process that used the summaries from First Cycle coding to identify patterns within the data. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), Second Cycle coding condensed the data into a smaller number of analytic units

and is especially helpful in a multiple case study as it “lays the groundwork for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes and directional processes” (p. 86). Second Cycle coding involved pattern codes which consist of “categories or themes, causes/explanations, relationships among people, and/or theoretical constructs” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 87).

After completing several rounds of coding, the researcher wrote up individual reports for each case. The report was sent to the participant to review for accuracy. Member checking was an important step as it provided new data and helped to improve interpretation of the account (Stake, 2006). Follow-up interviews were conducted in order to fill in any gaps, address any concerns, and to verify the accuracy of the report.

Using the reports, several tables were created to complete a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2014). This type of analysis requires a researcher to “inspect cases in a set to see whether they fall into clusters or groups that share certain patterns or configurations” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 103). Cross-case analysis aided the researcher in identifying the diversity and commonalities between the cases.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed the guidelines set forth by Southern New Hampshire University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as the ethical considerations written by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Prior to conducting research, IRB approval was granted.

Prior to collecting data, each participant signed an informed consent form, which notified potential participants of the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, the right to end participation at any point, and contact names and information should a participant have any questions. Consideration for safeguarding participants was of utmost importance throughout this

study. Participants' identities were protected through the entire process, especially in reporting the data. Identifiers were removed, and pseudonyms were used in reporting findings and the researcher ensured that any description of schools allows for anonymity. Data was stored in a locked cabinet and a password protected computer so that only the researcher had access to it.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research involves the researcher identifying three major considerations: credibility, dependability, and transferability. Through these considerations, the researcher aimed to separate personal assumptions from the data to present conclusions that are free from bias.

Credibility. Credibility, or validity, as defined by Trochim and Donnelly (2008) is “the best available approximation of the truth of a given proposition, inference, or conclusion” (p. 14). In order to establish credibility within this study, the researcher considered different types of research designs and carefully crafted the study so that the design, theoretical framework, research questions, and data collection methods all worked together in a logical manner to produce valid findings.

Credibility also takes into account researcher bias. According to Stake (2006), researchers need to identify affiliations that may impact interpretation. It should be noted that the researcher is also a classroom teacher of nine years. Therefore, the researcher experienced the similar struggles that naturally occur when one enters the teaching profession. This personal experience, while beneficial as it allowed the researcher to empathize with the experiences of the participants and dig deeper into their experiences, also brings with it a researcher bias. One ideology that influenced the researcher is the idea that new teachers need a great deal of support upon entering the profession. However, it is important to note that prior literature indicates that

support for beginning teachers is necessary (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In order to address these biases, the researcher focused on the research questions, made sure that interviews were based on the experiences of each participant, and paid careful attention that these biases did not impact coding. Additionally, the researcher used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the data and allowed for participant feedback.

Credibility is also found in the purposeful data collection design that utilized information from a variety of sources – a survey, the focus group, and interviews – in an effort to triangulate the data. Patton (2014) stated that triangulation of data provides cross-data validity checks. Creswell (2013) suggested to achieve credibility, data should be utilized in order to identify reoccurring behaviors, ideas, or actions. The data was used as a basis for drawing conclusions using rigorous coding methods.

Dependability. Dependability aims to determine “whether the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 126-127). In order to address this concern, the researcher involved participants in reviewing the case to verify the accuracy. This form of analytical triangulation allowed the researcher to ensure accuracy of information and to ensure that dependability of conclusions (Patton, 2014).

Transferability. While it is difficult to create generalizable results using qualitative methods of study, it is the intent of the researcher to create a study that has transferable findings. First, the participants were selected based on diverse school settings. Additionally, “thick, rich description of the participants and the context” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 126) allowed for each case to be put into perspective.

Limitations

All research has its limitations. Due to the small sample size of this study, the findings will lack generalizability. However, it should be noted that the intention of the study is not to result in generalizable findings but to seek an in-depth look at the role of expectations.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research. It is more important that findings have transferability and, therefore, can be applied in similar contexts and settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

It is impossible to entirely separate out researcher effects. However, the researcher employed the use of participants to verify the accuracy of findings. This ensured that what is published about each participant is a true reflection of each experience.

An additional limitation faced by all researchers is the concern that participants will voice what they anticipate the researcher wants to hear. However, prior research has demonstrated that all beginning teachers experience a reality shock when they enter the profession and do not have difficulty voicing these experiences to an outside researcher. Additionally, the research design took into consideration this factor. It is the hope of the researcher that through the use of the focus group prior to a one-on-one interview, participants developed a level of familiarity with the researcher.

Delimitations

Other theories of job satisfaction could have been considered and used as a lens of this study. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1964) have been used more frequently than Locke's Applied Range Affect (1976). These theories were not applied in the framework because they include external factors as predictors of job satisfaction, whereas expectations are an internal factor. Also, this study aimed to explore

Ingersoll's (Neason, 2014) belief that teachers leave the profession as a result of their dissatisfaction and the suggestion made by Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) that expectations play a role in a teacher's decision to leave or remain in the profession.

This study is based on the assumption that Oliver's (1977/1980) Expectations Confirmation Theory can be applied to the experiences of beginning teachers. This research also entrusts that beginning teachers can accurately recall their expectations and that teachers had expectations of the profession prior to becoming a teacher.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the study's methodological procedures. A qualitative multiple case study was used to study beginning teachers' expectations, the reality of their experiences, and the role of expectations in their reported levels of job satisfaction. The participant sample consists of beginning teachers who completed their degree between 2011-2014 from the same university with a bachelor's degree in education and are currently employed as full-time teachers. Using the focus group as an instrument to further narrow the sample size, the researcher selected individuals from diverse school settings (i.e., public, out-of-district placement, and charter). Each participant was interviewed, documents were used to discover more about the school setting, and then data was coded using several cycles of coding. A report for each case was written and verified by the participant using member checking. The reports were then compared using tables. This method aided in the identification of similarities and differences across cases.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore beginning teachers' expectations of teaching, how their expectations matched up to the reality of teaching, and the role that expectations played in their reported level of satisfaction. Therefore, a better understanding of beginning teachers' experiences could provide district and building level administrators, as well as professors working with preservice teachers, with the knowledge to better support new teachers.

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from focus group data, interviews, and document review. The findings focus on five beginning teachers who completed their bachelor's in education at the same university. The degrees completed were either in special education, early childhood education, or elementary education. This chapter includes discussion of each teacher's background, expectations of teaching, their expectations vs. the reality of their experiences, and their current level of satisfaction. Throughout this chapter, the names of both teachers and schools are pseudonyms.

Three major findings surfaced from the cross-case comparison. First, teachers expected to be familiar with the requirements of the job. Second, teachers expected that they would have the ability to make a difference, and lastly, teachers expected that their administrators and colleagues would offer them support.

This chapter includes the data from the study. Each case was written to focus on the background of the individual, the individual's expectations of teaching, the reality of teaching, and reported level of satisfaction. The cases are followed by a cross-case comparison that identifies the similarities and differences between the cases.

Marie – The Case Manager

Marie was unable to participate in the focus group as she completed the survey after the focus group had taken place. Interviews occurred over the phone and both interviews were postponed due to unscheduled events in Marie's work schedule. As a case manager, Marie is often pulled into meetings pertaining to students on her caseload and this caused both of the interviews to occur at a later time than what was originally scheduled.

Marie earned her degree in special education and is a first-year teacher in her early 20s who works with middle school students. She case manages ten students that are spread throughout the fifth and sixth grade. Marie also provides math and writing services to students that are not on her caseload. These 14 additional students are in Grades 4, 7, and 8.

The school that Marie works at is located in a small rural town and the building houses students from preschool to eighth grade. The population of slightly under 500 students is predominantly White, approximately 20% of whom receive free or reduced lunch. Last year the school scored above the state average for Smarter Balanced testing.

Marie serves students in a variety of ways. She provides support in the classroom, co-teaches a math class, and also provides pull-out services. She works closely with the teachers on the sixth-grade team. In her building, the teaming model starts at sixth grade and continues through to eighth grade. Each team includes four subject area teachers: language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Background

Marie's passion for special education started in fourth grade. She was concerned for one of her classmates who could not participate in gym class and at recess. The classmate, a girl with Down syndrome, could not participate due to her heart condition. Marie recalled, "At that point

one of the special ed teachers at my elementary school reached out and explained to me what Special Olympics was and offered for me to be a peer coach.” This led to 12 years of peer coaching and began Marie’s interest in special education.

Marie completed the coursework required for high school graduation in three and a half years. As a result, Marie had the unusual opportunity of completing an independent study in special education during the last six months of her high school experience. Marie spent that study working directly with students identified with intellectual disabilities, attending IEP meetings, and learning about testing. Marie also gained a deeper understanding of case management. Overall, she learned a great deal about special education. “I student taught basically before even going to college. It was like a mini-internship.” This experience led Marie to enroll in a bachelor’s in education program and to earn her special education certification.

Marie completed her degree in December of 2014. During the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year, she was hired for two long-term substitute positions. The first job was in an elementary school and the second was in a high school. Both positions were in special education.

Expectations of Teaching

Marie attributed her expectations of teaching to her experiences as a high school student. Marie recalled being able to pick out the happy teachers and the grumpy teachers. “I can honestly go through my entire four years and pick out the nice teachers that actually cared and enjoyed their job and the ones that were grumpy and showed up for the paycheck.” In her opinion, the difference between the two was in the teacher’s ability to develop relationships with students. Marie’s expectations of teaching include the belief that building relationships with students is the key to success.

In high school, Marie was more successful in classes where she had developed a relationship with her teacher. She reported that these teachers “took the time to listen to you and actually knew about your life.” She reflected on the impact that these experiences had on her and how they formed her current expectations of teaching:

I think that my experience of the classes that I did enjoy because of those relationships versus the classes that I hated and dreaded without having those relationships made a significant impact on the way that I interact with students, how I interact with my coworkers, and kind of that whole philosophy I have for education.

Marie reported that she makes this idea of relationships known to her students’ parents so that they have a better understanding of her approach. In her mind, “you can’t teach a student unless you build a relationship first.” Marie’s experiences as a high school student helped her develop the expectation that relationships between teachers and students are the foundation for success.

Expectations of Teaching vs. the Reality of Teaching

Marie’s experiences as a first-year teacher have included several unmet expectations, as well as one area in which Marie’s expectations were met. Most importantly, Marie reported, the relationships she has built with her colleagues have exceeded her expectations.

Unmet expectations. Marie’s expectations of teaching were not met in terms of what has been required of her as a case manager. Specifically, Marie has been disappointed by her level of preparation, taxed by the amount of work required for IEPs, and disheartened, at times, by the time and effort necessary to manage the complexity of her relationships with paraprofessionals as well as parents.

Level of preparation. Entering her teaching career, Marie believed that her expectations of case management were in line with reality as a result of the coursework she had completed

prior to taking a full-time job. However, there are various aspects of teaching that Marie feels were not explained completely enough in her bachelor's program, while, in other areas, the program simply "skimmed the surface." In particular, she feels that she should have known more about special education laws, although she admits that "there's not enough time in your degree at ----- to learn every single law that comes with special ed." She also believes that some aspects of the job, such as scheduling services and recertification, were absent from her program. Additionally, Marie referenced several times the idea that textbooks gave her the "unrealistic, best-practice world of what collaboration looks like among your coworkers and it's just not as realistic as they make it sound." Marie also believes that "textbooks and your professors and everything else kind of give you rose-colored lenses about this profession. And when you walk in, it's not always what meets the eye." Overall, the expectations of teaching that were set during her college courses have not been met and Marie does not believe that her program offered an accurate portrayal of the profession.

IEP Paperwork. Marie entered her first year of teaching with a general idea of what case management would include and found that these expectations were inaccurate considering the amount of time she dedicates to paperwork regarding IEPs. While Marie did complete an internship as well as student teaching during her college years, she reported that the timing of those experiences was not such that she got a complete picture of the case management workload:

When I was student teaching and doing my internships, during the times of year that they fell on, it wasn't during reporting periods for progress reports so I certainly had no idea what progress reports consisted of. I definitely knew about the paperwork and the timelines but I don't think the urgency or the law factor was ever pressed on me in the

way that it is now that it's my responsibility. I don't think you take on the stress or realize, you know, what compliance really is until it's your butt on the line.

Instead, her experiences in the classroom led her to the belief that she would spend equal amounts of time on paperwork and lesson planning.

That's been quite a shocker to me, how much really goes into the other parts of special ed. And I definitely thought I would be doing a lot more lesson planning and a lot more differentiating and some of those things, and I'm finding that I'm just [as] consumed now with paperwork and that case management process as I am with the teaching and planning portion of things. It's almost as if I'm doing two jobs at once.

Marie has found that her expectations of teaching were not met in regards to the amount of time she puts into completing paperwork for IEPs.

Managing paraprofessionals. Marie did not anticipate the amount of stress involved in managing paraprofessionals. She reported that this task is “one of the biggest stressors in my job role.” She struggles with her paraprofessionals not fulfilling the commitment of their positions:

So for example, my sixth graders, a couple of them get assisted studies, which are essentially a study hall, and in the IEP it says they're supposed to be overseen by a para-educator. So the expectation at the beginning of the year was made clear that during the study halls it's [their] job to help support the child during their study hall and supervise them. There have been times where I've walked up into the library and I had a para doing his own college homework instead of supporting that student.

Marie also hears from parents and students that paraprofessionals are distracted throughout the day by college work and that they spend a great deal of time on their cell phones. The issue is complicated by the fact that administration is inconsistent with how they want Marie to deal with

confronting the paraprofessionals. On one hand, they have told her that it isn't her job to deal with disciplining paraprofessionals, but on the other, when she reported issues they have asked her to deal with it. Additionally, Marie believes that the administration does not have the same level of expectations for each of the paraprofessionals. Part of this issue stems from the fact that there is no handbook for paraprofessionals. Marie did not expect that managing four paraprofessionals would be the most challenging aspect of her job.

Parents. Through her first year of teaching, Marie has struggled with her expectations of parents. She did not anticipate that parents would view her as someone other than a case manager. Instead, Marie believes that:

Parents see special educators as an advocate and as that extra line of communication and that's all fine and dandy but it begins to kind of pileup... Things like that that aren't necessarily special ed related at all, I get wrapped up and involved in as kind of that advocate.

Marie has been responsible for finding permission slips and also collecting schoolwork when the sibling of a student on her caseload was absent. These requests are complicated by the fact that parents have made remarks that have made her uncomfortable.

I think that sometimes parents forget that as a special ed teacher my job is to kind of close those gaps and level the playing field. I don't have a magic wand to magically just wave and fix every situation, and I think that sometimes they think because they have the law involved, that they have that on their side to kind of use. I've had multiple times where I've had, 'oh I have an advocate and I don't mind bringing them to the meeting.'

This causes Marie a great deal of stress and she did not anticipate that parents would have so many requests and would attempt to use the law to coerce her.

Marie has also struggled with the amount of time she dedicates to parents' needs. She is on the phone with parents every other day and sometimes the calls last an hour. This led her to a belief about special educator burnout. "I can definitely see why special ed has such a high burnout rate now and I think it has more to do with the parents' case management portion of things than it actually does with the teaching portion." Marie has found that the experience of working with parents has not met her expectations as they request more from her than she anticipated.

Met Expectations. Marie's expectations about teaching were accurate in terms of the amount of happiness the job would bring her.

I love my job and I come to work every day and I'm happy. And I feel like when I chose this career field it wasn't for the money, it was for wanting to be at work every day. So I think that expectation absolutely, without a doubt has been met.

Marie feels that becoming a teacher was a good choice for her and that she has never once woken up and not felt like going to school. Marie's expectations of the happiness she would feel as a teacher have been met.

Exceeded expectations. Marie's expectations of teaching were exceeded in her professional relationships and especially through the support provided by her mentor.

Professional relationships. Marie has established a number of relationships with the teachers in her building that have exceeded her expectations. She believed that as a young, new teacher she would have to prove herself to her colleagues. However, she has found that her colleagues have gone out of their way to welcome her, especially with their little, kind comments: "I thought they were just being sweet cause I was new . . . so those little comments here and there that were nice confidence boosters, and they just made me feel comfortable and

reassured, and I felt like I was drowning but I guess I'm doing okay.” Even brief words of encouragement have been enough to exceed Marie’s expectations of professional support.

Marie reported that she has developed strong relationships with the teachers on the sixth-grade team. Every Thursday they meet to discuss student progress and Marie feels that the team values her input. The regular education teachers look to her for support in situations where “the whole class isn’t getting something, maybe I have a different perspective on what they can be doing differently.” Marie’s relationships with other teachers have exceeded her expectations.

Marie also found that her stereotypes about classroom teachers were inaccurate. During her internship, she witnessed a number of classroom teachers push back against the accommodations and modifications that were suggested for students with learning disabilities. Marie explained that her experience was that the teachers “were very set in their ways and they didn't really want to hear much from special ed. It was very much like these are your kids, they’re your problem.” In contrast, regular education teachers in her school have been receptive to her recommendations as to how to better support her students. The professional relationships that Marie has built have helped her to feel supported beyond her expectations.

Mentor. Marie’s school has a mentor program and the experience of working with a mentor has exceeded her expectations. Marie realizes that she is fortunate to be starting her career in a building that has a mentor program. She reported:

Our school is really good. We have a mentor program here. So when you enter and you're a first-year teacher, you're part of that mentor program and you're aligned with someone that's kind of in the same field as you. So when you do have some of those questions, you know that you have that go-to person.

Marie's mentor helped her to navigate the less familiar job responsibilities. For example, she is required to write student learning objectives (SLOs) which was a requirement she did not have experience with prior to being hired. The mentor program guided her through the progress. Marie's mentor has been invaluable, often providing Marie with an experienced perspective on how to address certain issues. Overall, the support from her mentor has exceeded her expectations.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

Marie reported that she is highly satisfied with her job. However, she joked, "It depends on what day you ask me." Marie believes her level of satisfaction results from the relationships that she has built with her students and the growth she sees in them, both academically and socially.

Students. Marie spoke about two students when discussing her level of satisfaction. One student who "has a very hard time trusting adults" recently reported that Marie is someone he trusts at school. During a recent classroom activity, students were asked to write down people that they trust, both inside and outside of school, and then the students ranked the people on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most trustworthy. In the student's ranking, Marie was the highest ranked person at school and received a 10. Marie said, "It's those little things" that make her feel satisfied in her job.

Marie proudly reported that her job satisfaction also stems from watching her students grow. One student, whose behavior in the past has forced the school to place him out of district, had a behavior-changing breakthrough recently, after a conversation with Marie. After this breakthrough, Marie reported that she "almost cried." Once again, she reiterated that her satisfaction is due to "that growth and the fact that I had developed a close enough relationship"

to help nourish that growth in a young person with special needs. Marie attributed her high level of satisfaction to the strong relationships she has built with her students and the social and academic growth that occurs as a result of those relationships.

Satisfied despite unmet expectations. Marie believes that although she has struggled with unmet expectations, her job satisfaction is linked to the expectations that she feels matter the most.

I think it comes back to prioritizing your expectations and your satisfaction. You know, those things that you're dissatisfied with . . . are they enough to make you satisfied or unsatisfied with your job? . . . I can probably go on and on about all the things I dislike about my job or about the school I'm at and this, that, and the other thing, but all of those things that are satisfying, are satisfying enough to make my overall job happy and great and where I want to be.

Marie believes that even though some things have gone wrong this year, and her expectations have not been met in a variety of areas, there are enough elements of her job that are going right and are elements, in fact, that are going so well that she feels satisfied with her job and plans to stay at her school “for the long-haul.”

Kelsey – The Unexpected First Year Teacher

Kelsey participated in the focus group and conducted her follow-up interview using Adobe Connect. Her follow-up interview was rescheduled due to a scheduling conflict.

Kelsey is in her early 20s and earned her degree in early childhood education. She is currently in her first year of teaching as a second-grade teacher at an urban charter school. The school system includes grades K-8, and Kelsey’s school includes grades two through four. The school was established because of high rates of dropout, low attendance, and low test scores in

the city's public schools. The school prides itself on rigorous academic standards and high standardized test scores. The curriculum is planned using data from assessments given throughout the year that gauge student learning and identify strengths and weaknesses.

Kelsey works with a team of second-grade teachers that is spread out over four classrooms – each classroom is assigned two teachers. Kelsey and her co-teacher are responsible for 19 students and ensuring that they are proficient on their benchmark assessments. Her co-teacher, who is in her second year of teaching, works with her to provide whole and small group instruction, as well as individualized interventions for students.

Within the second grade, there are four curriculum teams. Each team consists of two teachers and focuses on one of the following areas: writing, literacy, science, or math. Teams are responsible for planning lessons in their content area and writing up formal lesson plans that are shared with the other classrooms. Through the sharing of lesson plans, the team has been able to create consistency throughout the grade-level, and teachers have developed an expertise in one area of content. Kelsey serves on the literacy team and, as a result, she takes the lead in her classroom with lessons that focus on literacy.

Background

Kelsey reported that she has “always known that I wanted to work with kids.” Throughout high school, she worked after school and during the summers at a childcare center. She also took advantage of a program offered through her high school that provided students the opportunity to work in a preschool program and earn their preschool license.

After comparing early childhood education programs, Kelsey entered the teacher preparation program right after high school and graduated in 2014. During her bachelor's program, she interned in a second-grade classroom in an inner city school. This led her to seek

opportunities to work with students in areas of poverty and feels this is her “calling.” Upon completion of her degree, she was unable to get a job as a full-time teacher and worked for one year as a paraprofessional in a public elementary school. Her responsibilities included providing second and third graders support in the classroom and interventions outside of the classroom.

Expectations of Teaching

Kelsey has worked with children in multiple settings throughout her life and believes her expectations of teaching were set during her experiences as a student and during her teacher preparation program. Each of these experiences helped her to develop a different set of expectations.

Experiences as a student. From her experiences as a student, Kelsey developed the expectation that teachers are caring. Kelsey reported that her teachers were very caring and wanted to help their students. Her teachers were “always wanting to be with us, always helping us with stuff.” This resulted in her teachers doing whatever it took in order to help students learn. One teacher, in particular, stands out in her mind, as he was always coming up “with different methods to teach us.” He made learning fun and utilized a variety of approaches including using videos. This demonstrated to her that teachers were focused on students and really cared about their progress.

Experiences as a student teacher. Kelsey believes her expectations were also affected by her bachelor’s program, especially her student teaching. Her internship was in an urban kindergarten classroom. She recalled, “The third day I was in control of the classroom. So I feel like that experience kind of set my expectations for what teaching would really be like.” Her student teaching lasted for a semester and required her to plan and teach lessons. Through this experience, she developed the expectation that teaching would be about building lifelong

learners. “I thought it would . . . child-centered, more like building the lifelong learners, that love for learning.” She developed the expectation that experiences in the classroom would be discussion-based and that would help students to engage in their learning. As a student teacher, Kelsey believed that her role as a teacher would be centered on developing lifelong learners.

Expectations of Teaching vs. the Reality of Teaching

As a first year teacher, Kelsey has experienced the full range of unmet, met, and exceeded expectations.

Unmet expectations. Her expectations have not been met regarding the workload she is expected to complete, her school’s strong emphasis on standardized assessments, and classroom instruction.

Amount of work. Kelsey did not anticipate the amount of work she has to complete on a daily basis. “There’s always so much to do. And I don’t think I imagined that there would be that much to do.” One of the biggest shocks resulted from the deadlines for submitting lesson plans and reporting data from assessments. These deadlines have caused her to struggle to balance time spent on reports and planning with the need for dedicating time during her day to working directly with her students.

Kelsey also did not anticipate that she would work such long hours. Because she works in a charter school, her workday is longer than a typical public school day. “Being a charter school, we have extended hours so I will be working for at least 10 to 11 hours a day. By the time I get home, I am very, very tired.” Kelsey reported that she arrives at school at 6:45 am and leaves around 5:00 pm. When she returns home, she continues her work for about an hour. Kelsey’s expectations were not met in terms of her workday because she did not anticipate

the amount of work she would need to complete and the length of her school day being extended well beyond eight hours.

Focus on data. Kelsey did not expect that her planning would be based on data from standardized assessments. Kelsey's school uses standardized assessments to plan the curriculum and instruction. While this is part of the mission statement of the school, Kelsey did not anticipate how serious the school would take state testing. Growing up and taking the same tests, Kelsey had her own experiences and opinions about standardized tests and believes that "using that one thing for data just is kind of against . . . my philosophy, because I feel like that is just one day for one kid." She questions the accuracy of the data and did not expect that teaching would be focused so much on preparation for the tests.

Within her classroom, Kelsey was shocked by the amount of time she dedicates to preparing her students for taking tests. She stated that a great emphasis is placed on making "sure they know how to put the answer in the answer box, and a lot of focusing on that, not whether or not we're really building that lifelong learner—the love for learning." She feels that the focus is on "how well they do on the tests" and not building a passion for learning. Kelsey spends a great deal of time, on a daily basis, collecting data. Kelsey reported:

Every day we give them a little exit ticket as their assessment for the lesson if they learned the lesson or not. And then we also do a reading assessment every two months to see like what level they are at, and we also do a benchmark assessment . . . and then for daily assessments, we do the exit tickets for every subject and we also do a fluency math assessment every day.

This data is sent to her supervisor and involves short assessments such as exit tickets and longer assessments referred to as benchmarks. The amount of time spent on preparing students for

assessments and collecting data have not met Kelsey's expectations of best practices in education.

Classroom instruction. Kelsey's expectations of classroom instruction were also unmet. She thought she would engage in meaningful conversations with her students about the stories they were reading. Instead, she reported that her typical method of teaching is: "I am going to show you how, we will do it together, and then you do it." She feels that this is "a little repetitive" but nothing can be done to change the method because "that's how the school does it." She believes that if she were to go to another school, she would have more freedom with her method of classroom instruction and does not expect that she would be using the same model of instruction every day. This would allow her to be more creative in her method of instruction.

Met expectations. Kelsey's experiences during her bachelor's program helped her to form accurate expectations of lesson planning, and therefore her expectations were met. As a college student, Kelsey submitted formal lesson plans that outlined standards and goals. She was grateful for this experience as it prepared her for the weekly lesson plans that she creates. She admitted that at the time, she did not think her professors were guiding her in the right direction, that they were making her do too much work. In the end, "They were clearly right because we are writing out lesson plans and they are really, really long and they are well in-depth." This expectation, and the experience of creating formal lesson plans, has helped Kelsey as a new teacher.

Exceeded expectations. Kelsey believes her expectations were exceeded in the areas of relationships – both with her colleagues and with her students. This support stems from consistent opportunities for her to benefit from being observed, a welcome amount of balanced feedback, an organization and culture that enables and encourages her to collaborate with other

teachers, and most important, the mutually valuable relationships she has developed with her students.

Amount of support. Kelsey stated that because she is at a charter school, there are positions in her building that do not typically exist in public schools. Kelsey believes that these positions have provided her with a strong level of guidance and describes her school as a “nice supportive environment.” She is observed weekly by her supervisor and by a new teacher coordinator. “I will have two or three adults in the room twice a week coming to observe and giving mostly positive feedback.” Kelsey spoke highly of the new teacher coordinator and his support. “He’s given me feedback on what to improve and things that are going well in the classroom. He’s given me a couple of interventions . . . and has provided some materials.” The level of support provided to Kelsey has exceeded her expectations.

Professional relationships. The organization of Kelsey’s school has allowed her to establish meaningful professional relationships with the teachers in her building. First, Kelsey works with a co-teacher who is in her second year of teaching. This allows Kelsey to be available to work with specific groups of students while her co-teacher works with the rest of the class. Working with a co-teacher is helpful because Kelsey feels like the partnership is focused on the two teachers “always giving each other input.” Kelsey’s relationship with her co-teacher has exceeded her expectations.

Working with the grade level team has also exceeded Kelsey’s expectations. She feels that she has developed “strong relationships” with her colleagues. She likes the team model as it allows the teachers to “bounce ideas off of each other” and “to talk things through.” This type of setting has helped her to feel supported, and she feels like it’s a similar model to when she

completed her student teaching. Working closely together with other teachers is something that Kelsey did not anticipate and the experience has surpassed her expectations.

Relationships with students. Kelsey did not expect that she would develop such meaningful relationships with her students. “I’m loving having those really close relationships with my students and a lot of my students . . . don’t really have a lot of strong relationships at home so they’ll seek that with their teachers.” These relationships have helped her to feel a sense of accomplishment. “It’s just like building that relationship and you know that you’re making a difference.” These relationships give her something to look forward to every day and their reward has gone beyond her expectations.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

Kelsey reported the same level of satisfaction when the focus group met in early November and during an interview in January. She says that on a scale of 1 to 10, she is a 7 or an 8. Kelsey does not plan on leaving her school anytime soon, but she is interested in changing to a lower grade. She anticipates that within the next three years she will move into a kindergarten or first-grade classroom, even if that means she has to leave her school.

Kelsey stated that her satisfaction is driven by the strong relationships she has built with her students and seeing their academic growth. In her opinion, the kids are great.

They actually care about you. It’s really great, and I hope they all know that I care about them too, as well. And I think that’s a lot of what gets me through all the stuff that is not so fun, like planning their assessments . . . looking at the data, and analyzing their benchmark data . . . I think the relationships help get you through that.

Kelsey rationalized that sometimes you have to do tedious things to get to the best end-result.

Sarah – Teacher and Case Manager

Sarah participated in the focus group but joined using Adobe Connect due to her geographic location. She also completed her follow-up interview using Adobe Connect but due to issues with the internet, the interview was completed via telephone.

Sarah is in her late 20s and is currently in her second year of teaching at an out-of-district placement school that specializes in Special Education. The school has two programs, middle school and high school. Sarah teaches at the middle school (fifth through eighth grade) and currently has eight students.

Sarah is responsible for curriculum, instruction, and case management. Her day is split into six periods and also includes an advisory period. She teaches math, science, social studies, English, writing, and a social skills class. She works with a co-teacher, and that allows her to provide remedial instruction. The co-teacher is responsible for teaching a health class, for which Sarah wrote the curriculum.

Background

Growing up, Sarah knew that she wanted to help people and thought she would be a social worker. But, as she grew older, she realized that social work would place her in uncomfortable situations that might lead her to burn out. Her next thought was to become a school counselor. However, when she reflected on her school experiences, it became apparent that her real calling was to work in special education.

Sarah was not the ideal high school student. Her parents did not encourage her to continue to college because of the financial burden they would assume. Thus, after graduation from high school, Sarah went into retail, where she worked for three years. During that time, she realized that retail was not a career option she wanted to pursue. As a result of this realization,

she started taking college courses at night and online. Eventually, she entered a bachelor's program in education and completed the degree in May of 2014.

While working toward her degree in special education, Sarah worked as a paraprofessional in the life-skills program at a high school for three years. She felt that working as a paraprofessional would allow her the opportunity to “make sure it was what I wanted to do” and to gain experience that would lead to a job. In fact, this experience helped her discover that while she wanted to work in special education, she most enjoyed working with children on the Autism Spectrum. Additionally, while completing her coursework, Sarah interned in a second-grade classroom, worked as a substitute teacher, and even spent time as a secretary in her current school.

Expectations of Teaching

Sarah believes that her expectations of teaching are the result of her experiences as a student and her experiences as a paraprofessional. During her time as a student in public schools, Sarah feels that she had caring teachers, and, conversely, that she experienced the negative effects of school politics. As a paraprofessional, Sarah's experiences working with teachers helped her to form a unique set of expectations about teaching.

Experiences as a student. Sarah entered the teaching profession because she expected it would allow her to help students. From her experiences as a student, Sarah had “amazing teachers,” people she felt were loving, kind, and inspiring. Her expectations of teaching included a belief that the focus would be on students and helping them to grow.

Sarah's expectations of politics in education guided her away from public schools. Through her K-12 experiences, Sarah witnessed the politics involved in the school system and stated, “I almost didn't become a teacher because of all of the political nonsense that comes

along with the public schools.” She commented that public schools are limited regarding curriculum and harnessed by the type of testing that is required for students, especially those identified under special education. Due to her experiences in public schools, Sarah does not believe working in special education in a public school setting is a viable option for her. If she were to work in a public school, she would become a regular-education, classroom teacher. When applying for jobs, Sarah sensed that the public school setting would not be the best fit because of her experiences.

Experiences as a paraprofessional. As a paraprofessional, Sarah worked with teachers that helped to form her expectations of teaching. One teacher was a “phenomenal woman” that Sarah saw as a mentor. Sarah took the opportunity to work after school with this teacher and that experience helped her to visualize what it took to be a good teacher: “In order to be a good teacher, to do what I need to do, this is what it looks like.” Working with this teacher modeled for Sarah what the profession required and the steps necessary to be successful. Another teacher gave Sarah valuable advice on dealing with parents, advice that helped to adjust Sarah’s expectations before entering the profession. Sarah admitted that she was judgmental about the actions of parents, but this teacher helped her to learn that “at the end of the day, we’re [teachers and parents] both trying to do what’s best for the kid, we’re just coming at it from different angles.” This teacher helped Sarah to appreciate different perspectives and learn how to work with and better understand parents. Sarah’s expectations of teaching shifted because of her experiences working with model professionals.

During her teacher preparation program, Sarah believed that her expectations of the teaching profession were more accurate than her classmates’ as a result of her job as a paraprofessional. “I had a lot of experience one way or another between being a para and

working with parents. And I think that maybe that's why when I got into the teaching profession I kind of knew . . . this is how it's going to be." In her opinion, her experiences in schools "helped disillusion me or answer any questions that I might have had." She stated that while working through her courses, there was a difference in expectations between students that had classroom teaching experience and those who entered the program directly from high school. During classes, those individuals who were employed in schools often explained to other students what it was really like working in schools. Sarah believes that working as a paraprofessional helped her to form realistic expectations of teaching.

Expectations of Teaching vs. Reality of Teaching

During our focus group and follow-up interviews, themes developed surrounding Sarah's expectations and experiences. Specifically, Sarah seemed clear that, as she entered the profession, although a variety of her experiences fell short of expectations, she found that her expectations were exceeded when it came to working with students.

Unmet expectations. Sarah reported being disappointed regarding her personal expectations, her expectations of support, and anticipated workload. In the area of professional expectations, Sarah did not anticipate the extent of her professional responsibilities.

Personal expectations. After completing her degree in education, Sarah felt that she was ready for teaching, yet she struggled with expectations that she had set for herself. "I think that's the one thing they never tell you [to expect to feel] in your first year of teaching, that you [are] not nearly as good as a teacher as you thought you were [going to be]." Sarah understands that teaching is a learning process, but she wishes she were better and recalls many nights when she felt like a failure. At this point, she questions how she is going to "find the time to learn everything I have to learn." Additionally, while she admitted that her professors were helpful in

cautioning her that the first years of teaching would be difficult, she thinks it would have been even more helpful if they had added a simple assurance: “I wish someone had told me that it was OK not to be perfect your first year.” Sarah has struggled with her personal expectations.

These days, it appears that some of Sarah’s personal expectations have changed. She says, “I’m not Superman.” One of Sarah’s informal mentors has helped her to realize that sometimes she needs to take a break from work. This realization developed from Sarah’s belief that teaching takes “a lot of heart and . . . you give so much of yourself every day, all day, all the time, that if you don’t [take a break], you find yourself getting burned out.” Sarah’s principal has also helped her to understand that she can’t be the perfect teacher right off. While Sarah has struggled with the expectations she set for herself, those expectations have shifted due to support from her colleagues.

Expectations of support. During her first year of teaching, Sarah’s expectations of her administration were not met regarding support: “I think my principals tried to be as supportive as they could, but they were very busy.” As Sarah entered her first year, she was tasked with creating a curriculum for her middle school students. Sarah did not have access to a mentor and there was no induction program during her first year of teaching. She feels that some type of support (e.g. a mentor) would have been beneficial.

I actually wished I had a mentor teacher, and I had more support . . . I think there was a lot that was taken for granted . . . that I would know how to do it . . . and it wasn’t until after I fell on my face that they were like, ‘Oh, you were supposed to do this.’

She believes that her first year would have gone more smoothly had she worked with “someone with a little more experience to kind of help guide me.” Sarah’s expectations of support were not met and that forced her to learn through experience, through trial and error.

Professional responsibilities. Based on her prior experiences in schools, Sarah thought she was ready for her professional responsibilities, but she was simply overwhelmed with the number of tasks she had to complete. “I thought I was prepared for the amount of work I would have to do, but I wasn’t.” The unanticipated workload included having to build a curriculum for her middle school students as well as providing all the necessary documentation involved with being a case manager. When she entered teaching, she expected that she would dedicate her school day to her students. However, the case management piece of her job often takes precious time away from her being a teacher with her students. “There were some days . . . that I was so bogged down by all the paperwork that I know that the kids didn’t get my full attention.” Sarah’s expectation of the nature of a teacher’s professional responsibilities were not met due to the often overwhelming amount of paperwork involved in her role as a case manager.

Exceeded expectations. The relationships that Sarah has built with her students have exceeded her expectations. She has found that these relationships help her to look forward to her day and she gets a great deal of satisfaction from watching her students grow.

Relationships with students. One thing that has certainly exceeded Sarah’s expectations has been the rewarding relationships that Sarah has built with her students.

I didn’t think that I would spend as much time thinking about my kids in my free time as well and worrying about them and hoping that whatever was happening was OK for them. They definitely without a doubt are a reason to get out of bed every morning when you don’t want to. Those kids rely on you. I love going there and being that person for them. These relationships have given Sarah a clear purpose as a teacher and she values the role that she plays in her students’ lives. Sarah’s relationships with her students have gone above and beyond her expectations.

Student growth. Based on her experiences, Sarah expected that she would be able to help students grow. However, these expectations have been exceeded. Sarah reported that when a student learns a concept, she realizes that she's made a difference in that student's life. "I have kids who will rise to expectations that have never had expectations before. So now that I am making them meet them, you can see a difference." Sarah knew that her job as a teacher would aim to promote student growth; however, she did not anticipate it would be so rewarding.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

Sarah is highly satisfied with her job. "I love my job. I love the bad days, and I love the good days." While there are aspects of her job that do not meet her expectations, Sarah feels that there are more upsides than downsides to teaching and that "in the end it's what I do with the kids, and it's what they're learning and their experiences that make everything worth it for me." Sarah's high level of satisfaction is tied to her school climate and the personal fulfillment she gets from the job.

School climate. While Sarah was disappointed by a workload of professional responsibilities that may have impacted the time and energy she would like to have focused directly on student learning experiences, she considers the extra workload as a necessary aspect of her particular job description and recognizes certain trade-offs inherent to her position. Sarah's particular job requires her to juggle the roles of both a teacher and a case manager; however, she has control over curriculum and can "pick and choose from different programs" or create her own. She admitted that this leads to a great deal of work, but she appreciates knowing that this level of autonomy is specific to her school setting. "I feel like I'm doing more now to help kids than ever, because I have this freedom, and I have this ability to work with the

schedule.” Sarah is satisfied by the flexibility that her school provides, a flexibility that she feels has allowed her to make decisions about her curriculum and her schedule.

Sarah is satisfied with her school climate and the tone that she believes her principal has set for the building. As a second year teacher, she is comfortable approaching her principal with issues about students and believes the principal trusts her judgment as they have a strong relationship. In the past, she worked with administrators who did not have as similar a philosophy of education, a fact that often caused conflict. One of Sarah’s fears is that the climate at her present school will change when the principal retires. This has pushed her to think about moving to another school, or possibly return to college to complete a master’s degree.

Personal fulfillment. Sarah reported that she is is satisfied with her job because of the fulfillment she feels on a daily basis. She sometimes feels selfish and stated, “I feel like I get just as much out of it as the kids do. At the end of the day, I think it’s probably the best decision I’ve ever made.” Her ability to support students in their emotional and academic growth is far more important than the hours she spends preparing lessons and completing paperwork. To her, all of the other tasks that she needs to complete are just “noise.” She explained the tradeoff between fulfillment and the tedious work necessary to sustain fulfillment:

You are not going to like everything all the time. That is just how it is. There’s no job out there that’s going to be perfect for you all the time. You are never going to find that one job that answers all those needs and all those wants. You find something as close as you can and so in my mind, this is what it is.

Although all of her expectations were not met, Sarah is satisfied as a teacher.

Julie – The Involuntary Transfer

Julie's schedule did not allow her to participate in the focus group. Instead, her interviews both occurred using Adobe Connect. Similar to other teachers included in the study, both of Julie's interviews were rescheduled as a result of unanticipated changes in her schedule.

Julie is in her mid-40s and works in an urban school as a preschool teacher of students with autism. After completing her bachelor's in early childhood education, she is currently in her third year of teaching. Julie has continued with her education and has earned a master's degree in special education and is working on completing her master's in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

Julie's first job as a teacher came when she was hired in December after a new preschool classroom was added at Elm Street Elementary School. After finishing that school year and completing the next full school year, she was then transferred to another school in the same district.

Julie currently works at Pinewood Elementary School. Pinewood serves just over 500 students in grades ranging from preschool to grade five. The majority of the student population is White but also includes smaller populations of Hispanic (19%) and African-American (7%) students. About 40% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. According to Smarter Balanced scores from the previous school year, students at Pinewood tested significantly lower than the state average.

Julie's preschool program is new to the school this year. The program takes students the moment they turn three years of age. As a result, Julie sees an influx of new students throughout the year. Currently, she has seven students and the support of two paraprofessionals.

Background

Julie comes from a family of teachers. Her mother was a first-grade teacher, and her father taught high school music. Julie is the mother of two grown children, both of whom have found themselves pursuing careers in education. Her daughter is a special education teacher, while her son is working as a paraprofessional and starting work on a master's degree in special education.

Although Julie did not earn her bachelor's degree in education until later in life, she "always kind of felt that pull to the classroom." The advice of her high school guidance counselor deterred her from yielding to that pull into a teaching career when he told her she could never be a teacher because she was too much of a troublemaker. This detour postponed Julie's achievement of becoming a credentialed classroom teacher, but she still managed to enter the field of education by working as a paraprofessional in a number of different school districts.

When her daughter left home for college, Julie made her decision to return to school for a degree in education. This necessitated having to leave the paraprofessional job due to the lack of flexibility, so she found herself working full-time in an office. Since she had to work in the office full-time, Julie's internship turned into a year-long experience rather than just lasting for a semester. She endured a schedule of interning in the morning and then working at the office from noon to 8:00 pm.

Expectations of Teaching

Julie believes her expectations of teaching in general stem from her watching her mother and her experiences as a paraprofessional. Working as a paraprofessional and completing her coursework for her bachelor's degree helped her to form more specific expectations about working as a special educator with young children.

General expectations of teaching. Julie developed what she believes were realistic expectations of teaching. As a child, she helped her mother correct homework, so she later understood that the job would entail taking work home. Through her experiences as a paraprofessional, she knew that she would have to spend her own money on teaching supplies. Both experiences led Julie to understand that teaching would not involve her earning a great deal of money. She took a \$12,000 pay cut when she left her job and took a teaching position. Julie believed that her general expectations about teaching were accurate based on her experiences as the daughter of teachers and her positions as a paraprofessional.

Expectations of Special Education. Julie's expectations included the belief that she would be able to make a difference in the lives of her students. Julie worked with students identified with a variety of learning disabilities during her time as a paraprofessional. Through these experiences, she worked with a student on the autism spectrum. Julie stated, "it was right after my mom died and this little boy just healed my heart." This experience helped her to narrow her focus to working with students on the spectrum. During her coursework, some of her professors made it very clear to her that early intervention "makes such a difference." These experiences led Julie to expect that early intervention would be a powerful way to make a difference.

Expectations of Teaching vs. the Reality of Teaching

Although Julie felt the benefit of growing up learning the role of a teacher from parents who were educators, Julie reported a variety of unmet expectations that she attributes to her experience at Elm Street. She admits, she "was looking for new jobs all last year." She did not feel right: "I wasn't satisfied, I thought maybe I had made a mistake." At that point, Julie was not sure she "could have survived another year" at Elm Street. Furthermore, she also found that

her expectations were not totally met at Pinewood; yet, Julie reported that her expectations of teaching were met by the amount of personal satisfaction it has brought, and will continue to bring her. Julie also believes that a number of her expectations were exceeded in both buildings.

Unmet expectations. Julie's expectations of teaching were not met in terms of her understanding of job requirements and job stability. Elm Street Elementary did not meet Julie's expectations in terms of support from administration and peer professionals, and she felt disappointed by a lack of supplies. Her new teaching position at Pinewood has only presented one struggle in terms of a professional relationship with a colleague.

Requirements of the job. After completing her bachelor's program, Julie expected she would be ready for the requirements of a teaching position. However, she did not feel prepared for her role as a case manager. She believes that it is difficult for colleges and universities to prepare students for the reality of teaching. "There's so much you don't get to see because of privacy . . . I was really not prepared because all of the assessments and all of the things that it would not have been possible for them to prepare me for, not knowing what school district I was gonna work in." Julie's expectations of her level of preparedness were not met during her first year of teaching.

Julie was also shocked by the amount of work she needed to complete. "I also had no idea that I would be working so much at home, like at night and on weekends." This caused her to struggle to find a balance between planning and her role as a case manager. "I feel that I don't have enough time to do the planning because I'm so busy doing paperwork all the time. Part of that is because it is special education and there's so much paperwork for compliance." In addition to this work, Julie did not anticipate the other tasks she would be required to

complete. “There’re duties, and there’re meetings, and there’s all kinds of things that you don’t expect.” Overall, Julie’s expectations of teaching were not met during her first year as a teacher.

Job stability. Julie knew that she would have to take a pay cut when she began as a teacher. However, she did not anticipate that she would have to deal with not having a contract and making the same amount of money during her first three years. As a result of this, she has found herself living like a college kid at times. “I feel like I’m in college again, and I’ve got boxed mac and cheese and a little ramen noodles every once in awhile.” She recently started tutoring in order to bring in additional income. Julie expected that teaching would provide her with job stability but her experience has been drastically different.

Support from administration at Elm Street. Julie struggled in building a positive relationship with her administrator and feels that her expectations of support were not met. This lack of support ranged from not having a representative of the local education agency (LEA) at her parent meetings to the feeling that she, unwittingly from lack of guidance and support, broke “a lot of the rules in terms of compliance and paperwork.” In her opinion, “this principal didn’t seem to care if it wasn’t done exactly to the timetable that it was supposed to be.” Julie was never observed by her principal and she had many negative conversations with her. At one point Julie approached her administrator expressing her need for an additional paraprofessional since she felt one paraprofessional was inadequate to meet the needs of the ten students for whom she was responsible. The principal denied her request. Julie expected her principal would be a source of support and these expectations were unmet.

Professional support at Elm Street. Another disappointment, during her year and a half at Elm Street, was Julie’s feeling of being isolated from her colleagues. She was not provided with an induction program, nor did she have a mentor. When she did request a mentor, she was

told to find her own. Additionally, her classroom was not in the same area as the rest of the preschool rooms. “It was just awful that I taught in a school that had five preschool classrooms and all the other four classrooms were on a wing together and my classroom was in the wing with the fourth and fifth grade. I was isolated from my colleagues.” Expectations of professional support were not met due to feelings of isolation.

Supplies at Elm Street. As a classroom teacher, Julie expected that she would be provided with teaching materials. She purchased items when she worked as a paraprofessional and knew that she would not be given everything that she wanted. However, she expected that the school would provide her funds to purchase items necessary for her classroom. “I thought I would have supplies that the school district would provide me. I didn’t . . . most of what I got was from the dump and they told me to clean it before I let the kids touch it.” Julie purchased many items herself and was able to use Donor’s Choose to fulfill 16 projects. Although Julie’s expectations for supplies were not met, she has been able to search creatively and thereby find the necessary funding to purchase what she needs for her classroom.

Professional relationships at Pinewood. Pinewood Elementary had never had a preschool program, let alone one that is self-contained. As a result, Julie has struggled to maintain a positive relationship with the school nurse as she resists the change. According to Julie, the nurse does not understand the meaning of a self-contained classroom and why Julie requests that the nurse comes to her preschool classroom to assess a sick child rather than send the student down to the nurse. The nurse also has issues with the bathroom practices of her preschool classroom and the issue has escalated beyond the building. Julie did not anticipate that establishing a preschool classroom would cause conflicts in professional relationships within her building.

Met Expectations. Before she became a teacher, Julie knew that working with students identified under special education gave her a great deal of satisfaction. She commented that her expectations were met in “the amount of joy that the job would bring me.” In her current position, she works with two paraprofessionals who also find joy in the job. “We just laugh so much, so hard, all day long and . . . sometimes I still can’t believe that I get paid to do this. I just have so much fun doing it. I just love it, even though it is not as much money as I used to make.” Julie’s expectations have been met in the area of personal satisfaction.

Exceeded expectations. Julie’s expectations have been exceeded as far as student growth and her relationships with parents are concerned. Due to the difference in climate, between Elm Street and Pinewood Elementary School, Julie reported that her expectations have been exceeded in terms of professional support at Pinewood.

Student growth. During the past two years, Julie’s expectations of student growth have been exceeded. She stated:

There’s so much progress that you can see. I always say that it’s selfish because they come in and they’re not speaking and they don’t know their letters and, you know, many of them when they leave . . . are mainstreamed into kindergarten with their peers. So it’s just so exciting.

One student that is currently in Julie’s classroom has made a great deal of progress since she arrived in the classroom three months ago. At that point, the student was nonverbal, but Julie spoke of a dramatic improvement: “She’s just been saying so many things. I think she’s going to be one of my little stars.” Julie believes that early intervention is extremely important for students on the autism spectrum and the growth that she has seen in her classroom has exceeded her expectations.

Relationships with parents. Julie spends a great deal of time communicating with her students' parents, which has helped to establish very close relationships with them, especially, she feels, in comparison to other teachers. In addition to emailing and calling parents, a great deal of communication happens via text messaging. Julie uses text messaging because, with the exception of gym class on Fridays, her students are in her classroom all week, making it difficult for her to call parents from school.

Julie has been the recipient of a great deal of support from parents. During her first year, one parent "wrote letters to the superintendent . . . about how lucky they were to have me as a teacher." This parent has maintained contact with Julie, especially consulting Julie about her daughter's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Another set of parents sought help from Julie when they found it difficult to structure their weekend schedule in a way that provided consistent support for their son at home. Julie was able to build a trusting relationship with them, which created the emotional space for the very honest conversations that helped them work through the problem together. Julie feels that her expectations of parents have been exceeded because she has been able to build such strong, supportive relationships.

Professional support at Pinewood. Julie's relationship with her new administrator has exceeded her expectations. Julie feels that her principal has created a welcoming school and makes teachers feel part of the process. "We have staff meetings where we are working on a mission and vision statement for school and what we want it to be." The principal has supported Julie in every difficult situation as they occurred during the year. "I feel like she still remembers what it was like to be a teacher. She's so supportive of teachers and I think a lot of principals

forget what it's like when they become a principal." The relationship that Julie has established with her new principal has gone beyond her expectations.

Julie's expectations of professional support have been exceeded as well, by one of her paraprofessionals. The paraprofessional is a retired teacher with 27 years of experience in the regular education kindergarten classroom. "It's like a gift from God to have somebody . . . that has that experience and connections at the school." Julie commented she is a great source of knowledge and her input is invaluable no matter what the situation. She has pushed Julie to approach her administrator for the supplies that she needs. Julie has been impressed with the amount of support she has received in her classroom this year.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

Julie reports that she is satisfied with her position as a teacher, but only because "I am not in *that* school anymore." She struggled at Elm Street and felt that her "spirit was kind of breaking." Julie had thought that all schools would be like Elm Street, so she was in disbelief at the beginning of the year. "This place cannot be this good," she thought, and she is still somewhat skeptical that "the other shoe is going to drop" at Pinewood.

Julie grows more confident every day as her experiences at Pinewood continue to demonstrate what a relationship with one's administrator should be like and "how a school is supposed to run." Julie stated that she is currently "trying to adjust my expectations now that I'm in an environment that is much more supportive." While Julie anticipates finishing her master's in Applied Behavior Analysis and sitting for the exam to become a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, she enjoys the classroom and wants to gain more experience before leaving her position as a teacher.

Hannah – The Mover

Hannah was able to participate in person during the focus group. However, compared to other participants, there was a considerable amount of time, two months, between her first and second interview. Hannah's follow-up interview occurred while she had a break in her school day and occurred via telephone.

Hannah is a third-year teacher in her early 30s who has worked full-time in two different school districts. After graduating from the bachelor's program with a degree in elementary education, Hannah was unable to find a full-time job. During the summer, she decided to go back to school for her master's degree and applied to work as a substitute in two different districts. She substitute taught the first two weeks of the school year and then Hannah was hired as a technology teacher in Bakersfield.

Bakersfield is a small, rural town that contains three schools. The job required her to split her time between two buildings within the same district that are both overseen by the same principal. Hannah worked with students in grades K-6. Both schools are classified as elementary schools and have a predominantly White population. Over half of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Last year, the school scored significantly below the state average for Smarter Balanced testing.

Hannah worked there for two years before issues within the district became unbearable. The issues stemmed from small town politics and an unsettling amount of change in leadership. Hannah explained that the town had issues with the school budget and funding. This resulted in a decrease in pay from her first year to her second year. Additionally, a new superintendent was put in place with a temporary contract that quickly turned into a permanent contract, despite the individual's lack of experience. The new superintendent happened to be

friends with the town's business administrator. The new superintendent continued this trend by placing several other individuals that lacked the qualifications for the job in positions of power. As a result of the political mess, Hannah left at the end of last school year and is currently working at Jefferson Middle School as a technology teacher.

Jefferson Middle School consists of Grades 5 to 8, with about 650 students. Similar to Bakersfield, the majority of the population is white, however, only 8% of the population receives free or reduced lunch. As might be expected, Jefferson's school children scored higher than Bakersfield's on the Smarter Balance tests. Furthermore, and to the district's credit, Jefferson students scored significantly higher than the state average on those tests.

Background

When Hannah was in her teens, she always loved being around children and knew that her career would lead her to do "something that would be helpful to kids." Her family recognized that she was "good with kids" and felt confident that when she was around "they had a built-in babysitter." Hannah's first formal experience working with children came while she was in high school, when, during the summer, she worked at a day camp. Additionally, during her junior and senior years, she worked at an after-school program for preschoolers.

Hannah did not have the ideal family life. In her opinion, this made her stand out in the affluent community in which she lived. Her father struggled with addiction and her mother was absent from the family. "I was the one kid that I knew that got free or reduced lunch and didn't have a lot." As a result, Hannah poured all of her efforts into school. She says that she was always a good student, though she often struggled to complete homework.

Hannah did not enter teaching in a traditional manner. After high school, she attended college and majored in political science. With just a semester needed to finish her degree, she

left college and worked for years in retail, even becoming a manager. After six years, Hannah realized that she wanted to become a teacher. At that point, she entered a bachelor's program, in education.

Although Hannah's professional career did not start with teaching, she remembers that one of her high-school teachers predicted that she would one day be a teacher. When he wrote her a letter of recommendation, he insisted on giving her a copy to read. In the letter he made his vision for her clear--"I don't necessarily know what Hannah wants to do with her life, but if the stars align, she would be every third-grade students' favorite teacher."

At the time, Hannah felt confused by his guidance, and she believes that her confusion led her to continue to resist her calling to education for several years after she graduated. Finally, though, when she made her mind up to become a teacher, she contacted the teacher to thank him for his insight.

Expectations of Teaching

Hannah believes her expectations of teaching were formed through her experiences as a student. She credits her experiences as a K-12 student and what she learned during her undergraduate studies for molding her expectations as a teacher. She believes that her student experiences, K through 12, helped her to identify what she wanted her classroom to feel like, while, later on, her studies in college helped her make decisions about pedagogy.

Experiences in K-12. Due to her difficult home life, Hannah developed the expectation that school would always be a safe and caring place. She "felt like the teachers cared and that is something that is so important to me." She expected to create an environment that made students feel that their presence is a positive thing and that students should feel that they "add to the classroom and they get from the classroom."

One powerful, negative, and prolonged experience that she had as a young student convinced Hannah to expect that teachers would carefully consider each child as a whole human being in order to do whatever it takes to reach every learner. Hannah experienced the opposite. She was especially good in math in comparison to her peers. Without regard for the potential emotional consequences, her teacher placed her desk in the corner to separate her from the other students. Her work consisted of worksheets. Through this experience, Hannah began to believe that teachers should assist in student growth, emotionally as well as academically.

Experiences in college. Hannah's expectations of teaching changed during her time as an undergraduate student. Her coursework helped her to understand what needed to happen in order to create the safe environment that she desired. Originally, she thought her classroom would be similar to those she had experienced. Students would sit in rows, complete their homework, listen, and keep their mouths shut. She believed she would be "super strict on homework." Through her coursework, she developed expectations of what was necessary to help students feel comfortable and safe, and that included working with students to meet their needs through exploring their individual interests.

Expectations of Teaching vs. the Reality of Teaching

Hannah's current position at Jefferson Middle School "feels like a vacation" compared to her first job. Thus, most of her unmet expectations were experienced in Bakersfield. Still, Hannah admitted that she did have some of her expectations exceeded while working in Bakersfield.

Unmet expectations. During her time in Bakersfield, "anything that could possibly go wrong probably did." Her expectations were not met in terms of her mentor, onsite professional development, administrative support, and the ability to meet the needs of learners.

Mentor in Bakersfield. Hannah was assigned a mentor teacher during her first year of teaching that did not meet her expectations. This relationship was “very different than what I had in mind.” While Hannah felt that the mentor was “a strong person that I could go to no matter what help I needed.” However, she lacked knowledge in the area of technology education, as she was the art teacher in the building. Hannah described the relationship not as a mentor-mentee relationship but more of a “symbiotic relationship” in which both teachers took away the same amount of support. In the end, Hannah believes that her mentor program “wasn’t really as much help as I kind of wished it would’ve been because she couldn’t answer as many questions as I had specific to my [subject] area.” Hannah’s expectations of her mentor were unmet due to the fact that she did not teach the same subject area.

Professional development in Bakersfield. As a technology teacher, Hannah’s expectations of in-school professional development were not met. “The professional development that they offered they based more on what the classroom teachers would need.” The teachers were focused on issues such as selecting a math textbook, which left the specialists feelings left out and bored. Hannah figured out how to improve the professional development offering: “I stepped in, and either because I’m naïve or a loudmouth, I went to the principal.” Through this conversation, she was able to establish separate professional development for the specialists so that they could focus on issues that were more pertinent to their curriculum. Because the offering at the school did not meet Hannah’s expectations, she supplemented the in-school professional development with the coursework for her master’s in education.

Leadership in Bakersfield. Hannah’s expectations of leadership, in particular the superintendent and the technology director, were not met. These two individuals placed Hannah

“in positions that normally I wouldn’t expect of first or second-year teachers.” Hannah’s expectations were unmet because there were many “additional things that people took for granted that I would do.”

During her two years in Bakersfield, Hannah worked under two superintendents. An individual who lacked experience but “had a lot of political ties with the community” replaced the first superintendent. Due to her lack of experience, “she made several bad decisions.” A number of times the superintendent signed Hannah up for workshops without her knowledge. “I was signed up for things. I was going to two to three workshops and they were administrator level workshops . . . they were just sending me to these places.” According to Hannah, the superintendent “would receive an email saying we have this great opportunity for someone in your district, and that someone was me. My new name was ‘someone.’” Hannah also joked that in her school they did not use the word volunteer, instead they referred to it as being ‘voluntold.’ The superintendent did not meet Hannah’s expectations in terms of leadership.

Hannah also did not expect the technology director to add to her workload. During her free period, it was not uncommon for Hannah to be pulled into meetings with vendors about purchasing technology equipment. The technology director also placed her in charge of a computer-based, standardized test during her first year of teaching. This experience involved her spending countless hours trying to figure out the schedule and caused Hannah a great deal of stress. Furthermore, Hannah revealed, she completed the additional work without any additional compensation. Administrators such as the superintendent and technology director did not meet Hannah’s expectations in terms of support. Instead, they added to Hannah’s workload.

Ability to meet the needs of students in Bakersfield. One expectation that was unmet resulted from the school’s inability to provide services to meet the needs of students. Many of

the students in Bakersfield came from difficult home environments and Hannah feels that “we didn’t do enough to help out that population.” Many of the students, especially those reliant on the school meals program, struggled during vacations from a lack of care and supervision. Hannah recalled that the staff had conversations about providing free after-school opportunities for these students and possibly even a camp during vacations, but that it “was never something that was seriously considered.” Hannah’s expectation that the school would provide better support to students was not met.

Met expectations. One of Hannah’s goals has always been to help students and this expectation was met almost immediately. “Even though I didn’t feel like I had two feet on the ground and my head screwed on straight, I still felt like I was making a difference even if it was little by little.” She added that there are times when the job provides her with so much gratification it makes her truly grateful.

It almost makes me feel selfish because I love it so much and I get so much out of it. And I mean, sometimes when Thursday rolls around and I get that email that I got paid and I’m like, ‘I get paid to do something that I love so much’ and it kind of makes me feel a little selfish but it really is such a rewarding job.

Hannah’s expectations of how rewarding teaching would be were met.

Exceeded expectations. Despite the fact that Hannah’s experience in Bakersfield included a number of unmet expectations, many of her colleagues exceeded her expectations in terms of professional support. Additionally, throughout her time as a teacher, the impact she has on students has exceeded her expectations, and so, too, has her personal growth.

Professional support in Bakersfield. A number of Hannah’s colleagues in Bakersfield exceeded her expectations in the area of professional support. “Some of the core group that I

worked with, my specialists team and some of the other people I worked with on the administrative team, really blew my expectations out of the water.” One of her fears was that she would not be taken seriously as a new teacher and Hannah found that veterans saw her as an equal and praised her for her work. Hannah’s expectations of her colleagues were exceeded during her two years in Bakersfield.

Hannah’s principal surpassed her expectations and she appreciated the professional relationship that she built with him. She described her principal as “her entire support system.” As she recalled . . .

He made my first year so much better than I had expected because I expected to not have my voice heard or not be an important part of the school community. And he made sure that that wasn’t true. Anytime I had a crazy idea . . . he was like, ‘OK, let’s just try it.’ And was just totally behind me 110% and that blew my expectations out of the water and really made it easier for me to be true to my values and things that I thought were really important for the kids.

Hannah’s decision to leave the school came after she found out that her principal was leaving. In fact, he encouraged her to leave and told her that she was “being used by a lot of people in the district” and was willing to do whatever it took to help her find another job that would meet her needs. Hannah’s supportive relationships with many of her colleagues and with her principal were better than she expected.

Impact on students. During her two and a half years as a teacher, Hannah’s expectations of her ability to have a positive impact on students have been exceeded. Hannah spoke warmly of former students: “I still have those connections with those kids. They’re still seeking my help with things.” Hannah has also experienced those ‘aha!’ moments with her students and loves it

when students say things like, “This doesn't feel like learning at all, but I'm pretty sure you're making me learn.”

Personal growth. Hannah did not anticipate that teaching would promote personal growth. “I feel like I grew a lot more than I expected to.” Through feedback from her colleagues, Hannah has gained confidence in her ability to be a good teacher. Collegial feedback has helped her learn not to be so hard on herself, and eventually, during her first year of teaching, she found the proper balance. As she put it:

I was really concerned with making sure I did what everyone expected of me and then I realized that my expectations are so much higher than everyone else's. So I should just kind of focus on those because it's always good to do better than someone else's expectations rather than to just settle for them.

This personal growth helped Hannah find her footing and allowed her to take the necessary steps to provide her students with new, high-quality learning experiences. The expectation was that she would simply teach word processing, but the confidence that came from her personal growth led her to introduce students to the exciting world of Google accounts and computer coding.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

Despite the fact that Hannah's first teaching job ending badly, she doesn't “feel like I was super let down or disappointed that my expectations were not met.” She feels that she was satisfied during the first year and a half in Bakersfield and is currently satisfied at Jefferson Middle School. She even believes that her experience in Bakersfield played a real part in her satisfaction at Jefferson, though the greater source of her satisfaction has always been her students.

The grass is greener. Hannah's negative experience has contributed to her high level of satisfaction. "I've been at my current job since September. I really, really like it. And I feel like I am able to appreciate it more because I had an absolutely horrible first job experience."

Hannah believes that changing schools was the right decision and often hears from her colleagues in Bakersfield that she got out at the right time and that things have become worse.

It's kind of like you have to go through the worst part of your life to be able to realize and appreciate the best part of your life. So I'm glad I only had to do that worst part for two years and I got the best part right after.

Hannah's negative experiences in Bakersfield have greatly fueled her appreciation for her current position at Jefferson.

Importance of students. While Hannah realizes that every job has negative elements, she believes that her students are a relentless source of satisfaction. She believes that other things do not matter anywhere near as much as her strong connection with her students. As the technology teacher, she often does not have access to her room when other teachers need the use of computers, yet she feels that such snags don't matter. "It doesn't matter because you've got those kids. And that's all that really matters." She added, "You could list a hundred things that could go wrong but at the end of the day . . . there's nothing that's more rewarding as far as I'm concerned." Hannah's level of satisfaction is the result of her relationship and success with her students.

Cross-case Comparison

Expectations and experiences varied significantly from teacher to teacher. A cross-case analysis aided in determining if any themes existed across the five cases. The five teachers who participated in the study came from diverse school settings, held different teaching positions, and

reported varied expectations of the profession. Despite these differences, three themes were identified:

- participants expected to be prepared for the requirements of the job,
- participants expected that becoming a teacher would allow them to make a difference,
and
- participants expected that support would be provided.

The following discussion identifies the similarities and differences that exist between the cases when considering the themes. Stake (2006) suggested that cross-case comparisons be used to make comparisons between the cases “rather than to increase understanding of individual cases” (p. 83). As a result, the findings from the cross-case comparison aim to provide a simplistic description rather than the thick description found in a single case study (Stake, 2006).

Expectations of Teaching

Research sub-question 1: What are the expectations of teaching held by beginning teachers?

Three categories developed across the cases in terms of expectations. First, all teachers expected that they understood the requirements of the job. Second, teachers expected their jobs would allow them to make a difference in the lives of their students. Lastly, teachers entered the profession expected to receive some level of support from their colleagues.

Theme I: Requirements of the job. The teachers involved in the study expected to enter the profession with an understanding of what their daily responsibilities would include. Their assumptions were based on the fact that the teachers all had a variety of

experiences in educational settings prior to entering the profession. In general, these expectations included the idea that the primary focus of their job would be teaching.

Preparation. All of the teachers involved in the study completed student teaching and left the university with state certification in either early childhood education, special education, or elementary education. This experience led to the expectation that they had indeed been prepared for the role of a teacher. In addition, three of the teachers worked as paraprofessionals prior to being hired, and the other two teachers had experience substitute teaching and working at camps. Further experiences included jobs at preschools and summer camps. Even beyond that, one teacher had completed an internship during high school, another had earned her preschool license prior to graduating from high school, and one had worked as a secretary for several months before being hired to teach in the same school. Through these experiences, the teachers developed the expectation that, while they may have had a few things to learn, overall, they thought they were prepared to take on the role of a teacher. These experiences led the teachers to harbor expectations that they were prepared for the classroom.

Focus on teaching. These teachers entered the profession with the expectation that the job would focus on teaching and student learning. Thus, the teachers entered the profession with the belief that they would spend most of their time focused on lesson planning and classroom teaching. The special education teachers felt the same, although they were also aware that they would be expected to attend meetings and complete paperwork. Still, based on their experiences, the teachers entered the profession with the expectation that they would focus their efforts on planning lessons and working with students.

Theme II: Impact on students. All the teachers included in the study expressed the notion that teaching was a career that involved changing students' lives for the better. Their

expectations included the idea that teachers established caring relationships with their students to set the foundation for student learning and growth, and that teaching would be a child-centered occupation. Teachers aspired to be individuals who inspired student growth by creating caring environments. Additionally, the elementary teachers felt that they served a unique role that would help provide a fundamental basis for their students' educational paths. This was especially evident for the preschool teacher who developed the expectation that early intervention would be the best method of helping students transition to the mainstream classroom. Throughout all the cases the same idea was repeated--that these individuals entered teaching as a way to support students.

Theme III: Level of support. As a result of their experience in teacher preparation programs, teachers expected their administrators and colleagues would support them during their first year. All of the teachers entered their schools looking for guidance from a mentor. One teacher voiced the expectation that support would be similar to what she received during her student teaching. Overall, teachers expected that the support would aid them in helping students to learn. All five beginning teachers duly expected that support would be provided during their first year as a teacher.

Expectations vs. the Reality of Teaching

Research sub-question 2: What discrepancies, if any, exist between expectations and the experience of teaching?

Throughout the cross-case analysis, it became evident that teachers most frequently reported the expectations that were either exceeded or not met. For example, teachers' expectations about the requirements of the job were not aligned with the reality of their experience leading to their expectations not being met. In contrast, teachers did find that they

were able to make a difference in the lives of their students and this expectation was exceeded. Lastly, expectations in the area of support were inconsistent across the cases. While some teachers' experiences included a great deal of support, others struggled due to the lack of support.

Theme I: Requirements of the job. The five teachers all reported that their expectations about the requirements of the profession were not met. In some cases, teachers did not have an accurate understanding of what the job required or the amount of time it would take to complete specific tasks. Teachers also had concerns over their lack of knowledge in their subject area and their ability to meet the demands of the job. Lastly, teachers struggled during their first year to balance their work life and with their home life.

Unanticipated tasks. The five beginning teachers expected they knew what their job would require based on their prior experiences. However, they found that there are a great number of tasks, such as meetings and duties, that they did not anticipate and many of these tasks pulled them away from their students. The teacher at the charter school found that collecting and reporting data was such an important factor at her school that as deadlines were approaching she found herself struggling to find the time to input data while still providing students with the full attention necessary to meet their needs as a responsible teacher. She simply did not expect that deadlines for reporting data would be one of her teaching responsibilities.

The other teachers also faced tasks that can be summarized as additional burdens that conflicted with their expectations. The case manager experienced the unanticipated task of managing relationships with paraprofessionals and ensuring that the paraprofessionals were providing services outlined in IEPs. Special educators also spoke about the difficulties that occur when dealing with parents and the fact that dealing with parents can be especially time-

consuming. Beginning teachers experienced unexpected tasks and added burdens that did not meet their expectations.

Time. In terms of special education, teachers expected having to complete a great deal of paperwork, but they did not really understand what that work would look like and the time it would require. One teacher reported that, at times, her workday is completely taken up by paperwork. All of these teachers spoke about the unanticipated length of their work day and that they end up taking work home to be completed at night and over the weekend. These beginning teachers remain shocked that their job would require so much more time than they had expected.

Lack of knowledge. Three of the beginning teachers that participated in the study also reported their expectations were not met in terms of their knowledge base. One teacher felt she did not know enough about special education testing and another teacher did not know how to schedule services for her students, write student learning objectives, and have a solid enough understanding of special education laws. Both of these teachers explained that there were topics that were not covered during their teacher preparation that left them feeling unprepared for the job. However, both did note that it might be impossible for this training to happen due to the limited time of the program, the difference in how special education is organized in different school districts, and privacy laws. Beginning teachers' expectations about their job requirements were not met due to their perceived lack of knowledge.

Concerns over ability. The expectations surrounding job requirements have caused some of the teachers to question their ability to meet the requirements of the job. One teacher voiced concerns wishing that she were better at her job. Additionally, a first-year teacher stated that she's "constantly second-guessing" herself as she tries to meet the standards and deadlines. Teachers felt that they were learning from their mistakes, although these lessons were

trumped by the feelings of failure and not always immediately realized. Teachers worried that they would end up feeling like failures. Several teachers dealt with deep personal concerns due to their unmet expectations.

Impact on personal life. Teachers reported they did not anticipate how hard it would be to step away from their jobs. One teacher reported that she feels like “work never ends.” For two teachers, the first year of teaching caused them a great deal of stress and resulted in a variety of illnesses. One teacher had two bouts of shingles. All of the teachers involved in the study admitted they had a difficult time finding a balance between taking care of themselves and taking care of their work. Some of the teachers expressed their struggles with learning how to take a break. Teachers all struggled with the unanticipated impact that teaching would have on their personal lives.

Theme II: Impact on students. One expectation that has been dominant and met throughout every one of the cases is that every teacher feels that she has made a positive impact on her students. All of the teachers reported having seen student growth. And that, they all report, has been the direct result of focused, individualized instruction and the development of fulfilling relationships.

Individualized instruction. Teachers have been able to meet their expectations about student growth through the practice of individualized instruction. As case managers, teachers aimed to help bridge the gaps that make learning difficult for their students through individualizing their approaches. This requires them to adjust their method of instruction based on the student. The case manager stated, “Every child is different and you never know which puzzle piece needs to go where in order to make them successful.” The need for individualization might require her to pre-teach or re-teach concepts, to teach a skill through

scaffolding, or to make modifications to an assignment or assessment. It is noteworthy that the teacher in the out-of-district placement school chose to work outside of the public school system because she realized that her expectations of true individualization of instruction would not have been met otherwise. In her current role, she has the flexibility to focus on one concept or skill with a student until the student masters it. All these teachers share the feeling that they have been able to meet their expectations of supporting student growth when they are focusing their efforts on individualized instruction.

Relationships. All of these teachers expressed feeling the importance of building relationships in order to meet their expectations of having a genuine impact on student growth. The teacher in the charter school spoke to the reality that, when working with students who live in poverty, relationships between teachers and students are of the utmost importance because those relationships are less likely to exist at home. She has found that her ability to build those relationships and to be a supportive adult in her students' lives has facilitated student progress. Another teacher repeatedly mentioned her expectations surrounding relationships and the fact that students are not able to learn until they have set that foundation with their teacher. The teacher serving as case manager as well as a classroom teacher is so thoroughly involved in her relationships with a variety of her students that she thinks about them more than she ever expected, outside of the classroom and at home. While the preschool teacher has also found relationships with her students to be important, she feels that their young age makes her students' growth highly dependent on her relationships with their parents. Through the support of parents, the work that she does in the classroom is followed up at home. As an example, this teacher described an instance where she has seen growth happen for one student at a remarkably

fast rate. Beginning teachers emphatically reported that building relationships is a highly important factor in being able to make their expectations about student growth a reality.

Student growth. All of the teachers who participated in the study reported heartfelt stories of student growth. This ranged from behavioral improvement to academic growth. Overall, the teachers' expectations of being able to impact students and promote personal and academic growth were met and often exceeded.

Theme III: Level of support. Throughout the study, cases showed evidence where and when expectations of support were not met. While some principals were supportive, in other cases, there was a clear lack of support. Further inconsistencies include the fact that mentors were not offered to all teachers. One consistent aspect throughout the cases was the predominant evidence that colleagues were a strong source of support in helping beginning teachers in a variety of ways.

Administration. Teachers expected that principals would serve as a go-to means of support. For one teacher, the principal in her first job exceeded this expectation. He supported her, and to a highly unexpected point, when he advised her to look for employment opportunities outside of the district because of the negative impact of issues within the school system. In another of these cases, the teacher moved from an unsupported situation into a supportive experience in her second job. Since the principal had established a culture wherein teachers' voices mattered, this new teacher felt immediately supported when that principal went to bat to get her the supplies she needed.

A different teacher, one who stayed with her first job, has experienced a supportive relationship with her principal, a relationship wherein he has guided her to adjust the expectations she held of herself. And while another 'stayer', the teacher in the charter school,

does not have a principal, her equivalent to a principal has observed her classroom and provided feedback on multiple occasions. When principals establish relationships that provide healthy support for their teachers, beginning teachers expectations of support are met.

In other situations, however, principals have been a source of anxiety. One of the 'movers' describes the end of her relationship with her former principal as a bad break up. She reports that the experience left her with PTSD. One indicator of the nature of the problem was her explanation that, although the principal did not take the time to observe her teaching, he somehow managed to fabricate and inform her of judgments about what happened inside her classroom. The first-year case manager also has struggled with her principal. In her case, he has been giving her inconsistent instructions in regards to managing her paraprofessionals.

Beginning teachers look to principals for support. When this is not present, those expectations are unmet.

Mentor. Due to the support provided through the bachelor's program and subsequent internships, teachers expected that during the first year, or years, of their careers, they would be assigned a mentor.

For some, this has turned out as expected. The case manager works closely with another special education teacher who has helped her through various issues throughout the year. In the case of one of the teachers, while she was not assigned a specified mentor teacher, she has had the support of a variety of individuals to fill that role, including the new teacher coordinator, her supervisor, and her co-teacher. These individuals have provided her with feedback and suggestions for improvement. In some cases, beginning teachers' expectations of support were met through their interactions with mentors.

Even when a mentor is provided, expectations for relevant support might not be met. One teacher in this study, although assigned a mentor, did not have a positive experience and her expectations of a mentor were not met. As a new technology teacher, she felt her mentor would be someone with knowledge in the same subject area. Because her mentor did not teach or have sufficient knowledge of the technology, this new teacher felt that the relationship was an equal partnership rather than the supportive role she felt a mentor should provide.

Two of the teachers felt they would have benefitted from guidance, yet neither of them was assigned a mentor. Although passionate and dedicated, both teachers felt as though they had made a lot of mistakes during their first year. In fact, they had sustained such uncomfortable experiences that both of them were driven to doubt they were fit for the profession.

This study revealed that beginning teachers' experiences with mentors are not consistent. Only one of the teachers reported that her mentor was effective in providing the necessary supports. One beginning teacher experienced a mentor without the qualifications to live up to her expectations, and two found alternative sources for mentoring. Overall, the teachers did not find one of their most important expectations systemically met.

Colleagues. All five teachers reported a high level of support from the other teachers in their buildings. Support ranged from informal check-ins to collaborative sessions about curriculum. Two teachers found that their colleagues were sources of inspiration, especially effective on those days when the new teachers felt they were just not doing a good job. Three of the teachers noted the benefits of collegial support they felt to be inherent in the team-teaching model.

The two teachers not working in the team model spoke of the importance of support offered, out of the generosity, of specific individuals. One middle school teacher even reported

such generosity extended through constant, mentor-style communication with a teacher at the high school. In the other case, that of the preschool teacher, she reports feeling blessed to have as a resource the experience of a retired classroom teacher who is working as a paraprofessional in her classroom. In both cases, *unassigned* individuals have supported the beginning teachers with advice on curriculum and seasoned approaches to the multitude of complex situations and diverse demands that confront the teaching professional.

Throughout their experiences, the beginning teachers who participated in the study reported that informal relationships with their colleagues have met their expectations of support.

Impact of the Disconfirmation of Beliefs on Satisfaction

Research sub-question 3: What impact, if any, does a disconfirmation of beliefs (positive and negative) have on beginning teachers' levels of reported satisfaction?

All five teachers reported experiencing a variety of both unmet and met expectations. According to Oliver's (1977/1980) Expectations Confirmation Theory, unmet expectations will result in a negative disconfirmation of belief and therefore dissatisfaction. However, in this study, all the teachers reported high levels of satisfaction, explaining that their level of satisfaction did not always depend on their expectations being met. In these situations, teachers reported their satisfaction was based on their high prioritization of student learning and personal growth, and their sense that all expectations, regarding their new careers, are not equal. In fact, several teachers specifically expressed the idea that beginning teachers' expectations should be prioritized. An additional theme that surfaced was that school climate plays a role in satisfaction.

Importance of students. All of the teachers in this study reported that the most important factor in their level of satisfaction is the ability to help students. The cross-case

comparison identified that this was one expectation that was met for all teachers. One teacher summarized this idea when she stated that despite her negative disconfirmation of beliefs, “It’s doing something that’s bigger than me. It’s not about me. It’s about them. And that’s why I love it. I’m making a difference in someone’s life.”

Prioritizing expectations. Many of the teachers in the study voiced the perception that not all of their expectations of teaching were significant. One teacher believes that there are always going to be elements of the job that will cause an individual to be dissatisfied. Another teacher said that teachers need to prioritize their expectations and that students are at the top of her list, thus bringing her satisfaction with her job. The charter school teacher made her case clear by explaining that although some of the unanticipated tasks that she has to complete are often frustrating, this does not bring her dissatisfaction because they are tasks that are necessary in order to promote student growth and achievement, and since student growth is a top priority in terms of her expectations about the job--overall, she feels satisfied. In just this regard, all of the teachers rationalized that while many of their expectations were not met, overall, it did not matter, because their expectations about their ability to have an impact on students were met--and oftentimes those expectations were unexpectedly exceeded.

Climate and satisfaction. Throughout the cases, one theme that became evident was the school climate. The National School Climate Center defined climate as a school’s “norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (para. 3, 2016). Teachers most frequently commented on the aspect of climate related to relationship and organizational structures pertaining to support provided through a mentor, colleague, and/or administrator. The level of support varied from school to school.

Teachers commented that their administrators were extremely supportive, seemingly absent, and in one case, a source of stress.

In speaking about climate, one of the first-year teachers felt that her high level of support was due to the organization of her charter school. Based on her experience in public schools, she did not think she would have been offered the same supports. Similarly, the teacher at the out-of-district placement school identified that the organizational structure in her school led to a lack of support for beginning teachers. Organization was evident in the belief of one teacher who explicitly credited her belief that she was in a good school due to the sole fact that the school had developed a mentor program for all new teachers.

In terms of comparing school climates, two of the teachers in the study moved jobs and both reported that their current, higher level of satisfaction was due to the new school climate. This became evident to each of them during the first few months in the new setting. One teacher explained that everything was different in the new climate including her ability to meet the needs of the student, the political atmosphere of the town, and the availability of resources due to the town's support of education. Findings from this study suggest that school climate may influence teacher's reported levels of satisfaction.

Chapter Summary

Each of the five teachers entered the profession in a different manner with their own unique set of expectations about teaching. Based on their school setting, each teacher reported a variety of unmet, met, and exceeded expectations. Overall, the teachers reported that their expectations included a belief that they were familiar with the requirements of the job. They also expected that teaching would be a way to support students. Teachers also identified that their expectations of teaching included the idea that the administrators and colleagues would support

them within their schools. While not all of their expectations were met, the five teachers all reported high levels of satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Recommendations, and Reflections

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the role that expectations of teaching had on the reported level of job satisfaction of beginning teachers. The main research question was: How do job expectations impact beginning teacher satisfaction and turnover?

This question was supported through the exploration of three sub-questions:

1. What are the expectations of teaching held by beginning teachers?
2. What discrepancies, if any, exist between expectations and the experience of teaching?
3. What impact, if any, does a disconfirmation of beliefs (positive and negative) have on beginning teachers' levels of reported satisfaction?

Through the exploration of these questions, the researcher sought to understand the experiences of beginning teachers so as to provide insight to both universities and school administrators in their efforts to provide beginning teachers with positive early-career experiences, experiences that support a positive disconfirmation of their beliefs. Evidence, implicit and explicit in this study, points to the need for solid, position-specific support for novice teachers. The evidence also indicates the need for designated, qualified, teacher-specific mentors.

Experiences that involve mentors and administrators help promote met expectations and therefore satisfaction. The evidence demonstrates they do so by supporting and enhancing every new teacher's reason for wanting to become a highly skilled professional teacher in the first place--their vital belief that they can and will continue to learn and grow themselves. This takes place through confident and powerful relationships with their colleagues as well as with their

students. The relationships established between teachers and students allow teachers to be able to carry out their expectation that they will have a positive impact on their students' lives.

This chapter includes the study's analysis, interpretations, and synthesis of findings. The following areas are explored in this chapter: (a) discussion of prior findings, (b) recommendations, and (c) researcher reflections. The chapter culminates with a closing summary.

Discussion

This multiple case study aimed to determine if job expectations play a role in beginning teachers' levels of satisfaction. Based on the data, expectations do play a role in beginning teacher satisfaction. However, also made clear by the evidence of this study, is the fact that the issue of expectations and their role in teacher satisfaction is almost always overshadowed by the primary motivation so evident in each one of the teachers presented here. That motivation, which becomes the dominant expectation and overwhelming source of teacher satisfaction, is student success.

Subordinate to that are other expectations, and for each new teacher, there is a set of expectations sorted by weight and importance according to that person's priorities. A summary of the findings is presented below as well as a discussion of how those findings relate to the findings of other researchers.

Expectations of Teaching

The study identified three themes prevalent in beginning teachers' expectations of the profession. First, beginning teachers entered the profession with the expectation that they were prepared for the responsibilities of the job. Second, beginning teachers expected that they would be able to make a difference in the lives of their students. Third, beginning teachers expected to

receive extra support from experienced colleagues, from administrators, and from designated mentors within their buildings.

Requirements of the job. The present study identified that beginning teachers enter the profession expecting to have a clear understanding of the requirements of the job. This is consistent with research from DiCiccio et al. (2014) that indicated the expectation that teacher education programs prepare new teachers for the responsibilities of the job. Chase (2006) also noted that new teachers believed their teacher preparation experiences helped form their expectations of job requirements.

This finding suggests that teacher preparation programs seek to identify if common inaccurate expectations of the profession exist and to work towards helping students form more accurate expectations prior to graduation. Participants in the study mentioned they felt as though several experiences were missing from their program but understood that this was due to a limitation of time. During the focus group, the idea surfaced that preservice teachers should be exposed to a variety of school settings and be provided with the opportunity to observe a number of teachers with varying teaching styles. They believed this would provide them with a better background in making decisions on what age group and what type of school would be the best match for them. Ultimately, they believed that through additional experiences in different schools, they would be able to set more realistic expectations of school types and age groups.

Impact on students. The five beginning teachers entered the profession with the expectation that they would have a positive impact on students and their growth. Consistent with this finding, Weinstein (1989) reported that college students of elementary education identified the concept of caring for students of utmost importance. This is in line with Hebert (2002) who found that beginning teachers “wanted to establish positive relationships with their students” (p.

170). Additionally, Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) noted that beginning teachers felt that the act of teaching students was more important than their subject area. This demonstrates a coherent belief and expectation that beginning teachers place students as the most important aspect of their job.

Level of support. The current study identified that beginning teachers have expectations of the level of support they will receive from their administrators as well as their colleagues. Hebert (2002) noted that new teachers expected to build relationships with their colleagues. This expectation often is rooted from experiences during student teaching where preservice teachers are provided with a cooperating teacher and experience a consistent amount of feedback from both the cooperating teacher and from an intern supervisor.

Expectations of Teaching vs. the Reality of Teaching

Throughout the data, teachers reported a variety of met, unmet, and exceeded expectations. Teachers did not find their expectations met in the area of requirements of the job. Their expectations about the ability to impact students were often exceeded and met. In the area of professional support, participants reported their experiences were unmet and exceeded.

Requirements of the job. Novice teachers entering the profession often realize a considerable discrepancy between their expectations and the real, on-the-ground responsibilities of the job. Through the cross-case comparison, it became clear that a variety of teachers' expectations of the requirements of the job were not met. Similarly, the findings of Marso and Pigge (1987) suggested that teachers' expectations of the job requirements are often not met. As a result, they suggested that new teachers experience a reality shock, and some, as a consequence, either adjust their expectations or leave the profession. Findings from another study also demonstrated that new teachers have had difficulty accurately predicting the work that teaching

requires (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Those difficulties included teachers struggling with the amount of time required for certain tasks and various duties involved in teaching (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Additionally, DiCicco et al. (2014) found that this unmet expectation is often attributed to a lack of training during teacher preparation. This is echoed by Chase (2006); the findings of the study demonstrated that teachers believed their success in the classroom was dependent upon their schools filling the gaps that existed between what their teaching preparation program provided them with and what was expected from the job. This supports the claims of two of the participants who felt that they were struggling with their positions in special education due to a lack of knowledge and concepts that were not discussed during their bachelor's program. Therefore, in order to support new teachers, decision makers within school systems can help address the areas that teachers lack experience.

Impact on students. The second theme that surfaced identified expectations that beginning teachers hold about their ability to have a real and positive impact on students. All teachers reported the growth they had seen in students and the relationships they had established had surpassed their expectations. Marso and Pigge (1987) found that rapport with students appeared to be a factor that contributed minimally to the reality shock experienced by new teachers. Research by Hebert (2002) demonstrated that beginning teachers did not struggle in dealing with their students and that teachers use different approaches in dealing with classroom management. These findings are consistent with the current study but demonstrate a more important finding. Beginning teachers have a great deal of control over how they establish relationships with their students and therefore it can be suggested that teachers have the ability to control the outcome of their expectations about relationships with students, whereas other factors are out of their control.

Level of support. This study demonstrated one final aspect of the expectations of beginning teachers, their anticipation of support from their principal, from designated mentors, and from their colleagues. This idea of support goes hand and hand with the concept of school climate. Price (2012) indicated that school climate is greatly impacted by the decisions and interactions of the principal. While not referred to explicitly, the concept of school climate was identified by several of the participants in their discussions of support and interactions with their colleagues.

The expectation of support from principals was not consistently met. According to research completed by Shann (1998), as well as Tillman and Tillman (2008), principals play a significant role in determining the experiences and level of satisfaction reported by teachers. Price (2012) noted that the relationships principals build with their teachers set the tone or climate of the building. When principals establish positive relationships with teachers, teachers develop a positive attitude and create a positive school climate.

Hebert (2002) found that teachers' relationships with administrators vary due to what the teacher is looking for in the relationship. This led to some teachers establishing strictly professional relationships while others sought both personal and professional relationships (Hebert, 2002). In this study, some teachers found their administrators to be sources of support while others felt administrators were unable to meet their expectations of a supportive relationship. Chase (2006) also noted that teachers felt administrators were unable to meet the expectations of beginning teachers in terms of support. While some teachers in the present study experienced a similar lack of support, the fact that other teachers in this study reported that administrators met their expectations can be explained by the fact that Chase conducted research

in only one school setting, whereas the participants in this study experienced a variety of principals in seven different schools.

This study also looked at the impact of mentors or the lack thereof. Three of the teachers had mentors while the other two reported feeling that they would have benefitted from having one. The study showed that mentors could be a strong source of support, which is in line with findings from Hebert (2002). These supportive relationships often stem from a matching of content between the teachers and proximity within the school

In one case, a mentor relationship did not meet the needs of the teacher because the mentor had little knowledge of, and did not teach in, the same content area. A number of previous studies have demonstrated this pitfall, concluding that when teachers are assigned a mentor who does not teach the same subject or grade level, there is a correlative impact on the ability of the mentor to support the beginning teacher (Chase, 2006; DiCiccio et al., 2014; Hebert, 2002).

Additionally, this study also explored beginning teacher expectations of collegial support, another important factor that contributes to school climate. While, in every case of this study, those expectations were met. Previous findings on this topic vary. Marso and Pigge (1987) reported that new teachers had “high ratings of their on-the-job experiences with other teachers” (p. 56). Hebert (2002) reported that teachers were able to find support from their colleagues and establish meaningful, supportive relationships. However, more recent studies indicate that new teachers experiences with colleagues have not been supportive. Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) and Chase (2006) both found that new teachers struggled to establish supportive relationships with their colleagues.

According to Shann (1998), environments where colleagues provide support are the direct result of administrative leadership. However, in buildings where the teachers in this study struggled with support from their principal, they were still able to report strong, supportive, collegial relationships with veteran teachers. In the present study, one teacher reported difficulties with her administrator, yet she was still able to find supportive relationships within her building.

Reported Level of Satisfaction

It is important to note that expectations differ from teacher to teacher and that each teacher weighs and prioritizes their expectations. Kyriacou and Kunc (2007) noted “For one teacher it is the sense of elation that comes from pupil success that is of particular importance . . . for another it might be not wanting to be buried under paperwork” (p. 1253). While teachers in the study identified that they were satisfied and that this was due to their students, there are certainly other expectations that play a role in their overall level of satisfaction, one such factor might include the role of school climate. This just further demonstrates that expectations are a complex issue and while researchers aim to determine a particular set of expectations held by teachers, expectations vary from individual to individual.

The present study identified three themes that were consistent across cases. Each of these themes will be considered in relation to the disconfirmation of beliefs (either positive or negative) and the findings from prior research.

Requirements of the job. Teachers reported their expectations were not met in regards to the responsibilities their job would include. This resulted in a negative disconfirmation of disbeliefs, and according to Oliver’s (1977/1980) Expectations Confirmation Theory, this leads to dissatisfaction and impacts teacher retention. Bogler and Nir (2014) found that satisfaction is

based on a teacher's perceived ability to meet the demands of the job. When a teacher enters the profession with unrealistic expectations of their job requirements and experiences what Marso and Pigge (1987) refer to as a culture shock, they experience a great deal of stress. Giacometti's (2005) findings noted stress and other emotional factors play a significant role in a teacher's decision to leave or stay in the profession. As a result, Giacometti (2005) suggested that school districts provide support through staff development and that administrators "can help new teachers reduce the stress level that is associated with the multiple tasks of teaching on a daily basis" (p. 116).

Based on these recommendations, increased involvement from administration can help teachers readjust their expectations of their job responsibilities and also will help to meet teachers expectations of support. Overall, attention to these matters will lessen, or eliminate, the negative disconfirmation of beliefs experienced by teachers in these two areas and therefore promote a higher level of job satisfaction. However, although teachers reported a discrepancy within this area, they also noted that they learned quickly how to manage most of their daily workload. This is consistent with findings from Marso and Pigge (1987) who noted that new teachers are able to adjust their expectations.

Impact on students. Teachers in this study reported a high level of satisfaction due to student growth and strong student-teacher relationships. This led to a positive disconfirmation of beliefs and therefore teacher satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Shann (1998) and Derlin and Schneider (1994). Both studies reported that teachers believed the most important factor in determining their level of job satisfaction was their relationships with students. Shann (1998) noted the same findings as the current study. "Teachers felt that teacher-pupil relationships were most important and reported that they were more satisfied with this aspect of

their job than any other” (Shann, 1998, p. 72). Similar findings surfaced in the data from the present study.

Level of support. The disconfirmation of beliefs varied across the cases. Additionally, a teacher who experienced a positive disconfirmation of beliefs due to experiences with colleagues also experienced a negative disconfirmation of beliefs due to experiences with a mentor. This demonstrates that support is a complex issue and that beginning teachers have great expectations of the support that they will receive.

As previously stated, Giacometti (2005) suggested that school districts work towards developing more support for beginning teachers. Further supporting Giacometti’s claim that principals need to provide support for beginning teachers, Bogler and Nir (2014) found that the principal-teacher relationship contributes to both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. Tillman and Tillman (2008) also found that satisfaction is tied to relationships with coworkers and supervisors (i.e., administrators). As a result, administrators at the district level need to ensure that administrators at the school level understand the importance of building strong, supportive relationships with teachers. These relationships are the key to satisfaction. Additionally, through the building of these relationships, principals can work to create a positive school climate in which colleagues develop supporting and caring relationships with one another.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study suggests that teacher preparation programs and school districts improve upon the support they provide to individuals as they enter the teaching profession so that beginning teachers receive the support they expect. This is a challenge on multiple levels and these institutions should pursue solutions. Several possible solutions could

address these challenges. Additionally, a number of recommendations should be considered in regards to further study of the topic.

Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

There are a number of experiences that lead beginning teachers to form expectations about the profession. However, one consistent idea expressed by the special educators was their lack of knowledge. One possible change that teacher preparation programs could consider is to provide beginning special educators with more experiences in regards to testing and to help them develop a better understanding of the numerous special education laws they will encounter in the field.

An additional recommendation would be to consider increasing the amount of time undergraduates experience in the classroom and school setting in order to provide preservice teachers with a better understanding of the demands of a full school year. In other words, schedule internships to allow students to observe a variety of experiences and require them to participate in some of the nitty-gritty aspects of teaching such as duties, grading, and parent meetings.

Furthermore, the issue is twofold. Not only should colleges and universities aim to better support teachers, they should also consider the impact of administrator preparation programs. Administrators need to be provided with an understanding of the difficulties and challenges that new teachers typically face and should be provided with a variety of methods to support these teachers as they transition into the profession.

Recommendations for School Districts

School districts should consider developing induction programs for new teachers.

Teachers benefit from the support of a mentor teacher, whether formal or informal, and most importantly when the teacher is familiar with the content area. While mentors are a good starting point, districts should consider the development of induction programs that allow teachers to access high-quality professional development and the opportunity for beginning teachers to be observed and provided with feedback.

Additionally, new teachers enter the profession with experience in the area of student instruction but do not always have a level of familiarity with the other aspects of teaching, such as report cards, various computer programs, and the nuances of dealing with parents. Induction programs can help to guide teachers through these tasks and provide another level of support outside of a mentor.

Administrators play an important role in the careers of teachers. Consideration needs to be given to how principals establish relationships with new teachers. Mentor training would help principals to identify what they can do to support beginning teachers and how to guide individuals that take on the position of a mentor teacher.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further studies should look at the expectations and experiences of high school teachers to see if similarities exist between different grade levels. Prior research has identified that elementary school teachers report high levels of satisfaction, and therefore it would be beneficial to draw a comparison between the expectations and experiences of elementary and secondary school teachers.

Additionally, this study only included graduates from a bachelor's program. Research could be expanded to determine if the level of education attained by a new teacher has an impact

on his or her expectations. Specifically, do expectations differ between beginning teachers with a bachelor's degree and beginning teachers with a master's degree?

A longitudinal study would allow for the collection of a variety of data including journals. The added benefit of a longitudinal study, while time-consuming, is that it would allow the researcher to trace beginning teachers' expectations from day one of their teaching career and document possible shifts in those expectations over time.

Additional research should seek to determine if the Teacher Expectations Confirmation Theory, a framework that furthers Oliver's Expectations Confirmation Theory (1977/1980), applies to the experience of beginning teachers. Findings from this study indicated that the model is applicable, however the research was limited to five participants. Further research should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine if the model is a predictor of retention and turnover with other populations of teachers.

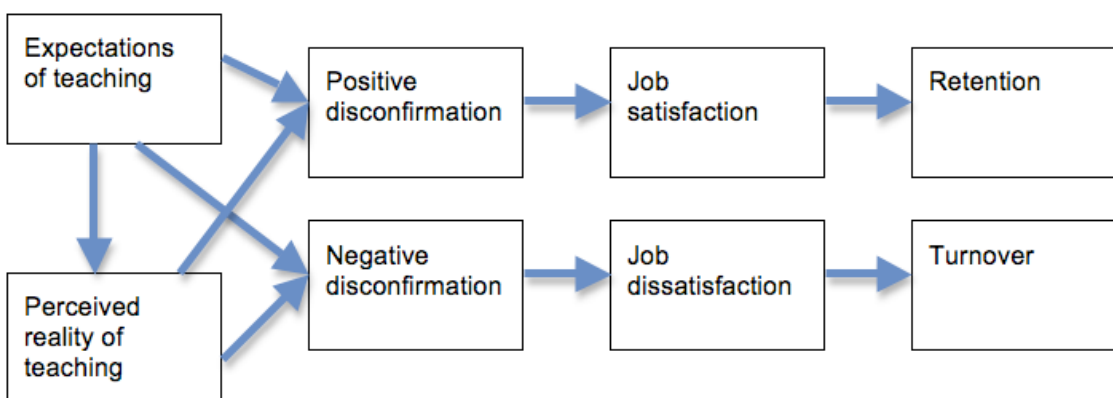


Figure 2 Teacher Expectations Confirmation Theory

Researcher Reflections

Throughout the course of this study, it was apparent that new teachers arrive at their first classroom with one expectation in common--a genuine passion to promote student learning through engaged student-teacher relationships. This passion allowed them to get through the sometimes tedious and perhaps less rewarding aspects of the job, and to further navigate the difficulties that all teachers face in their first few years in the profession. In helping new teachers to set appropriate expectations, professors, administrators, and veteran teachers can caution new teachers about the struggles they will face. While any attempt to develop accurate expectations is a good thing, as with any experience, it is also true that one ultimately learns by doing. This idea of learning through experience is present and consistent throughout the work of Dewey (1938) and is the undisputed value of student teaching. Unfortunately, there are simply more aspects of teaching than can be learned before an individual is faced with the responsibilities of the job. Thus, it remains true that teachers will always be likely to enter the profession with at least one or two expectations unmet.

So what can be done to increase beginning teacher satisfaction and teacher retention? As indicated in this research, beginning teachers struggle with developing realistic expectations of what good teaching requires. To address this potential discrepancy, schools can consider placing a greater emphasis on establishing and maintaining programs that support beginning teachers and lead teachers through the day-to-day, aspects of teaching. Additionally, schools should consider offering new teachers the focused, content-savvy support of mentors. Lastly, findings lead to the suggestion that principals work towards building strong relationships with new teachers while being a consistently supportive presence in the classrooms of their beginning teachers.

Closing Summary

The study demonstrated that these beginning teachers held three general expectations about the profession. The most important expectation, the belief every teacher in the study had in their ability to impact students, was met. That common belief led all of the teachers in this study to report a high level of personal satisfaction in their jobs. The research suggests that schools should place a larger emphasis on providing support for beginning teachers through induction programs and properly selected mentors in order to nourish that belief.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORMS



Department of Education

Beginning Teachers: The Connection Between Expectations and Job Satisfaction

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

Introduction:

I am Laura DeRosa, a doctoral candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. I am doing research on beginning teachers and how expectations of the profession relate to job satisfaction. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research.

Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research.

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can contact Laura DeRosa at laura.derosa@snhu.edu.

Purpose of the Project:

Beginning teacher experience high rates of turnover. The purpose of this research is to explore the role that beginning teachers' expectations of teaching plays in their level of reported job satisfaction. The researcher believes that your experiences will allow for a greater understanding of beginning teachers' expectations and experiences in the classroom, as well as your current level of job satisfaction. The researcher believes this knowledge will help administrators to build

the necessary support systems for beginning teachers, which will help to decrease the rate of teacher turnover.

Type of Research Intervention:

This research will involve your participation in a group discussion that will take about one and a half hour. You might also be selected for an interview to be conducted at a later date. The interview will take approximately an hour.

Participant Selection:

You are being invited to take part in this research because your experience as a teacher can contribute to the understanding and knowledge of beginning teachers' expectations of teaching and experiences in the classroom.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not.

Procedures:

You are being asked to help the researcher learn more about beginning teachers' expectations of teaching and how that relates to job satisfaction. You are invited to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to take part in a discussion with 6-10 other persons with similar experiences. Laura DeRosa or another doctoral candidate will guide this discussion.

The group discussion will start with me, or the focus group moderator, making sure that you are comfortable. We can also answer questions about the research that you might have. Then we will ask you questions about your expectations of teaching and experiences in the classroom and give you time to share your knowledge. You do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing.

The discussion will take place at Southern New Hampshire University, and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and guide or myself will be present during this discussion.

If selected for an interview, we will schedule a time that best meets your schedule. During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place. If it is better for you, the interview can take place at your school. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there.

Both discussions will be recorded, but no one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept on a password-protected computer. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except Laura DeRosa will have access to the recording.

Duration:

The researcher will need approximately 90 minutes of time on a single occasion to ask you a series of questions concerning your thoughts on expectations of teaching and your experiences with teaching.

If selected for an interview, the researcher will need approximately 60 minutes of time on a single occasion to ask you a series of questions concerning your thoughts on expectations of teaching, your experiences with teaching, and your current level of job satisfaction.

Risks or Discomforts:

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, we do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits of the study:

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about the expectations held by beginning teachers about the teaching profession. This

information will help school districts better understand the expectations and needs of new teachers.

Compensation:

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Confidentiality:

Your part in this research is confidential. None of the information will identify you by name. All information will be given a code number or pseudonym. Only the primary researcher will have the code that links names to the data. All data will be held in a secure place only accessible by the researcher.

We will ask you and others in the group not to talk to people outside the group about what was said in the group. We will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that we cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.

Sharing the Results:

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate. If I decide to take part in the study, I may quit at any time with no penalty. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to contact:

If you have questions about the study, please contact Laura DeRosa, the person mainly responsible for this study, at laura.derosa@snhu.edu.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the SNHU IRB, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the IRB, contact Thomas Beraldi at t.beraldi@snhu.edu.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

APPENDIX B
SURVEY, FOCUS GROUP, AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Survey

Dear alumni,

My name is Laura DeRosa, and I am a doctoral candidate at Southern New Hampshire University. I am currently seeking participants for my dissertation and am under the guidance of Dr. Cara Procek. My research focuses on beginning teachers and how expectations of the profession relate to job satisfaction.

I hope that you will consider completing the following survey. It contains ten questions and should take you less than five minutes to complete.

I appreciate your participation. Your feedback is important.

Laura DeRosa

Beginning Teachers: The Connection Between Expectations and Job Satisfaction Doctoral
Candidate, Southern New Hampshire University

laura.derosa@snhu.edu

Beginning Teachers: The Connection Between Expectations and Job Satisfaction**1. Age****2. Gender****3. Marital status****4. Race****5. When did you graduate with your bachelor's in education?****6. Current salary:**

- Below \$30,000
- Between \$30,000-\$40,000
- Over \$40,000

7. Current teaching assignment:

School name:

Grade:

Subject area:

Number of years in current position:

8. Please respond to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My expectations of the teaching profession were accurate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my current teaching position.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate working in my current position next year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see teaching as a long-term career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please enter your contact information if you are willing to participate in a focus group on the topic of beginning teachers' expectations of the teaching profession and the connection between expectations and job satisfaction. Participants will include other graduates from Southern New Hampshire University.

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

10. It is anticipated that the focus group will last between 60 to 90 minutes. The meetings will be held at Southern New Hampshire University on the following dates: November 7, 8, and 14. Please indicate the date(s) that work best with your schedule.

- Saturday, November 7
- Sunday, November 8
- Saturday, November 14

Done

Focus Group Questions

Engagement

1. What is your current teaching position?
2. What experiences led you to become a teacher?

Exploration

3. Before you became a teacher, what expectation did you have of the profession?
4. How does your teaching experience match up to your expectations?
5. What supports were put into place during your first year of teaching?
6. How would you describe your level of satisfaction with your job?
7. How long do you think you will continue in your current position?

Exit

8. Is there anything you wished we had asked you about?
9. What would you tell someone who is considering teaching as a career?

Interview Questions

Background Information

1. Tell me about your experiences in K-12 education.

-Where did you go to school?

-What are some of your most memorable experiences?

2. Based on your own educational experiences, what aspects of teaching drew you to the profession?

Expectations of Teaching

3. Prior to becoming a teacher, what did you think having your own classroom would be like?

4. While you were applying to different schools, did you apply to a certain type of school (urban, rural, upper class, middle class, etc.)?

-If yes, did you think that teaching would be different in a specific type of school?

-If yes, how would it be different?

5. When you were hired, what did you expect from the principal and your co-workers in terms of a professional relationship?

6. What were your expectations of the day-to-day responsibilities of a teacher?

7. Where do you think your expectations of teaching are rooted?

Present Experiences with Teaching

8. What expectations of teaching were met during your beginning years in the profession?
9. What aspects of teaching have met your expectations?
 - What aspects of teaching have exceeded your expectations?
 - What expectations of teaching have not yet been met?
10. In thinking about your expectations of teaching, were there expectations realistic?

Expectations and Job Satisfaction

11. Would you describe your current teaching assignment as ideal in terms of location and grade level?
12. How would you describe your current level of job satisfaction?
13. What areas of your job are you satisfied with?
14. What areas of your job exceed your expectations?
15. Do you see yourself continuing a career as a teacher?