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**Examining New Teachers' Perceived Reality Shock and Stages of Concern upon Entering
the Profession**

Arcadia University
Ed.D. Program in Education

Meghan Anne Markle

A DISSERTATION
IN
EDUCATION

Presented to the Faculties of Arcadia University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Doctor of Education.

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative survey study was to use a phenomenological approach to seek input about the experiences of new teachers as they navigate the role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher. This study sought input from new teachers on factors that contribute to their reality shock, as well as their thoughts on the types of supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession. The top factors contributing to the reality shock as reported by these new teachers during their first years of teaching included: Supporting students with diverse needs, having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials, and managing classroom discipline. In addition, this study examined the perceived levels of concerns for certain teaching tasks connected to the development stages of impact on self, task, and impact. The results from this study indicate that new teachers are largely more concerned with teaching tasks related to student impact than with self and task concerns. In addition to these results the following phenomenological themes were uncovered: work/life balance, student systems of support, paraprofessionals, administrative support, relationships, and impact. Review of new teachers' identified supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession were also analyzed. Identified supports that helped them manage their transition into the teaching profession included student teaching experience, mentors, and administrative support. Results from this study yielded helpful information to better understand the experiences of new teachers. Recommendations for future research should include an extension to the time frame of the study and administering this study with new teachers in diverse school contexts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This qualitative study examined participants who completed a teacher education program in State Z and had recently entered the teaching profession. These individuals are considered “new teachers” who have been teaching for 3 years or less. As with most transitions in life, the transition from student to teacher is not without its difficulties. New teachers experience a “reality shock” upon entering the teaching profession. Richards, Templin & Gaudreault (2013) state,

"As a result of their various roles and responsibilities, beginning teachers often find their work to be overwhelming and exhausting. Novices face numerous challenges during their transition into the school culture, some of which they may feel unprepared to handle. Such concerns include completing paperwork, attending meetings, coping with insufficient instructional materials and resources, conducting student assessment and monitoring student learning, and having inadequate time to prepare lessons" (p. 443).

This researcher examined the experiences of new teachers in their first years of teaching by taking a particular view of the factors that contributed the most to their “reality shock,” as well as their thoughts on the types of support that have helped to manage their transition into the profession. In addition, this researcher examined the perceived levels of concern of new teachers regarding certain teaching tasks connected to the development stages of impact on self, task, and impact (Fuller & Bown, 1975). Determining factors that contributed to reality shock, in addition to identifying new teachers’ perceived levels of concern, uncovered helpful information for both teacher education programs who prepare pre-service teachers, as well as school district personnel who provide support for new teachers.

This chapter includes background information on teacher education programs and teacher licensure for pre-service teachers. A description of the research problem and research questions, a summary of the methods of this study, and the rationale and significance of this study are provided.

Background of the Study

Now more than ever teachers are asked to produce significant academic student growth while also meeting the diverse learning needs of students (Zimpher & Howey, 2013). Over the past years, teacher education programs attend to evolving program requirements in order to help teachers support the diverse learning needs of their students. For example, “The fundamental purpose of a teacher preparation program approved by the Commonwealth of State Z is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the teaching profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to enable PreK-12 students in State Z to achieve academic success” (PDE, 2012). In State Z, since teaching is a clinical profession, candidates for this profession spend extensive time in school settings throughout their pre-service programs. In order to graduate and be eligible for certification, teacher candidates must demonstrate they can teach responsively and effectively by the end of their student teaching experience (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). In addition, to maintain program accreditation, teacher education programs in State Z must provide evidence about graduates’ place of employment and data about the achievement of PreK-12 students of their graduates to make continuous improvements to their programs and report these improvements to the State Department of Education.

Veenman (1984) first coined the term “reality shock” to describe the stress new teachers experience. He defined the term as “the collapse of missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life” (p. 143). Since 1984, more

studies have been conducted related to the teachers' experiences of reality shock. Chubbuck et al. (2001) suggested that helping novice teachers transition from a student identity to a teacher identity during their preparation can help diminish reality shock. Understanding that beginning teaching is a complex and dynamic experience is helpful when preparing and supporting new teachers. "Changes in the teaching context and in the demands made by schools affect all teachers, but they are experienced with special intensity during the first years of the teaching career" (Correa, Martinez-Arbelaiz, & Aberasturi, 2015, p. 68).

Research Problem

According to a recently published study for the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Ingersoll et al. (2018) stated that "more than 41% of new teachers leave teaching within 5 years of entry" (p. 24). This report also highlights the attrition rate among first year teachers (13%), and that teaching has a higher turnover rate than other professions such as nursing, law and engineering (Ingersoll et al., 2018). New teachers often develop beliefs during their teacher education program that guides their classroom practice once they enter the profession (He & Cooper, 2011). These beliefs include their professional philosophy, passions, commitments, ways of acting and interacting, and their cognitive teaching knowledge (Conway & Clark, 2003). When faced with the challenge of managing day-to-day life in school, new teachers focus on their own survival. New teachers face conflict between their personal beliefs and the reality of their teaching experience when managing factors such as: inefficient classroom management skills, inadequate teaching materials, interpersonal relationships, school culture, parent communication, and student motivation (He & Cooper, 2011). As stated by Feiman-Nemser (2003),

"We misrepresent the process of learning to teach when we consider new teachers as

finished products, when we assume that they mostly need to refine existing skills, or when we treat their learning needs as signs of deficiency in their preparation. Beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the contexts of teaching” (p. 27).

Fuller and Bown (1975) first described the concern stages of new teachers (self, task, and impact) and the importance of determining these developmental stages in order to provide ongoing support during the beginning years of teaching. Fuller (1971) labeled “concerns” as “constructive frustration, anticipation or what a person is trying to do in a particular situation” (as cited in George, 1975, p. 2). To help conceptualize the term “concerns” George (1978) explains,

“Specification of content in terms of concerns is important because progress in concerns seems to occur when concerns-related content is presented. Concerns have their origins in a situation which causes these concerns to be aroused. Once aroused, concerns must be resolved before other concerns can be aroused” (p. 3).

Fuller and Bown (1975) believed teachers progress in a linear succession of stages of concern where at first, new teachers are focused primarily on the self, then moving to the stage of concern or focus on instructional tasks, only after the issues with the self are settled. Finally, after new teachers maneuvered the concerns of tasks such as developing appropriate instructional materials, new teachers move to the last concern stage of impact. At this stage, teachers are able to consider their impact on student achievement. Fuller and Bown suggested that teachers only become concerned about the last category, impact concerns, when self and task concerns have been resolved. They state, “Impact concerns encompass larger educational decisions and

considerations of the impact of current trends and issues on students in the classroom” (as cited in Stair, Warner, & Moore, 2002, p. 155).

Although Fuller and Bown’s study is widely cited in the area of teacher development, recent studies have found a different trajectory than first suggested by Fuller and Bown (Conway & Clark, 2003). In more recent years, researchers have reported that many new teachers do not necessarily experience a linear succession through the stages of concern; rather, they may experience a more on-going, cyclical process with inward and outward concerns of the self, task, and impact (Conway & Clark, 2003; Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007).

Given the evolution of teacher preparation and the conditions faced by teachers in their first few years, more updated information is needed around understanding the level of concern and the reality shock new teachers may be experiencing. Uncovering the factors which teachers themselves perceive as present through reality shock, as well as determining their stage of concern provides helpful information when considering support for new teachers. Findings from this qualitative study will inform both teacher education programs and district personnel who support new teachers.

The questions guiding this research were:

What do new teacher participants describe, from their own perspectives,

1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” they have experienced in the first (0-3) years of teaching?
2. as the critical supports that helped them manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?
3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-

survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

Context of the Study

With this study, the researcher invited participants who were newly certified teachers and were currently teaching in the surrounding metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Certified teachers have successfully completed an accredited teacher education program and fulfilled the requirements for level I certification in State Z.

Teacher education programs in State Z are required to follow certain guidelines in order for compliance from the state. Institutions must

“ensure that candidates complete a well planned sequence of professional educator courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry, and application of technology related to each academic discipline the candidates plan to teach or in the academic disciplines related to the non-instructional certificate categories in which they plan to serve (SDE, 2018, p. 11).

The courses, competencies, and experiences for K-12 teacher preparation programs must be designed to address the issues and knowledge that are relevant for K-12 levels of teaching and learning. The professional core of courses, competencies, and experiences for K-12 teacher preparation programs all must include the following areas:

- I. Cognitive Development and Learning Theory
- II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy
- III. Assessment
- IV. Professionalism

V. Accommodations and Adaptations for Diverse Students in an Inclusive Setting and Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

In addition to the requirements of courses, teacher preparation programs must adhere to the guidelines set forth by the state for fieldwork practice. Students who have completed an accredited teacher education program in State Z have completed the following stages of fieldwork and student teaching prior to graduating:

- Stage 1 and 2- Observation and Exploration: Student teachers spend a minimum of 40 hours observing and assisting in a variety of educational settings.
- Stage 3- Pre-Student Teaching: Candidates work with small groups of students in a school setting, supervised by a certified teacher for up to a total of 150 hours.
- Stage 4- Student Teaching: Students spend 12 weeks full time in a classroom where at the end they resume the full responsibilities of teaching for at least half the duration of this time.

A traditional route for teacher certification includes persons who have never held a teaching certification prior to their application and who have recently completed a teacher education program. For candidates seeking a Level 1 initial teaching certification in this state have fulfilled the following requirements:

- Passing score on a Basic Skills Assessment (such as: ACTs, SATs, PAPA with Pearson, or CORE with Praxis)
- Complete teacher education college program with a minimum GPA of 3.0

- Successfully complete student teaching
- Fulfill all graduation requirements
- Pass State Teacher Certification Content Area Tests (such as: Grades 4-8: Modules 1, 2 and 3 *plus* at least one Subject Concentration)
- Apply for certification through the state's management system

Research Methods

Qualitative Phenomenological Research. The goal of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to better understand the factors that affect new teachers in order to best support their development, during the transition in roles from pre-service to in-service teacher. In order to learn about their lived experiences, qualitative research methods were used to learn their attitudes, opinions, beliefs and perspectives (Aktaş, 2018). The phenomenological design of this study revealed the individual perceptions, views and common practices of new teachers as they navigate the phenomenon of reality shock, experienced by most teachers when shifting teaching roles (Aktaş, 2018).

Participants. Samples that are selected purposively rather than through probability methods can provide insight into a particular experience (Smith et al., 2009). Using purposive sampling, the researcher collected data from new teachers who are teaching in the surrounding metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In this study, the researcher invited participants who met the criteria to complete an online survey to gather data about new teachers. To be included in this study, participants met the following criteria:

- Criterion #1: Potential participants were recent graduates who successfully completed an undergraduate teacher education program in State Z.

- Criterion #2: Potential participants currently hold a State Z Level I teaching certification.
- Criterion #3: Participants have 0-3 years of teaching experience and were older than 18 years of age.

Data Collection. In this study, the researcher used an online survey to gather data about new teachers. Creswell (2013) explains that data gathered through the Internet has its advantages. For example, collecting data using an online survey “provides participants with time and space flexibility that allows them more time to consider and respond to requests for information” (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Alase, 2017, p. 13). For this study, the researcher used questions from the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) that has been developed to measure the concerns of teachers in three areas: self, task, and impact. The questions used in this survey determined if teachers’ classroom behaviors and effectiveness may be related to their concerns about teaching (George, 1978). In addition to using items from the TCQ, the researcher included demographic and open ended questions to collect data on the other areas of the study of reality shock and supports new teachers currently receive.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The shift from “learning to teach” to “teaching to learn” is an important process for new teachers. The Center for American Progress recently reported that since 2010, “total enrollment nationwide in teacher preparation programs has declined by more than one-third; this decline has occurred in the context of increasing enrollment in bachelor’s degree programs nationwide over the same time period” (CAP, 2019, n. p.). According to Ingersoll et al. (2018), between 40% and 50% of all new teachers in the United States leave the profession in the first 5 years. Employing

and training a new teacher can cost upwards of \$50,000 and translates into a financial cost for the United States of \$7.34 billion (Gujarati, 2012, as cited in Teague & Swan, 2013). With these staggering statistics, school administrators need to take a closer look at the causes of low new teacher retention rates.

The purpose of teacher preparation programs is to have pre-service teachers transfer the knowledge, skills, and competencies learned to enable PreK-12 students to achieve academic success (SDE, 2018). Many pre-service teachers receive a significant amount of classroom training during their student teaching. In addition, many new teachers receive support through induction and mentor programs during their first year of teaching. Thus it is very important for teacher educators and school administrators to continue to familiarize themselves with the changing needs and characteristics of today's new teachers so they can best meet the needs of the 21st century K-12 students they teach (He & Cooper, 2011).

According to He & Cooper (2011), new teachers reported lack of administrative support as a challenge they experienced during their first year of teaching. In addition, new teachers reported that administrator support focused more on the local school district policies and "how things are done around here" in order for the new teacher to fit into the school teaching environment rather than supporting their own discovery of their teaching style (Hammerness et al., 2016). Timor (2017) reports that there is a positive correlation between the level of administrative support and job satisfaction among new teachers. In addition, "Nasser-Abu Alhija et al. (2011) found that 78% of novice teachers tend to turn to their colleagues and rarely turn to school managers" (as cited in Timor, 2017, p 22). Teachers in general will only ask for help if it does not appear that they are failing at their job (Timor, 2017).

Although new teachers are still learning the intricacies of teaching, they can give helpful insight to their lived experiences of their first years of teaching. Their input can help guide school administrators in preparing induction and mentoring programs and further professional developmental needs of new teachers. Understanding the current development stages of new teachers and factors that contribute most to their reality shock can help target specific support to new teachers. Hearing from new teachers will help determine if support should first be directed towards managing their own “self” or if support should be directed more toward the factors connected to the task and impact stages. Helping to create an education culture sensitive and responsive to the differing needs of new teachers to the teaching profession will be repaid in these new teachers’ future work in schools (Hobson & Ashby, 2012).

Conclusion

Regardless of the training received during teacher education programs, many new teachers experience a reality shock in their first years of teaching as they manage the transition role from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher. Research has indicated the need to identify the developmental stages of concern for new teachers in an effort to provide targeted support during their first years of teaching. Providing targeted support that addresses both the factors that contribute to their reality shock and their level of concern will increase new teachers’ desire to remain in the teaching profession. Although research studies have explored the reality shock and developmental stages of new teachers, there was a need for a more recent study to determine the factors that cause stress to our new teachers in this day and age.

The purpose of this qualitative survey study was to use a phenomenological approach to seek input about the experiences of new teachers as they navigate the role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher. The aim of this study was to seek input from new teachers on

factors that contribute to their reality shock, as well as their thoughts on the types of supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession. In addition, this study examined the perceived levels of concern for certain teaching tasks connected to the development stages of impact on self, task, and impact.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Extensive bodies of research have provided insight on the experiences of new teachers as they navigate the transition from student to teacher. This chapter presents areas of study related to both the types of training received during teacher education programs and the given supports upon entering the profession. In addition, significant literature about the reality shock new teachers may experience helps draw connections to the developmental stages of new teachers. In order to understand the experiences of new teachers, it is important to understand the shifts that occurred in teacher education programs.

This review first analyzes the new teacher retention problem, discusses the term “reality shock” and then reports on the extensive history on the mandates on various government education acts over the years. A closer look at the requirements for teacher education programs and their connections to the national reforms are examined. Efforts of colleges and universities on teacher preparation with a particular focus on the different types of student teaching experiences being offered are explained. A brief overview of the supports new teachers receive upon entering the profession are analyzed. Finally, a closer look at the theoretical framework on the developmental stages of concern of new teachers is reviewed. Understanding the history of teacher education programs, training of pre-service teachers, the development stages of new teachers and the reality shock new teachers' experience and its impact as they transition from student to teacher is the focus of this analysis.

Introduction

School districts work diligently to place highly qualified teachers in every classroom, although many different factors affect the performance of the new staff members. According to

Husser and Bailey (2016), the United States will need to produce 375,000 new teachers annually by 2024 to replace teachers who are retiring or leaving the profession. Over this same time frame, over 3.15 million additional students are projected to enroll in public education, stressing the need to train and prepare teachers who enter the profession. Recruiting teachers will be a part of the process but training and maintaining teachers will be the bigger challenge. A large number of new teachers leave the profession during their first 5 years of teaching in the classroom (Van Overschelde, Saunders, & Ash, 2017). Contrarily, when teachers receive the correct support, their ability to succeed rapidly increases as well as their effectiveness (Van Overschelde et al., 2017). The more effective the teacher, the more willing they are to stay in the profession. In order to decrease the amount of teachers leaving the profession, teacher education programs and PreK-12 schools need to explore the factors that ensure public schools serve students in the most beneficial way possible by determining what will sustain teachers over time (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016).

New Teacher Retention

According to a recently published study for the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Ingersoll et al. (2018) stated that “more than 41% of new teachers leave teaching within 5 years of entry” (p. 24). This report also shows that the attrition rate among first year teachers is 13 percent, and that “teaching has higher attrition, perhaps surprisingly, than nursing, and far higher turnover than traditionally highly respected professions, such as law, engineering, architecture and academia” (Ingersoll et al., 2018, p. 22). Decreasing attrition rates among beginning teachers should be a focus for school administrators in order to avoid the costs associated with the attrition. Teacher attrition has both financial and academic consequences for students and districts (Stein & Stein, 2016). Calculating the costs for the recruitment, hiring,

training, orientation, and professional development, school districts could lose between \$8,000-\$10,000 per teacher leaving the profession (Stein & Stein, 2016).

To help with teacher attrition, school districts can create a school culture that is sensitive and responsive to the differing needs of new staff members entering the teaching profession (Hobson & Ashby, 2012). As Feiman-Nemser (2001) states, “New teachers really have two jobs to do – they have to teach, and they have to learn to teach” (p. 1026). Although many teacher education programs sufficiently prepare their students for the pedagogical aspects of teaching, it can be difficult to adequately address the stress they experience when entering this profession.

Despite teacher education programs that deliver training and real experience in the classrooms, new teachers may not fully understand all the ramifications involved with teaching until they enter the profession. Many beginning teachers often find their work to be overwhelming and exhausting (Jenkins, Smith, & Maxwell, 2009). Novices may face numerous challenges during their transition into the school culture, some of which they may feel unprepared to handle (Correa, Martinez-Arbelaiz, & Aberasturi, 2015). Such concerns include completing paperwork, attending meetings, coping with insufficient instructional materials and resources, conducting student assessment and monitoring student learning, and having inadequate time to prepare lessons (Richards, Templin, & Gaudreault, 2013). Chubbuck et al. (2001), suggest that new teachers experience “reality shock” when they transition from a student identity to a teacher identity. According to Chubbuck et al. (2001), “Reality shock is the “collapse of ideals formed prior to teaching as one experiences everyday classroom life” (p. 367).

Associated with “reality shock” is the potential for a feeling of alienation and a lack of school and systematic support that affects their efficiency in teaching (Richards et al., 2013).

Beginning teachers have to learn to manage the systems of the school and reach the differing expectations of their performance from various stakeholders such as students, administrators, colleagues, and parents (Richards et al., 2013). Hobson and Ashby (2012), use reality aftershock to explain the phenomenon that occurs when new teachers are put into teaching positions but no longer have the support they received from cooperating teachers during their student teaching experiences. Similar to the concept of reality aftershock or reality shock is the connection to “culture shock.” Jenkins, Smith, & Maxwell (2009) warn educators of the personal and professional isolation new teachers report feeling which can cause a loss of personal and social identity. As new teachers are trying to navigate through the demands of planning engaging lessons, implementing classroom management techniques, and learning about the climate they experience “culture shock.” Jenkins et al. (2009) refer to “culture shock” as, “a teacher’s cultural capital is insufficient to deal with the cultural milieu of a classroom or school” (p. 64).

All teachers are affected by the pressure for their students to perform well on standardized tests and their impact on student learning, but new teachers experience this stress with special intensity during their first years of teaching (Correa et al., 2015). Teachers have to maneuver the transformation and constant change of their profession and the impact it has on their identity which can bring about instability and uncertainty (Correa et al., 2015). Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner (2015) expand upon the first years of teaching and the “reality shock” they experience by also characterizing this stressful time as the survival phase in teachers’ professional career.

In different studies conducted over the years, upon entering the profession new teachers continue to report similar concerns they have experienced. According to Dicke et al. (2015) classroom disturbances and student disruptions are major factors that cause stress and strain for

new teachers. The beginning teachers felt they were unprepared to cope with the student discipline issues. When new teachers encounter problems and feel they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities, they choose to imitate others teachers in their school without seeking solutions grounded in theory from their teacher education program (Ulvik & Langørgen, 2012). Giving new teachers continuous training in how to manage their classroom would allow them to deal with disturbances more efficiently and increase their well-being (Teague & Swan, 2013). Strengthening classroom management skills in new teachers would also create a better-prepared teacher workforce, reduce the reality shock, and support teachers' well-being (Dicke et al., 2015).

Introduction of “Reality Shock”

Veenman first popularized the term “reality shock” to identify the experiences of new teachers. Veenman (1984), summarized research conducted in the sixties, seventies and early eighties, and coined the term “reality shock.” He defined the term as “the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training as a result of the confrontation with the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life” (p. 143). In his review, he presented the results of 83 studies that have appeared since 1960 on the perceived problems of beginning teachers in their first year(s) of teaching. According to Veenman (1984), “The eight most frequently perceived problems were (in rank order) classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students” (p. 170). During his review of multiple studies, he concluded that beginning teachers reported to having changed their original student centered teaching behavior to a more authoritarian way as a consequence of experienced difficulties (Veenman, 1984). He stated,

“Many studies provide evidence that students become increasingly idealistic, progressive, or liberal in their attitudes toward education during their pre-service training and then shift to opposing and more traditional, conservative, or custodial views as they move into student teaching and the first years of teaching” (p. 145).

In addition to the eight most frequently perceived problems, Veenman also uncovered other problems that were mentioned frequently in the studies he reviewed. Doubts and worries about own competence, inexperience with visual aids, relationships with students, relationships with the school community, and insufficient preparation for the job of teacher were reported as problems by beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984). Through the synthesize of the studies, Veenman was also able to decipher that along with the initiation into the profession, the first year of teaching is also often an initiation into the adult world with new responsibilities.

Historical Background

Government Mandates on Teacher Education Programs

No Child Left Behind Act. In 2001, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law. The purpose of the bill stated, “to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to attain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (DOE., 2016a). To accomplish the goal of the bill, funding changes occurred and more federal resources were sent to high-poverty and struggling schools (Cochran-Smith, 2005). In addition, the bill mandated requirements to include highly qualified teachers for all students in the PreK-12 system (DOE., 2016a). In order to be considered “highly qualified,” NCLB requires that all students have teachers with at least a bachelors’ degree, state certification or a passing

score on a state teacher licensing exam, and demonstrated competence in the subject they teach (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010; Selwin, 2007).

According to Conley and Hinchman (2004), “The principles of the NCLB legislation, embodied in the reauthorization of ESEA, represent the most sweeping national education reforms since the Sputnik-inspired reforms of the 1960s” (p. 43). The directives of NCLB also placed stress on schools of education because requirements contradicted their approach to the certification program (Selwyn, 2007). The same stress PreK-12 teachers experienced with new testing mandates from NCLB, teacher education programs were also feeling the same effects. According to McCracken (2004), the pressure for test-prep curriculum is also felt in college classrooms. Even though more important topics and skills have been identified, college programs have to cover a certain amount of test material in order for new teachers to pass exams for their teaching licensure. McCracken (2004) highlighted the challenges college professors face of having to focus on exposing pre-service teachers to materials and topics that may not support their development. In addition, the number of examinations required for teacher education programs has lessened the number of candidates entering programs (Selwyn, 2007).

Race to the Top. Despite the demanding changes to the education system under NCLB, the reporting system of teacher education programs lacked clear structure and accountability. In 2010, Crowe reported that “less than 2 percent of all teacher education programs in the United States have been flagged as low performing” (p. 10) since Congress required each state to develop and implement criteria to identify low performing programs. Critics believed that this number inaccurately depicted the number of low performing teacher education programs. They believed that the reporting system under NCLB was irrelevant and did not ensure that states

measure teacher effectiveness and connect the results back to teacher preparation program as was intended (Crowe, 2010).

With the introduction of “Race to the Top” (RTT) act, an accountability emphasis was placed on teacher education programs. States were required to disclose to the public the effectiveness of teacher education programs based on the results of PreK-12 students’ ability to learn. Crowe (2010) reported that states that received funds from RTT determined the program’s overall preparation effectiveness based on data from student-achievement and student academic growth. Under RTT, the states had to reach the following requirements: “report the impact new teachers have on PreK-12 achievement; provide survey results from new teachers and principals who employ them; and share data on the hiring of graduates” (Crowe, 2011 p. 59). Teacher education candidates could then use this information to help them make informed decisions about their choice for their own teacher education program. The purpose of this mandate was to see major improvements in the state oversight for teacher education. These accountability indicators forced states to build and expand high quality- teacher preparation programs.

Every Student Succeeds Act. Following the cyclical pattern of changes to education laws, six years later RTT was forfeited and President Obama signed into succession the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) in 2015. Under these changes, teacher education programs continued to be under examination. On October 12, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education released the “Teacher Preparation Regulations” to help ensure that novice teachers are ready to succeed in the classroom and that every student is taught by a highly qualified educator.

Once again the new regulations continued to have specific mandates for teacher education programs. As stated by the U.S. Department of Education, “The regulations aim to bring transparency to the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs, provide programs with

ongoing feedback to help them improve continuously, and respond to educators across the country who do not feel ready to enter the classroom” (DOE., 2016a). In addition to the accountability measures, these regulations gave prospective teacher candidates better access to information about the strengths and weaknesses of different programs. With this information, teacher candidates could choose a preparation program that is right for them. In addition, these regulations “aim to provide better information to address the mismatch between the available teaching jobs and fields in which programs are preparing educators, and to enable districts and schools to deploy their best teachers where they are needed the most” (DOE., 2016a).

Higher Education Act. The “Teacher Preparation Regulations” under ESSA are measures that are required under the “Higher Education Act” (HEA) for states to report annually about program effectiveness by facilitating ongoing feedback between programs, prospective teachers, schools and districts, states and the public (DOE., 2016b). The changes to HEA stem from a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office that found “some States are not assessing whether teacher preparation programs are low-performing, as required by law, and so prospective teachers may have difficulty identifying low-performing teacher preparation programs, possibly resulting in teachers who are not fully prepared to educate children (DOE., 2016b). At the time, U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. committed to “ensuring that the measures by which States judge the quality of teacher preparation programs reflect the true quality of the programs and provide information that facilitates program improvements and, by extension, improvement in student achievement” (DOE., 2016b).

Under the new requirements of HEA, States and institutions of higher education are to report on the various characteristics of their teacher education programs, including an assessment of program performance. As stated in the revisions, “Thousands of *novice* teachers enter the

profession every year and their students deserve to have well-prepared teachers” (DOE., 2016b). The reporting requirements ensured that members of the public, prospective teachers and schools/districts, the States, and institutions of higher education have accurate information on the quality of these teacher preparation programs. In addition, this information helped States and institutions of higher education make improvements where needed.

“Standards Aligned System” for Teacher Education Programs in State

In October of 2018, the State Z Department of Education (SDE) reviewed their “K-12 Program Framework Guidelines” that was issued in 2012. As stated,

“The fundamental purpose of a teacher preparation program approved by the Commonwealth of State is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the teaching profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to enable PreK-12 students in State to achieve academic success (SDE, 2018, p. 1).

SDE’s standards-based system includes “core elements of State Z’s emerging instructional system: standards, curriculum, instruction, materials and resources for instruction, fair assessments, and appropriate interventions” (p. 2). The combined elements are intended to produce strong results for students. All State Z teacher preparation programs are expected to align to state standards, teach candidates the skills to teach a standards-based curriculum effectively, learn how to use materials and resources, use assessment skills, and implement interventions in the classroom to improve student learning (SDE, 2018, p. 2). New teachers are evaluated on their success in achieving the six key goals.

SDE (2018) believes teaching is a clinical profession and requires candidates to spend “extensive time in school settings--beginning early in their teacher preparation program

sequence” (p.2). In the “Observation” stage, candidates observe in a variety of educational related settings. In the “Exploration” stage, the candidate works under a certified teacher with a small group of students. Candidates spend a total of 40 hours in these combined stages. For 150 hours, candidates do not have full control of a class, but work with small groups of students in school or afterschool settings supervised by a faculty member or cooperating teacher in the “Pre-Student teaching” stage. Finally, students move to stage 4, “Student Teaching.” The student teacher spends 12 weeks full-time in the classroom with increasing teaching responsibilities to “completely simulate the role of a grades K-12 educator” (SDE, 2018, p. 22). For more than half of the student teaching experience, the student teacher takes full responsibility as demonstrated by effective methods for the planning and delivery of instruction (SDE, 2018).

Since the first year of teaching is so critical, SDE requires PreK-12 education preparation programs to develop and maintain a support program for their new teacher candidates for two years. The institutions should provide professional networking opportunities, resource information, and job placement services. In addition, teacher preparation programs “must be able to demonstrate how they use evidence about program graduates and evidence about the PreK-12 students of their graduates to make continuous program improvements” (SDE, 2018, p. 23).

Teacher Preparation

In 2010, the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, delivered a speech that addressed “America's university-based teacher preparation programs need for revolutionary change—not evolutionary tinkering” (Duncan, A. 2009, n.p.). During his speech he emphasized the importance of copying the practices of effective teacher preparation programs to encourage the lowest performing programs to make necessary changes.

Despite the changes to the accountability measures placed on teacher education programs, education experts continue to report on further necessary changes. According to a White House press release in 2014, “The vast majority of new teachers—almost two-thirds—report that their teacher preparation program left them unprepared for the realities of the classroom” (as cited in Stein & Stein, 2016). Schools of education work to continually adjust their curriculum to effectively meet the needs and qualifications of more capable teacher candidates. Teacher education programs deliver a clear understanding that teaching is rooted in practice and not theory and that improvement to classroom instruction happens with a sharper focus on core instructional practices (Stein & Stein, 2016; Zeichner, 2012).

Day and Gu (2014) argued that, “Efforts to increase the quality of teaching and raise standards of learning and achievement for all pupils must focus on efforts to build, sustain and renew teacher resilience, and that these efforts must take place in initial teacher training” (p. 22). Another focus on identifying effective teaching practices is the instructional and classroom management-oriented frameworks that are not tied to a particular subject matter content or grade level (Zeichner, 2012). According to Darling-Hammond (2006), with the diversity in the ways students learn, it is necessary that during the preparation of new teachers, they are equipped with research and collaboration skills so they can learn from one another. Novice teachers can acquire core teaching practices by learning from their colleagues (Zeichner, 2012).

Teacher preparation programs play an invaluable role to help teacher candidates understand the particulars of unique teaching settings (Hammerness, Williamson, & Kosnick, 2016). As teacher candidates gain more experience, they can focus on putting skills together to contribute to the ongoing improvement of the practice of teaching (Zeichner, 2012). During their teacher education program, teacher education students are introduced to making meaning to their

learning and teaching. The impact on how teachers implement teaching methods depends on the culture of schools (Kelly et al., 2018). According to Stein and Stein (2016). “Today, with only a few exceptions, our schools of education have a limited relationship with their local public school systems. In those instances where collaboration exists, it is focused primarily on managing and coordinating the in-service experiences of the teacher candidates’ during their senior year” (p. 194). In order to provide more opportunities to learn in real school settings and understand school culture, teacher candidates gain practical experience in PreK-12 classroom settings. Institutes of higher education are building standing relationships with local public schools to help their teacher candidates gain practical, hands-on experiences (Stein & Stein, 2016).

Student Teaching. Teacher education programs include field experiences which are mandated by the state as a way to assess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher candidates with their teaching. In order to graduate and receive certification, teacher candidates must demonstrate that they can teach responsively and effectively by the end of their student teaching (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). For over 200 years, student teaching has long been the global approach to teacher preparation programs where this culminating experience is an opportunity for teacher candidates to put their coursework into action (Young et al, 2017; Guise, Habib, Thiessen, & Robbins, 2017). American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (2013) suggests that pre-service teachers should be in the schools, doing clinical work throughout their entire program, not just during their last semester (Segal, 2018). Field-based teacher preparation courses provide teacher candidates with the best setting to develop their teacher practices that cannot happen in a closed university classroom setting (Segal, 2018). According to Van Overschelde, Saunders & Ash (2017), it is essential for teacher education

programs to provide multiple opportunities for the teacher candidates to practice and reflect on their pedagogical approaches to ensure they can work effectively with unique population of students throughout their career. Traditional student teaching typically involved a master teacher releasing solo instruction responsibilities to the student teacher for a certain period of time (Guise, Habib, Thiessen, & Robbins, 2017).

In 2018 researchers of teacher education programs who are monitoring the efforts of student teaching experiences continue to provide revisions in order to strengthen the incoming teacher workforce. Henning et al. (2018) supports the need to implement a yearlong clinical internship experience to replace the semester of traditional student teaching. These authors support the idea of having the teacher candidate complete at least ten hours per week in their field work while they finish classes. Then during the second semester, the teacher candidate remains in the same placement to complete their full time student teaching (Henning et al., 2018). Segal (2018) also supports the notion to have more field-based opportunities earlier in the curriculum for teacher education students. “The conversation needs to move from having pre-service teachers simply observe in the school setting to more hands-on practices. Pre-service teachers should have opportunities to work with students as well as teach lessons” (Segal, 2018, np.).

According to Hammerness et al. (2016), the student teaching or fieldwork of any teacher preparation program is almost unanimously picked by new teachers as the most useful component of their preparation. During their student teaching, novice teachers have an opportunity to work closely with a master teacher and be immersed in a school setting to teach small groups of students or provide tutoring to individual students. Smeaton & Waters (2013) highlight the importance for teacher educators to continually adjust the university curriculum and

field experiences to address the realities of the changing field of public education. Cochran-Smith & Power (2010) believe that teacher preparation has spent too much time on teachers' knowledge and beliefs and not enough time providing school based clinical practice to learn how to teach students. Van Overschelde et al (2017) suggest teacher candidates should spend 500-600 hours in public school classrooms prior to student-teaching. When local public schools support and partner with colleges and universities to help train teacher candidates, "our nation will successfully create a corps of professional teachers" (p. 193).

Teacher Education Reform

Hammerness et al. (2016) report that, in 2010, an education reform from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) called for "clinically rich" classroom and school experiences for teacher preparation programs that included teacher candidates being involved in PreK-12 classroom settings. According to NCATE, more practice and time in PreK-12 classrooms will improve the quality of teachers. Programs that are "deeply, clinically based with academic coursework informing and supplementing field experience" (USDO, 2011, p. 20) should be at the center of teaching preparation (as cited in Hammerness et al., 2016 p. 1200). The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), another similar accrediting teacher education group, again called for the same education reform as NCATE. In 2010, AACTE stated "pre-service teachers should be in schools, doing clinical work throughout their entire program, not just during their last semester (Segal, 2018, np.). The AACTE reported similar findings for the need of more clinical work in teacher education programs. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) followed NCATE in advocating for the collaboration between teacher education programs and PreK-12 schools to jointly determine clinical placements for the teacher candidates (Nickens et al., 2018).

Education reform for more clinical experience and university and school partnerships called by various teacher accreditation groups led to the creation of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) (Nickens et al, 2018). The formation of this group, along with the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel inspired teacher education programs to increase the amount of field-embedded learning and to create further partnerships. The NAPDS issued “Essentials” for the definition of professional development schools and the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel recommended focusing on teacher education as a whole (Nickens et al., 2018). According to Van Scoy & Eldrige (2012) “They both offer guidance related to meaningful, effective school-university partnerships focused on improving teacher education” (p. 8 as cited in Nickens et al., 2018).

The strong push for more university PreK-12 partnerships came from the NAPDS and the other teacher accreditation groups but, Professional Development Schools (PDS) were adopted by many school-university partnerships in the 1980s as a way to improve both pre-service education and student achievement in the public schools (Savik, Thrift, & Fenster, 2018). Henning et al. (2018) explain that new programs and new practices can be created when school and university educators combine their expertise to address problems of teacher education. The partnerships created at PDS support this learning community “that fosters collaboration, promotes diversity, equity, and the development and demonstration of knowledge, skills, and theory, and endorses the mission of the university and the school” (Segal, 2018, np.).

According to Catelli, Carlino, & Petraglia (2017),

“The holistic integration of the four-pronged PDS model: preparation of pre-service teachers; professional development of in-service teachers; improved pupil learning and

achievement; and the implementation of innovative inquiry and/or research is designed to maximize learning and achievement at both the school and university levels” (p. 60).

These initiatives rely on a shared commitment to collaborative inquiry, developing pre-service, in-service, and university faculty in an effort to increase educational equity and support student achievement (Segal, 2018). Teacher educators and PreK-12 based educators should continue to collaborate to build the pedagogical connections between university coursework, PreK-12 based field experiences, and teaching practices in order to support new teachers (Fisher-Ari, Martin, Burgess, Cox, & Ejike, 2018).

Teacher Residency Program. One approach to implementing more field based experiences for teacher candidates is known as the teacher residency program or urban residency program. In these programs, pre-service teachers are immersed in a mentor’s classroom from the beginning of their coursework and classes are integrated with their clinical practice (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Hammerness, Williamson, & Kosnick, 2016). Programs that call themselves urban residency programs are designed to recruit and train teachers committed to working in high-poverty settings in cities (Anderson-Levitt, van Draanen, & Davis, 2017). According to Beck (2016), “The term “residency” is appropriated from the medical residency model and is a reference to the situated learning that is intended to occur in these programs as a result of their apprenticeship structure and preparation of candidates in cohorts” (p. 52). Urban residency program graduates commit to three or more years of teaching in the specific district after graduation (Beck, 2016). The goal of residency programs is to enhance the teacher candidates’ practice knowledge, to make them fluent in their practice and to socialize them to the work of teaching in a school setting (Henning et al., 2018). Effective residency programs come

from strong partnerships between the university and a PreK-12 district that build coherence and integration between university courses and student-teaching experiences (Fisher-Ari et al., 2018).

According to Foster et al. (2018) spending an entire year in a school enables the candidate to develop stronger relationships with PreK-12 students, the mentor teacher, the faculty, and the administration. With this longer experience, the teacher candidates become members of the school and participate in parent-teacher conferences, in-service days, and after school events (as cited in Henning et al., 2018). Fisher-Ari et al. (2018) states,

“Through yearlong residency programs in a school working alongside a teacher, concurrent with coursework in their certification programs, residents develop their pedagogical expertise and live out that learning in their day-to-day practice and collaborations with learners and teachers in their schools” (p. 63).

To meet the needs of the residents, supports are provided at the university level and at the PreK-12 school.

In addition, during this multiple year apprenticeship, candidates are compensated for their efforts. Henning et al. (2018) explain that replacing their part time work outside of education with compensated field work better prepares new teachers for their teaching careers. Some residency programs offer stipends of up to \$4000 in exchange for a commitment to remain in the district for 3-5 years. Candidates in yearlong residency programs complete work traditionally done by substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and tutors. School budgets are able to compensate for their positions and invest that money into the teacher residency program (DeMoss, EastonBrooks, Hofman, Henning, & LeCelle-Peterson, 2017). Teacher residency programs address the financial burdens of students, meets local school districts needs for substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and tutors while further expanding clinical experiences of pre-

service teachers (Henning, 2018). Compensating teacher candidates allows them to spend more time in a PreK-12 school and help increase their value to the school. As candidates increase their hours in school classrooms, they become more confident and feel more prepared (Henning, 2018). “In addition to the increased value of the experience, teacher candidates bring their passion, a career commitment, and a daily determination to invest in learning about their profession” (Henning et al., 2018 p. 4).

School Supports for New Teachers

To help alleviate the reality shock new teachers experience upon entering the profession, schools provide support to help maneuver and survive the first year of teaching. Induction programs, mentoring programs, and colleague collaboration are school supports that benefit new teachers’ transition from “learning to teach” to “teaching to learn.”

Induction Programs. Learning to teach is complex and demanding work that occurs throughout teachers' professional life span. New teachers in particular need three to four years to achieve competence and then more years to reach proficiency (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In order to support beginning teachers and avoid undue stress; high quality induction programs can increase the likelihood that new teachers learn desirable lessons from their early teaching experiences and improve their teaching (Bastian & Marks, 2017; Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Competent new teachers who are supported in their teaching role and acclimated with their work environment are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2012; Teague & Swan, 2013). Formal induction programs are a cost effective component of a comprehensive approach to novice teacher development (Danielson, 2009). Despite the challenges, most new teachers can survive and thrive if they are equipped with quality training and induction support (Teague & Swan, 2013). Smith and Ingersoll’s (2004) research study indicated and supported

that the stress factors in new teachers was significantly reduced when new teachers participated in a “well constructed type of induction program with accountability on the mentoring teacher, and where the mentoring teachers assisted newer teachers in the same subject area, combined with collaborative activities with other novice teachers” (as cited in Bastian & Marks, 2017, p. 363).

Mentoring Programs. Mentor programs are implemented by school districts as a means of supporting the acclimation of new teachers into their new profession and school climate. According to Bressman, Winter, & Efron (2018) “Mentoring is a practice where a more experienced educator (the mentor) offers support, guidance, advice and encouragement to someone who is a beginner or less experienced educator (the mentee) with the intended purpose of enhancing teaching and learning” (p. 163). Mentors assist in strengthening the art of teaching, but also teach new hires how to handle the practicalities of the school setting (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Mentoring programs allow a first year teacher to work with an experienced teacher to improve upon their techniques and pedagogical approaches, develop personal relationships in order to share their emotions and experiences with a more experienced educator (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

For mentoring programs to be influential and increase teacher growth, time needs to be allocated for relationships to develop between the mentor and mentee in order for learning to occur (Clark, 2012). According to Feiman-Nemser (2001), “Educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning,” in contrast with “approaches that emphasize situational adjustment, technical advice and emotional support” (p. 17-18). Clark (2012) believes that assigning mentors who teach the same grade or subject area as the novice teacher is imperative. This allows novice teachers to not only learn the nuances of the

grade level or subject, but also how to differentiate instruction, learn the curriculum in specific context and how to manage the classroom (Clark, 2012).

Although mentoring provides a huge support to new teachers, concerns of evaluative measures and confining new learning to only one perspective are things to consider with mentor programs. Mentoring programs that involve evaluative aspects with a possibility of judgmental or even negative consequences are harmful to building relationships based on mutual trust and confidentiality (Daresh, 2001 as cited in Bressman, Winter, & Efron, 2018). Bressman et al. (2018) warn of the undesirable impact that evaluative forms of mentoring may have on the professional growth of teachers; they apply the term ‘judgementoring’ to describe the harmful consequences of merging the roles of evaluator and mentor. The researchers suggest that for many teachers, “judgementoring has a negative impact on their wellbeing, with some describing themselves, after their encounters with judgementors, as being ‘disheartened’, ‘demoralized’, ‘isolated’, or ‘lonely’” (as cited in Bressman et al., 2018, p.7). Therefore, it is important to keep mentoring and evaluation separate in order to best support new teachers.

Collaboration. Induction and mentoring programs have helped to reduce the novice teacher attrition rate, yet more can be done to support our new teachers. Smith & Ingersoll (2004) reported strong correlations between novice teacher retention and beginning teachers who were provided time to work with a mentor teacher who teaches the same grade or subject level, and time to collaborate with a network of teachers (as cited in Clark, 2012). In teacher education programs, pre-service teachers spend time collaborating with peers, professors, cooperating teachers, and students (Clark, 2012). Novice teachers are used to collaborative experiences, established relationships and ongoing dialogue among their peers. New teachers need a

continuation of these collaborative relationships as they make the transition to a full time teacher (Clark, 2012).

According to Feiman-Nemser (2003), new teachers long for opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and want more than social support and learning about the managerial tasks of teaching. According to Johnson & Kardos (2002), new teachers want to discuss curriculum implementation, get ideas about how to address student needs and gain insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas (as cited in Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Beyond the support of a mentor, new teachers are in support of collaborative opportunities among other colleagues. As Clark (2012) states, “Being able to discuss and collaborate with more experienced teachers about the challenges inherent in teaching enables novice teachers to learn valuable skills and build instructional strategies and capabilities necessary to strengthen teaching ability and to grow in competence” (p. 200). Active participation in learning communities, lesson observations, teaching demonstrations, discussions among colleagues and coaching feedback would add great value in the professional learning of beginning educators (Meeusa, Cools, & Plackleb, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Stages of Concern Theory. A closer look at the progression of teacher development for beginning teachers gives solid insight and further explanation of the reality shock experienced by many new teachers in their first years of teaching. Fuller and Bown (1975) adapted Fuller’s (1969) work on the stages of concern theory, which summarized the developmental patterns of concern that pre-service and beginning teachers move through in their career and has been widely cited when examining teacher development (Conway & Clark, 2003). According to this

theory, teachers begin their career focused on concerns about themselves, such as personal success, and only later in their career did they progress to concerns for student learning (Burns & Danyluk, 2017).

The concerns theory proposes three developmental stages: concern for self, concern for teaching tasks, and impact stage. Fuller and Bown found that teachers with little teaching experience were mostly concerned about self. Examples include: feelings of self-adequacy, acceptance by colleagues, concerns for good evaluations, and their personal desire to be successful in the classroom (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Mok, 2005; Smith, 2000; Watzke, 2007). According to Fuller and Bown's theory, after teachers move through the concern for self stage, their focus is turned towards concern about teaching tasks. This second stage describes teachers' concern of tasks involved with teaching (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Watzke, 2007). Use of instructional methods, delivery of curriculum, obstacles to effective teaching, management of time and access to adequate instructional materials are tasks of teaching that concern teachers at this second stage (Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007). In the final stage, Fuller and Bown found that teachers who had resolved their concerns about their self and their tasks were then only able to become concerned about their impact on their students (Smith, 2000). In this impact stage, teachers were concerned about the social and learning needs of their students. Teachers wondered if they would be able to meet the diverse needs of their students and whether their students were getting the preparation they needed to be useful members of society after graduation (Mok, 2005; Smith, 2000; Watzke, 2007).

Fuller and Bown concluded that the three stages of concerns followed an ordered pattern that advances through the stages by addressing and resolving the problems at each stage (Watzke, 2007). Over the years, other researchers have extended or countered Fuller and Bown's

results. Adams (1982) broke down Fuller's three concerns into six factors: adult perceptions, perceptions related to instruction, discipline, students' academic well-being, and school environment (as cited in Mok, 2005). Adams found similar findings that self and task concerns changed in the same direction as Fuller's model and teachers at all levels ranked student discipline and motivation as a major problem. On the contrary to Fuller and Bown, Adams found that instructional impact concerns were highest of all concerns and did not change across experience levels. Mok (2005) concluded that, "Fuller's model are framed in very broad terms and hence it is not surprising that many later studies find that task concerns and impact concerns prevail in similar stages. The findings may also imply that task and impact concerns, which are highly associated with the job of teaching, naturally are of concern in most stages of teachers' careers" (p. 56).

Conway & Clark (2003) conducted a study to revise and extend Fuller and Bown's concern-based model and argued that "the patterns of concerns moves not only outward as suggested, but also inward with heightened reflexivity and self-regulation as Interns progress" (p. 475). The researchers argued the need to focus on paying attention to the changes in the concerns and aspirations of new teachers. Inward development shifts away from the managerial tasks towards an increased critical reflection on concerns of curriculum and instruction, (tasks), self as a teacher (self), and concerns for students (impact) (Conway & Clark, 2003; Watzke, 2007). Conway & Clark, (2003) stated,

"We would like to advance the hypothesis that teacher concerns are likely to be cyclic over the first few years of teaching. Thus, it is likely that novice teachers cycle through a pattern, similar to that depicted in this study, each year in the early years of teaching,

with similar concerns emerging and then dissolving in cyclic fashion over a few years” (p. 478).

Watzke (2007) summarized Conway & Clark’s study along with other studies that reviewed the trends for each of the three stages of concerns. These findings concluded that the impact stage affects all teachers at different stages of their teaching career, including the first year. In addition, concerns of self and task also emerge at different stages of teaching. Self- and task-related concerns decrease with gained teaching experience, but may also increase at certain points during the beginning years. Even during the first year of teaching, concern for student academic growth and motivation remains high which Fuller and Bowen considered the focus on these topics to occur more at the impact stage which occurs later in teacher development. Watzke (2007) stated,

“The results further extend this prior research by offering insights into the impact stage and how these concerns change over time. Since multiple pre-service and in-service beginning teaching contexts have consistently identified the prevalence of these concerns in beginning teachers, it is important to consider the implications for teacher development” (p. 117).

Watzke (2007) felt strongly that the results of the Conway & Clark (2003) show that issues of survival are also intertwined with how they affect student learning at all stages including their beginning years of teaching regardless of the reality shock they experience.

It is evident that teachers will always have teaching concerns throughout their career. Beginning teachers experience a reality shock (Veenman, 1984) which inhibits their natural mode for survival that is connected to the concerns of self stage (Fuller & Bown, 1975). In

addition to this self stage, other researchers have concluded that beginning teachers are also concerned about tasks of teaching and their impact on students which Fuller believed to happen later in teachers' development (Conway & Clark, 2003; Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007). Rather than a more linear development, teachers can move in and out through stages of concern regardless of their years of experience. Their concerns will be of varying degrees of seriousness and varying degrees of importance on values in different teaching life stages (Mok, 2005).

Although there is an abundance of evidence arguing that beginning teachers experience a significant reality shock and have many concerns; there is also hopeful evidence that these new teachers are finding ways to cope with their first year experiences and also have an impact on student learning. Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982) enlighten educators to understand and address the concerns of new teachers in teacher education programs, but to focus on solutions. They claim that time is better spent problematizing teaching with prospective teachers than only addressing their concerns (as cited in Conway & Clark, 2003). Teachers are navigating many invisible elements such as: feelings of inadequacy, their own understanding of good teaching, school expectations and student behavior (Strom & Martin, 2016). Educators should not only focus on new teachers' concerns, but also on the positive aspects as they begin their teaching career. Conway & Clark (2003) suggest continuing to be aware of the concerns, but focus on their hopes and their fears together to present a more balanced view of the teachers' experiences and anticipations. Focusing on both aspirations and concerns through an inquiry approach to teaching will help better understand the development of teachers (Conway & Clark, 2003).

Summary

Historically, from the No Child Left Behind Act to Every Student Succeeds Act, required adjustments to teacher education programs to fulfill the requirements needed to train prospective

teachers. In an effort to give the best education to teachers, Pennsylvania requires a significant amount of fieldwork and student teaching as part of the certification process. Examples of the standard practice of student teaching along with the more advanced concept of Professional Development Schools and Teacher Residency Programs all have the same effort to successfully prepare the incoming teachers in order to best promote student achievement in PreK-12 settings.

Regardless of the type of training during pre-service years and the supports received upon entering the profession, research has proven that new teachers will experience a reality shock as they navigate from student to teacher. In addition, they are developing as teachers and are finding ways to manage their own concerns of self, their concerns of completing teaching tasks, and their impact on students' success.

The research on reality shock and the development stages of concern of new teachers is lacking current information that new teachers are experiencing in this day and age. Therefore, there was a need for more current data to determine the factors that contribute to reality shock and the concerns of new teachers. This research provides updated and current information to both teacher education programs and district personnel who support new teachers. As a result, there was a need to explore the following questions:

What do new teacher participants describe, from their own perspectives,

1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” they have experienced in the first (0-3) years of teaching?
2. as the critical supports that helped them manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?
3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-

survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

New teachers are entering the profession after completion of extensive teacher education programs and student teaching requirements that prepare them to be successful teachers. The goal of teacher education programs is to enhance teacher candidates' knowledge, make them fluent in their practice and socialize them to the work of teaching (Henning et al., 2018). In addition, the student teaching or fieldwork component of their teacher education is "unanimously perceived by new teachers to be the most useful component of their preparation" (Hammerness et al., 2016, p. 1199).

Regardless of pre-service teacher experience, new teachers experience a reality shock in their first years of teaching as they manage the transition role from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher. According to Veenman (1984), the eight identified challenges that new teachers typically face are: managing classroom discipline, motivating students, supporting the diverse needs of students, assessing students' work, building relationships with parents, organizing lesson planning, having insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and addressing the problems of individual students. The work of Fuller and Bown (1975) studied the developmental pattern of concerns that new teachers often move through in their first few years of teaching. They found that there was a general movement from concerns about self, evolving to concerns about tasks, and then culminating in teachers' concern for their instructional impact on students (Fuller & Bown, 1975). In more recent years, researchers have reported that the majority of new teachers do not solely experience a linear succession through the stages of concern, but rather they experience a more on-going, cyclical process with inward and outward concerns of the self, task, and impact (Conway & Clark, 2003; Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007). The

research on reality shock and the development stages of concern of new teachers is lacking current information that new teachers are experiencing in this day and age. Therefore, there is a need for more current data to determine the factors that contribute to reality shock and the concerns of new teachers.

The purpose of this qualitative survey study was to use a phenomenological approach to seek input about the experiences of new teachers as they navigate the role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher. The aim of this study was to seek input from new teachers on factors that contribute to their reality shock, as well as their thoughts on the types of supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession. In addition, this study examined the perceived levels of concerns for certain teaching tasks connected to the development stages of impact on self, task, and impact.

Research Questions

The questions guiding this research were:

What do new teacher participants describe, from their own perspectives,

1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” they have experienced in the first (0-3) years of teaching?
2. as the critical supports that helped them manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?
3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

Qualitative Phenomenological Research

The goal of this study was to learn more about the lived experiences of new teachers in their first years of teaching. According to Stake (2010), “It is necessary to go beyond determining ‘how things work’ to understanding how human things work in particular situations” (p. 14). Given that this goal sought knowledge on participants’ unique experiences, qualitative research was the appropriate lens to conduct this study. The researcher investigated the concerns and elements of reality shock that new teachers face during their first year of teaching. According to Wu and Wu (2011), a qualitative researcher “focuses on context analysis, explores the deeply-rooted causes of phenomena, and highlights the explanations of what happened” (Wu & Wu, 2011, p. 1305 as cited in Alase, 2017). According to Alase (2017), “It is the role and responsibility of the researcher to investigate and interpret the impact of the research subject-matter on the ‘lived experiences’ of the research participants” (p. 90).

Phenomenological approaches seek to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience: "how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 19; Creswell, 2013). This research design was used to reveal the individual perceptions, views and common practices of a particular real-life phenomenon (Alase, 2017). The goal of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to better understand the factors that affect new teachers in order to best support their development, during the transition in roles from pre-service to in-service teacher. In order to learn about their lived experiences, qualitative research methods were used to learn their attitudes, opinions, beliefs and perspectives (Aktaş, 2018). The phenomenological design of this study revealed the individual perceptions, views and common practices of new teachers as they navigate the phenomenon of reality shock, experienced by most teachers when shifting teaching roles (Aktaş, 2018).

According to Aktaş (2018), “The philosophical ground in phenomenology leads to the assumption that the reality of the workplace is defined by the subjectivity of organizational members” (p. 13). In other words, the personal feelings of new teachers (as the organizational members) leads to better understanding (or assumption) of the reality shock that new teachers experience. A closer look at the experiences of these new teachers helped to determine what the participants have in common. The findings from this study are important for teacher educators responsible for preparing new teachers, as well as school district personnel, responsible for providing mentoring programs, strengthening professional development and providing other supports for new teachers as they begin their professional, in-service careers.

Context of Study

New teachers are entering the profession after completion of extensive teacher education programs and student teaching requirements that prepare them to be successful teachers. The goal of teacher education programs is to enhance teacher candidates’ knowledge, make them fluent in their practice and socialize them to the work of teaching (Henning et al., 2018). In addition, student teaching or fieldwork component of their teacher education is “unanimously perceived by new teachers to be the most useful component of their preparation” (Hammerness et al., 2016, p. 1199). With this study, the researcher invited participants who are newly certified teachers and are currently teaching in the surrounding metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Certified teachers have successfully completed an accredited teacher education program and fulfilled the requirements for level I certification in State Z. The state requirements of teacher education programs and the teaching certifications of this state are further explained.

The fundamental purpose of a teacher preparation program approved by this state “is to admit, prepare, and support candidates for the teaching profession who, upon graduation, have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to enable PreK-12 students in State Z to achieve academic success” (SDE, 2018, p. 1). Teacher education programs in State Z are required to follow certain guidelines in order for compliance from the state. For example, any institution must

“Ensure that candidates complete a well planned sequence of professional educator courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry, and application of technology related to each academic discipline the candidates plan to teach or in the academic disciplines related to the non-instructional certificate categories in which they plan to serve (SDE, 2018, p. 11).

The courses, competencies, and experiences for PreK-12 teacher preparation programs must be designed to address the issues and knowledge that are relevant for PreK-12 levels of teaching and learning. The professional core of courses, competencies, and experiences for PreK-12 teacher preparation programs all must include the following areas:

- I. Cognitive Development and Learning Theory
- II. Subject Matter Content and Pedagogy
- III. Assessment
- IV. Professionalism
- V. Accommodations and Adaptations for Diverse Students in an Inclusive Setting and Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

In addition to the requirements on courses, teacher preparation programs must adhere to the guidelines set by the state for fieldwork. Students who have completed an accredited teacher education program in State Z have completed the following stages of fieldwork and student teaching prior to graduating:

- Stage 1 and 2- Observation and Exploration: Student teachers spend a minimum of 40 hours observing and assisting in a variety of educational settings.
- Stage 3- Pre-Student Teaching: Candidates work with small groups of students in a school setting, supervised by a certified teacher for up to a total of 150 hours.
- Stage 4- Student Teaching: Students spend 12 weeks full time in a classroom where at the end they resume the full responsibilities of teaching for at least half the duration of this time.

A traditional route for teacher certification includes persons who have never held a teaching certification prior to their application and who have recently completed a teacher education program. For candidates seeking a level I teaching certification in this state using the traditional route, the website lists the following requirements (*Traditional Programs*, n.d.):

- Passing score on a Basic Skills Assessment (such as: ACTs, SATs, PAPA with Pearson, or CORE with Praxis)
- Complete teacher education college program with a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Complete student teaching
- Graduate

- Pass Content Area Tests (such as: Grades 4-8: Modules 1, 2 and 3 *plus* at least one Subject Concentration)
- Apply for certification through the state's management system

Role of the Researcher

This researcher's interest in further investigating the experiences of new teachers in their first years of teaching led to the desire to conduct this study. Having once been a novice elementary teacher, the researcher remembers the shock that was experienced when a person makes the transition from pre-service student to licensed, in-service teacher; and is given the monumental task of having the sole responsibility to teach children. Also, this researcher currently serves as an assistant principal in a suburban elementary school located near the metropolitan area (however no potential participants from the school district in which she is employed as an administrator were invited).

In her role as an assistant principal, the researcher gives assistance to, and evaluates teachers in relation to their teaching practices; classroom management strategies; student engagement techniques; and a myriad of other elements involved in the practice of teaching and working with students and families. In this administrative role, the researcher is also responsible to observe and support novice teachers as they seek to provide high quality instruction for all students. During conversations with new teachers, a common theme of "feeling overwhelmed," despite their extensive teacher education training and background, continues to be shared between the novice teachers and the researcher, in her role as assistant principal. The researcher as an administrator believes that by supporting novice teachers in their role transitions,

administrators by extension are also supporting critical supports related to student learning and achievement.

In this qualitative study, the researcher was “the instrument” or human “protocol” designed to collect and analyze data, seeking to learn from participants’ lives while maintaining a stance of “empathic neutrality” (Patton, 2002, p. 49 as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest, “Qualitative researchers should be themselves, true to their social identities and their interests and/or topic” (pg. 114).

In the role of researcher, special considerations were made by the researcher to provide to the participants, transparency about the purpose of the study, confidential handling of identification and sensitive information, and efficient collection of data, all to respect the time constraints of novice teachers while pursuing their perspectives related to the research questions.

Participant Selection

In a phenomenological research study, all the participants have experienced a similar phenomenon and must be selected from a homogeneous sample pool of participants to understand the components of the research subject matter (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It is essential that the participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied (Alase, 2017). Since the phenomenon under study designates the participants, purposive sampling was used (Sonmez & Koc, 2018). Smith et al (2009) stated that “Samples are selected purposively (rather than through probability methods) because they can offer a research project insight into a particular experience” (p. 48). When selecting participants for a study, it is important to consider the size of the sample you will need. According to Marshall & Rossman (2011), “To justify a sample, one should know the universe of the possible population and its

variability and then sample according to all the relevant variables” (pg. 103). For this study, the researcher understood that the amount of new teachers without considering any other variables is too large of a sample size to study. Therefore, to narrow the constraints of the sample, the researcher collected data from new teachers who are teaching in the surrounding metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. According to Alase (2017), conducting a research study “with homogenous participants is to get a better gauge and better understanding of the overall perception among the participants’ lived experiences” (p. 12). With this purposeful sampling, gathering information from participants who have received similar pre-service preparation gave insight to similarities or differences they may experience in their first years of teaching at their current teaching assignment. To be included in this study, participants met the following criteria:

- Criterion #1: Potential participants were recent graduates who successfully completed an undergraduate teacher education program in State Z.
- Criterion #2: Potential participants currently hold a State Z Level I teaching certification.
- Criterion #3: Participants will have 0-3 years of teaching experience and were older than 18 years of age.

In educational programs or research studies, researchers suggest using snowball sampling in order to generate more participants. According to Creswell (2013), snowball sampling “identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (pg. 158). When applying this sampling method, members of the sample group are recruited through chain referral (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For this study, the researcher shared the survey with educators associated with teacher education programs and administrators

associated with PreK-12 schools located in this metropolitan area. The researcher requested that these sources share this survey with colleagues in an effort to recruit more new teachers who met the participant criteria. The use of purposeful snowball sampling helped to build on connections from local educators in an effort to gather meaningful information from new teachers.

Data Collection Methods

Survey. This qualitative study strived to better understand the reality shock and developmental stages of concern of new teachers. As Wertz et al. (2011) stated, “Knowing what something is entails a conceptualization of the matter under investigation as a whole and in its various parts, the way these parts are related and organized as a whole, and how the whole is similar to and different from other things” (p. 2). The authors stated that it is imperative to ask good qualitative questions that “use careful, self critical, methodical, and accountable procedures to answer them” for any study (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 3).

In this study, the researcher invited participants to complete an online survey to gather data about new teachers. Creswell (2013) explains that data gathered through the Internet has its advantages. For example, collecting data using an online survey “provides participants with time and space flexibility that allows them more time to consider and respond to requests for information” (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Alase, 2017, p. 13). In addition, online data collection will create a nonthreatening and comfortable environment for new teachers to discuss sensitive issues they may experience (Nicholas et al., 2010 as cited in Alase, 2017 p. 13).

The researcher surveyed a variety of new teachers in order to gather meaning from this specific population. According to Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele (2012), “Surveys are an effective research design when:

1. The data are best obtained directly from the respondents;
2. Your data can be obtained by brief answers to structured questions;
3. You can expect respondents to give you reliable information;
4. You know how you will use the answers; and
5. You can expect an adequate response rate” (p.16).

The use of a survey allows the researcher to ask both structured and unstructured questions. In the structured question, the respondent selected a predetermined response. In addition, unstructured questions required new teachers to answer open ended questions which allowed the respondent to answer the question in their own words (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012).

Teacher Concerns Questionnaire. For this study, the researcher used questions from the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) developed to measure the concerns of teachers in three areas: self, task, and impact. The questions used in this survey helped to determine if teachers’ classroom behaviors and effectiveness may be related to their concerns about teaching (George, 1978). These questions consisted of Likert scaled items, each of which is a statement of concern that addressed the areas of self, task, and impact. Questions from this instrument were easy to complete and each teacher indicated their degree of concern about each item on a one to five scale (not concerned to extremely concerned). According to George (1978) using this “non-evaluative environment is essential for the expression of concerns about self and task” (pg. 4).

In addition to using items from the TCQ, the researcher included demographic and open ended questions to collect data on the other areas of the study of reality shock and supports new teachers currently receive. The demographic questions determined the years of teaching experience, their current teaching assignment, their student teaching experience and other

demographic information. The other survey questions collected information on the factors that contribute to the new teachers' reality shock and also supports that help them manage their reality shock.

Confidentiality and Consent Procedures

After IRB approval, the researcher sent an email to local sources requesting assistance with contacting potential study participants and provided a recruitment email with a link to the survey (see Appendix A). In this study, the participants accessed the survey online through Qualtrics™ survey platform. The email sent to the participants outlined the purpose of the study and the details of the survey.

Confidentiality is important for gaining trust with participants when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). On the first page of the survey (see Appendix B), an invitation to participants was included, providing participants with information regarding the study including the voluntary nature of the study and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that the results of the study may be published in professional journals or shared in professional conferences; however, identifying information would be excluded since no identifying information will be included with this anonymous survey. A link to the consent form was provided (See Appendix C). A statement was included to inform the participants that by starting the survey, they are providing informed consent to participate in the study. Completion of the survey took less than 10 minutes for participants to answer the questions. If participants ended the survey early, any data entered to that point was included in the study.

When the survey closed, the researcher collected and exported the data from Qualtrics™ to begin analyzing the data. Data organization allowed the researcher to consolidate all information in one central location to facilitate data analysis (Creswell, 2012). Any data that is transmitted electronically using Qualtrics™ was created and organized by a password-protected network. Answers were tallied, coded, and organized in data files via the researcher's computer in a password-protected folder. The survey did not keep IP addresses; therefore, there was no identifying information about who participated in the study.

Data Analysis

In this particular study, the results of the survey were used to determine insights and lessons learned by the experiences of new teachers. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015),

“Data analysis is a complex procedure that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of a study. Findings can be in the form of organized descriptive accounts, themes, or categories that cut across the data, or in the form of models and theories that explain the data” (p. 202).

The process of data analysis classifies and interprets statements and uses structures to make meaning of the material and what is being represented (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Creswell (2013) uses interpretation in qualitative research to make sense of the data and the “lessons learned” (p. 187). Interpretation in qualitative research is looking at and beyond common themes to determine the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2013).

Stake (2011) emphasizes the need to look multiple times at data before drawing conclusions. Using both results of the data and the conceptual framework for indications helps the researcher to see how the data function or nest in their context and what varieties appear (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Triangulation is used in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Wertz et al. 2011). Qualitative researchers triangulate their evidence “to get the meaning straight, to be more confident that the evidence is good” (Stake, 2010, p. 123). Creswell further explains triangulation as “researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (p. 251). The researcher coded the data in order to triangulate the evidence and determine a comprehensive understanding of new teachers.

Stake (2010) defines coding as “sorting all data sets according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study” (p. 151). The process of coding involves breaking the data into smaller categories of information and determining evidence for the code after reviewing multiple responses (Creswell, 2013). Coding data involves analytical thinking to generate categories and themes. Marshall & Rossman (2011) explain the process as “the researcher sees the ways in which data/codes group or cluster together and their behaviors and sentiments appear concomitantly or in some patterned sequence” (p. 213). Creswell (2013) explains the importance of forming codes and categories as the heart of qualitative data analysis. “Researchers build detailed descriptions, develop themes or dimensions, and provide an interpretation in light of their own views or views of perspectives in literature” (Creswell, 2013, p. 184).

Trustworthiness of Data

Credibility of data is an important aspect of the data analysis process and researchers using qualitative methods must establish trustworthiness of data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In

relation to this study, the researcher used peer debriefing, thick description, and progressive subjectivity to increase the trustworthiness and transferability of the findings (Ponterotto, 2006).

Guba & Lincoln (1989) define peer debriefing as

“The process of engaging, with a disinterested peer, in extended and extensive discussions of one's findings, conclusions, tentative analyses, and, occasionally, field stresses, the purpose of which is both "testing out" the finding with someone who has no contractual interest in the situation and also helping make propositional that tacit and implicit information the evaluator might possess” (p. 237).

The role of the peer debriefer also acted as the “devil’s advocate” by asking the hard questions about methods, meaning and interpretations, but also provided the researcher catharsis by lending a sympathetic ear to listen to the researcher’s feelings (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). For this study, the researcher had a critical friend review the findings and established codes and provide feedback.

The major degree for establishing trustworthiness and transferability is thick description. According to Stake (2010), Clifford Geertz was a huge proponent of thick description and urged qualitative researchers “to describe the situation well, have an empathetic understanding, and compare present interpretations with those in the research literature” (p. 49). Ponterotto (2006) explains

“Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report’s intended readership. Thick

meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively “place” themselves within the research context” (p. 543).

According to Stake (2010), thick description provides direct connection to the cultural theory and scientific knowledge. The researcher used thick description by providing an abundance of details of the study in order to determine a connection to the cultural theories of reality shock and developmental stages of concern of new teachers.

Finally, the researcher monitored her own developing construction which is known as progressive subjectivity. According to Guba & Lincoln (1989) progressive subjectivity is

“The process of monitoring the evaluator's own developing construction. The technique of progressive subjectivism is designed to provide a check on the degree of privilege. The inquirer records his or her prior construction--what he or she expects to find once the study is underway...” (p. 238).

Since no researcher has a blank mind the authors remind researchers to be open to the investigation and regularly reflect on their own construction of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). With the use of a peer debriefing, the use of thick description and monitoring the researcher’s progressive subjectivity allowed readers to make decisions regarding transferability (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations

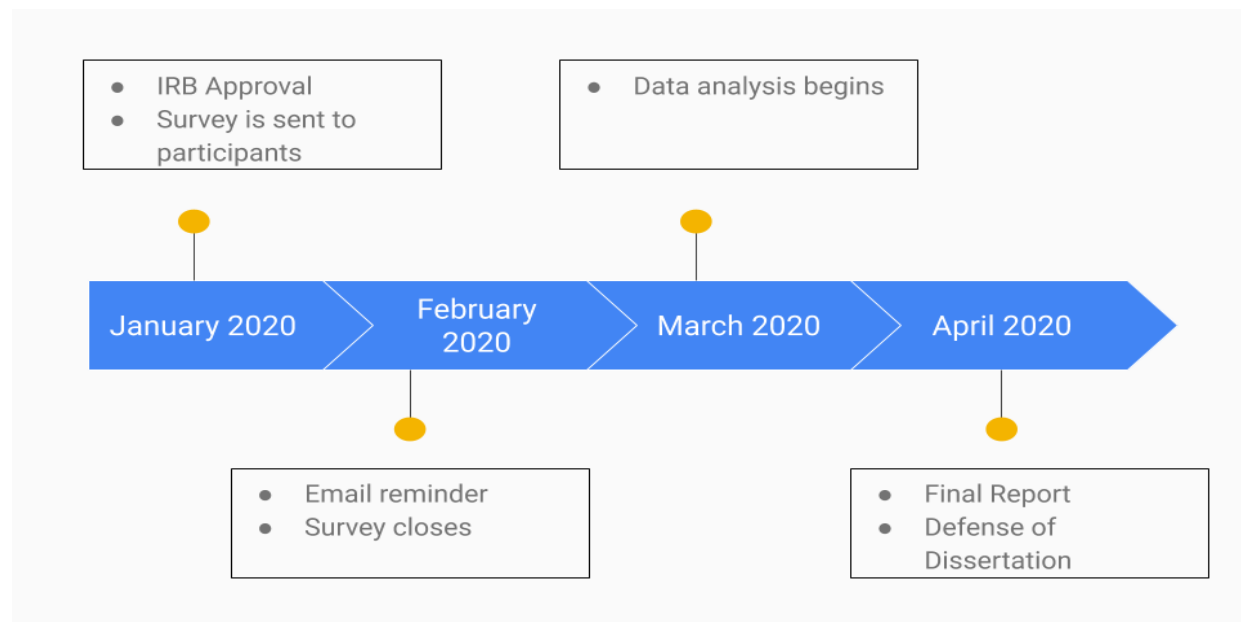
Limitations are constraints outside the control of the researcher and inherent to the actual study that could affect the generalizability of the results (Stake, 2010). The sample size, self-reported data, and length of study are limitations to consider with this study. Creswell (2013) suggests using the concept of purposeful sampling because it can purposefully inform an

understanding of the research problem. The sample size of participants can give extensive detail about the topic of study, but only when a large enough response is gathered from participants. Self-reported data can also be a limitation of this study. The researcher was mindful that people interpret information differently and a survey does not allow for clarification to address misconceptions with the question. Also, the researcher was aware of response bias where individuals may have a tendency to respond a certain way that they may consider to be their expected response. Finally, the longevity of the study is also a limitation. This particular study gathered data at one snapshot of time verses gathering data from new teachers at different points in their first years of teaching.

Time Frame

After acceptance of the proposal of this study, the researcher applied for IRB approval in January 2020. After IRB approval, the researcher sent the survey out to prospective participants in mid- January. This timing coincided with the mid-year of the school year and therefore teachers new to the profession had at least six months up until 3 years of experience to refer to. The survey closed at the midpoint of February and the researcher began the data analysis stage of

the study. The final report and defense took place in April, 2020.



Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

New teachers are entering the profession after completion of extensive teacher education programs and student teaching requirements that prepare them to be successful teachers. The goal of teacher education programs is to enhance teacher candidates' knowledge, make them fluent in their practice and socialize them to the work of teaching (Henning et al., 2018). In addition, the student teaching or fieldwork component of their teacher education is "unanimously perceived by new teachers to be the most useful component of their preparation" (Hammerness et al., 2016, p. 1199).

Regardless of pre-service teacher experience, new teachers experience a reality shock in their first years of teaching as they manage the transition role from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher. According to Veenman (1984), the eight identified challenges that new teachers typically face are: managing classroom discipline, motivating students, supporting the diverse needs of students, assessing students' work, building relationships with parents, organizing lesson planning, having insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and addressing the problems of individual students. The work of Fuller and Bown (1975) studied the developmental pattern of concerns that new teachers often move through in their first few years of teaching. They found that there was a general movement from concerns about self, evolving to concerns about tasks, and then culminating in teachers' concern for their instructional impact on students (Fuller & Bown, 1975). In more recent years, researchers have reported that the majority of new teachers do not solely experience a linear succession through the stages of concern, but rather they experience a more on-going, cyclical process with inward and outward concerns of the self, task, and impact (Conway & Clark, 2003; Mok, 2005; Watzke, 2007). The

research on new teachers, in particular with the factors that contribute to their reality shock and their development stages of concern, is lacking current information about the experiences of new teachers in this day and age.

The purpose of this qualitative survey study was to use a phenomenological approach to seek input about the experiences of new teachers as they navigate the role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher. The aim of this study was to seek input from new teachers on factors that contribute to their reality shock, as well as their thoughts on the types of supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession. In addition, this study examined the perceived levels of concerns for certain teaching tasks connected to the development stages of impact on self, task, and impact.

Research questions. The questions guiding this research were:

What do new teacher participants describe, from their own perspectives,

1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” they have experienced in the first (0-3) years of teaching?
2. as the critical supports that helped them manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?
3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

Methods

The goal of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to better understand the factors that affect new teachers in order to best support their development, during the transition in roles

from pre-service to in-service teacher. In order to learn about their lived experiences, qualitative research methods were used to learn new teachers' attitudes, opinions, beliefs and perspectives. To learn about the perceived reality shock and levels of concern of new teachers for certain teaching tasks, this researcher utilized an online survey to accomplish an in-depth study of this social phenomenon.

Survey. In this study, the researcher invited participants to complete an online survey to gather data about new teachers. The use of the online data collection provides participants time and space flexibility as well as creating a non-threatening environment for new teachers to discuss sensitive issues they may experience. The researcher used questions from the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) that has been developed to measure the concerns of teachers in three areas: self, task, and impact. These questions consisted of Likert scaled items, each of which is a statement of concern that addresses the areas of self, task, impact. In addition to using items from the TCQ, the researcher included demographic and open ended questions to collect data on the other areas of the study of reality shock and supports new teachers currently receive.

Participants. With this study, the researcher invited participants who are newly certified teachers and are currently teaching in the surrounding metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In educational programs or research studies, researchers suggest using snowball sampling in order to generate more participants. The researcher shared the survey with educators associated with teacher education programs and administrators associated with PreK-12 schools located in this metropolitan area. The researcher requested that these sources share this survey with colleagues in an effort to recruit more new teachers who meet the participant criteria.

To be included in this study, participants needed to meet the following criteria:

- Criterion #1: Potential participants will be recent graduates who successfully completed the undergraduate teacher education programs in State Z.
- Criterion #2: Potential participants will need to currently hold a State Z Level I teaching certification.
- Criterion #3: Participants will have 0-3 years of teaching experiences and be older than 18 years of age.

Characteristics of New Teacher Participants

The researcher initially received a total of 66 survey responses from invited participants. After reviewing the data, 12 survey responses were eliminated from the study due to having more than 3 years of experience or not fully consenting to the study. Results presented in this chapter include a total of 54 participants who meet all requirements of the study. To begin the study, respondents answered a series of demographic questions to understand more of the characteristics of the new teachers participating in the study. Of the 54 participants, 48 women answered the survey and 8 men with no one choosing a “they/them” pronoun or the “prefer not to say” choice. Participants were also asked to identify their race/ethnicity, educational certifications, student teaching program, teaching assignment, school setting, and number of years of teaching experience. The 54 participants have a collective of 89 “Level 1 Teaching Certificates” that vary across all subjects and certifications. Of the 89 certifications, 23 hold a special education certificate, 26 participants have a PreK-4 certificate, and 4-6 participants have various secondary level certificates in the content areas of Math, Science, English, and Social Studies. One of the participants also has a “Speech and Language Impaired” certification that is beyond the special education certifications.

A closer look at the other demographics of the participants is displayed in a number of tables to better understand and determine trends among the participants. Table 4.1 contains the “Race/Ethnicity” along with the gender breakdown for each group. For this study, 47 of the participants listed themselves as “Caucasian” while the other 7 participants were identified with a different race/ethnicity.

Table 4.1

Race/Ethnicity (Gender)

Race/Ethnicity	Total Number of Participants
African American/Black	1 (F-1, M-0)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0
Asian Pacific Islander	2 (F-2, M-0)
Caucasian	47 (F-39, M-8)
Hispanic/Latinx	3 (F-3, M-0)
Prefer not to say	1 (F-1, M-0)
Total	54 (F-48, M-8)

Participants were also asked to remark on their student teaching experience. The majority of the participants experienced the traditional 12 week student teaching program. The other 4 participants went to a professional development school or teacher residency program. There were 12 participants who marked “other” as their student teaching experience and offered further explanation. The majority of their experiences could also be considered under the various subheadings. For examples of “Other”, the participants noted that their student teaching consisted of an entire school year which is similar to the time frame of “Professional Development” schools. Therefore, the participants of this study either completed a full 12 week program, or a full school year program. Refer to Table 4.2 for the number of participants and their student teaching description.

Table 4.2

Student Teaching Experience

Program	Total Number of Participants
Traditional (12 weeks)	38
Professional Development School	3
Teacher Residency	1
Other	12
Total	54

The researcher also asked participants to indicate their number of years of full time teaching experience. For the purpose of this study, this included full year long term substitute positions and contracted teaching positions. The range was consistent for teachers who had 0-1 and 2-3 years of experience with 20 or more participants. Only 12 of the participants had 1-2 years of experience as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Full Time Teaching Experience

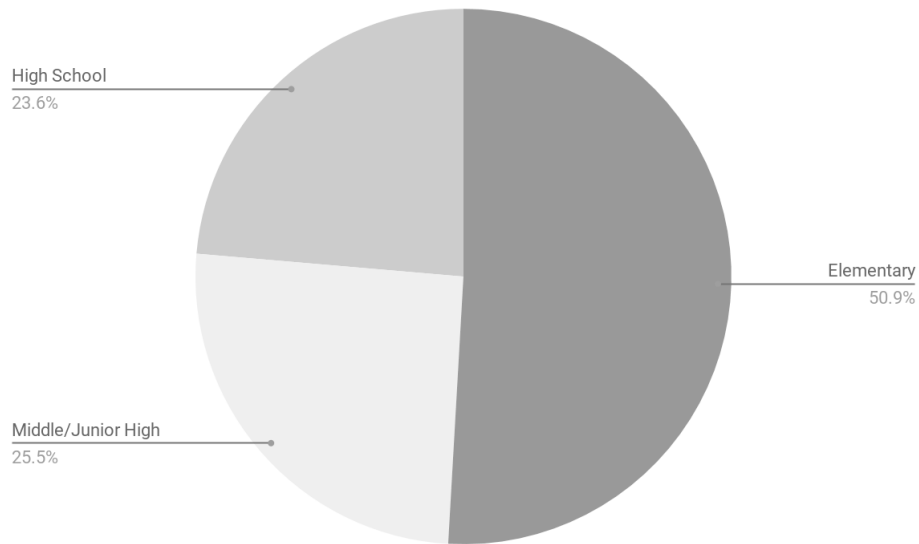
Number of Years of Teaching Experience (LTS or PTE)	Total Number of Participants
0-1 years	20
1-2 years	12
2-3 years	22
Total	54

Finally, a demographic breakdown of the school setting and school level of the participants is listed in Figure 4.4. In this breakdown, the majority of the participants are working at suburban elementary schools. There are 5 participants who work in urban high schools, 1 participant who works in an urban middle school, and 7 participants who work in an urban

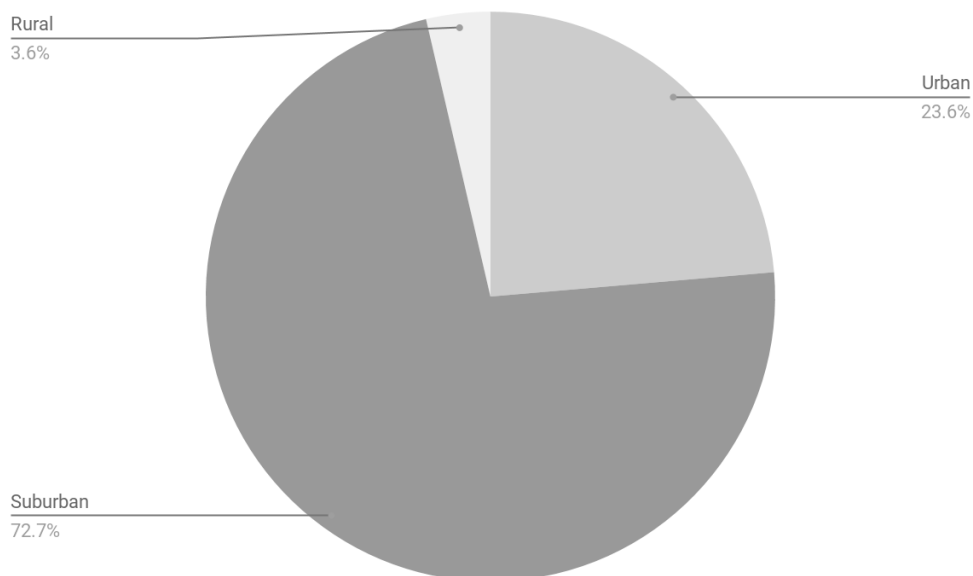
elementary school. The remainder work in rural or suburban schools across various school levels as noted in the following figure.

Figure 4.4

School Level



School Setting



Data Analysis

This researcher identified visible trends of the new teacher participants as related to their perceived reality shock and levels of concern for certain teaching tasks. Coding of the data helped to sort the data sets into topics, themes and issues important to the study. The researcher analyzed the data and developed themes to provide an interpretation of the experiences of new teachers. When organized in response to the research questions, findings indicate that overall, the participants perceived reality shock was attributed most to “supporting students with diverse needs.” The support of a mentor teacher and student teaching experiences were identified as the biggest support to help them manage their transition from a pre-service teacher to an in-service teacher. In addition, the results of this study conclude that new teachers' level of concern moves beyond the self stage and concludes that new teachers are also able to focus on tasks of teaching and student impact. In addition to these findings, phenomenological themes of: work/life balance, student systems of support, paraprofessionals, administrative support, relationships, student impact and data regarding the likelihood of new teachers staying in the profession were uncovered. The following results section further explains the findings from this study.

Results

Research question #1. What do new teachers describe, from their own perspectives, 1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” new teachers experience in the first (0-3) years of teaching?

To determine the factors contributing most to new teachers' reality shock, participants were asked to rank the following factors: managing classroom discipline, motivating students, supporting the diverse needs of students, assessing students' work, building relationships with parents, organizing lesson planning, having insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and addressing the problems of individual students based on their own perceived stress

as they manage their own reality shock. In the survey, participants were given a random order of these factors and ranked in order the areas that have significantly contributed to their “reality shock” upon entering the teaching profession.

Of the 54 participants included in this study, one participant did not respond to this question. The results of the ranking include a total of 53 survey entries. The results of the ranking demonstrate a close margin between the top three factors with 23% of the participants ranking the factor of “supporting students with diverse needs” as the number one factor contributing to their reality shock. “Having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials” and “managing classroom discipline” were ranked second and third with 21% of the participants ranking these factors as their biggest contributor to their reality shock. The percentage of participants choosing the following factors as their biggest contributor of their reality shock included: 11% for “addressing problems with individual students,” “communicating with parents” with 9%, “creating lesson plans” had 8%, “motivating students” had 4%, and “assessing student work” with 3%.

Differences among school levels. To determine any significant differences between high school, middle school/junior high or elementary school teachers, the data was disseminated by each level. For each factor, the highest average number of responses of participants that ranked this factor as their top choice of their reality shock is displayed. This breakdown shows a significant difference for a few factors when the data is disaggregated by teaching level. For example, “supporting students with diverse needs” ranked as the top spot, but after careful examination middle school teachers are reporting this as a lesser ranked factor contributing to the reality shock. On average, middle school teachers chose “managing classroom discipline” as their top ranked factor of reality shock with 40% of the teachers choosing this factor. On the

contrary, only 14% of elementary teachers and 7% of high school teachers ranked that as their greatest contributor to their reality shock. Also, 26% of elementary and 23% of high school teachers ranked “having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials” as a high contributor to their reality shock while only 7% of middle school teachers ranked this as their top choice. Refer to Table 4.5 for an itemization of the average top choices for each factor as ranked by elementary, middle school/junior high and high school teachers.

Table 4.5

Average Number of Votes for the Top Factor by Teaching Level

	Total	Elementary	Middle School/ Junior High	High School
1 (communicating with parents)	10.9%	11.1%	6.7%	15.4%
1 (supporting students with diverse needs)	23.6%	29.6%	20.0%	15.4%
1 (assessing students' work)	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%
1 (having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials)	20.0%	25.9%	6.7%	23.1%
1 (creating lesson plans)	7.3%	7.4%	6.7%	7.7%
1 (addressing problems of individual students)	10.9%	11.1%	13.3%	7.7%
1 (managing classroom discipline)	20.0%	14.8%	40.0%	7.7%
1 (motivating students)	3.6%	0.0%	6.7%	7.7%

Additional factors contributing to new teachers' perceived reality shock. The researcher also asked participants to share other factors that contribute to their reality shock beyond the factors listed in this study. Participants were asked "What other areas not listed that may have contributed to your "reality shock?" Based on the responses from the participants, the common themes that emerged regarding the additional factors that add to their perceived "reality shock" included: Work/Life Balance, Student Support Systems, Working with Paraprofessionals, and Administrative Demands. Each phenomenological theme with examples of participants' responses is explained in detail in the following sections.

Phenomenological Theme #1: Work/Life Balance. An overarching theme that new teachers reported was the amount of additional time is needed outside of the work day to complete their teaching tasks. Out of the 37 open ended responses received with this question, these responses mentioned various factors connected to their personal and work life balance. In regards to the significant amount of workload of teachers, a few participants' remarks included, *"The sheer amount of work needed to be done outside of the classroom/outside of school hours. The lack of preparation time. The insane amount of emails needed to be addressed."*, *"The amount of time/energy it takes to successfully plan, prep, and ensure all students' needs are being met every day."*, *"Managing one's own health and life outside of teaching"* and *"All of the time I have put into my job outside of my contracted hours."* These remarks from the participants signify that new teachers entering the profession do not have a full understanding of the amount of work that has to occur outside of school hours.

In addition, participants shared the distress about their first encounters with the transition from officially moving beyond their adolescence phase into adulthood. For example, responses from participants addressed this transition. As stated, *"Emotional Toll - Not enough time, stress,*

unpreparedness for real student problems that as a student teacher you are not 'privileged' to know.”, “*The work involved in supplementals and the harsh reality of adulting (for lack of better terms)*” and “*Managing one's own health and life outside of teaching.*” As new teachers enter the profession, they are not only learning the nuances of their new profession, but they are also managing entering a new phase as an adult.

As these results indicate that beyond the identified factors reported earlier that contribute to new teachers’ reality shock, managing their work and life balance also impacts their navigation into the teaching profession. In their first years of teaching, these professionals are also learning how to find a balance between completing all of their teaching requirements while also taking care of their own wellbeing. In addition to the work/life balance the participants also identified navigating different student support systems as a stress factor that affects their first years of teaching.

Phenomenological Theme #2: Student Support Systems. Student support systems such as Individualized Education Programs (IEP), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and student interventions became an emerging theme as new teachers identified additional factors that contribute to their perceived “reality shock.” New teachers noted that the demands of the paperwork included in special education services. For example, participants shared, “*Holding IEP meetings, using online systems for IEP paper work*”, “*Accommodating the diverse schedules/required IEP special services of students and teaching in multiple schools with slightly varying schedules*” and “*Working with regular education teachers to include my special education students in class*” as additional factors contributing to their reality shock. In particular, for special education demands, new teachers shared the additional workload that is needed in this area of education. Other areas of student support systems that the participants highlighted

included school's referral processes that had to occur in order to get students the additional support they needed. One participant explained, *"I also found the referral process for students who need extra support a bit of a 'reality shock.' It took time to learn who to contact about certain concerns."* Another teacher shared, *"a huge reality shock for me was the MTSS process which my school uses to identify students in need of supports (academic, behavior, OT, P etc.) This can be a mentally exhausting process in which sometimes you have to disagree with colleagues and even administrators and it was a real eye opener for me when I first started teaching."* These statements help paint a picture of the demands of learning different student support systems that can attribute to their reality shock.

In summary, the second phenomenological theme to emerge from the data explained new teachers' hardship as they learn about the different support systems that are in place for students. These support systems can cause frustration either because the process can be lengthy or new teachers may not know exactly where to go if a student is working below the grade level expectation. The next uncovered theme explains new teachers' lack of training to work with or manage paraprofessionals.

Phenomenological Theme #3: Paraprofessionals. The third theme to emerge among the responses from the participants included working with and managing classroom assistants or paraprofessionals. In their first years of teaching, teachers identified these factors as also contributing to their "reality shock" as they maneuver their transition from preservice teacher to inservice teacher. Many comments referenced having to learn how to manage or learn to work with other adults. One participant included this comment to help understand this factor contributing to their reality shock. *"As an autistic support teacher, I work with many paraprofessionals, therapists, and consultants. Working with other adults has been the biggest*

contribution to my “reality shock.”

As new teachers enter the profession they are learning to navigate how to interact with other adults especially if they are in a role that requires them to manage student support. Participants shared that they had not anticipated working with paraprofessionals to be a factor contributing to their reality shock. More knowledge and preparation of how to manage paraprofessionals would be helpful for new teachers to have prior to their transition to an in-service teacher. Finally, “Administrative Responsibilities” was the last phenomenological theme that emerged as a factor contributing to their perceived reality shock.

Phenomenological Theme #4: Administrative Responsibilities. The last theme to emerge consisted of the non-teaching requirements and administrative demands that new teachers also face in their first years of teaching. New teachers reported lacking an understanding of administrative responsibilities of teaching. Keeping track of meetings and understanding the evaluation or certification requirements added to their stress. For example, participants shared, “*I do not remember being taught how we would be evaluated, what constitutes tenure, the different Acts (ie Act 48) requirements, etc.*” and “*it was shocking to manage admin duties such as keeping track of meetings, and other professional responsibilities.*”

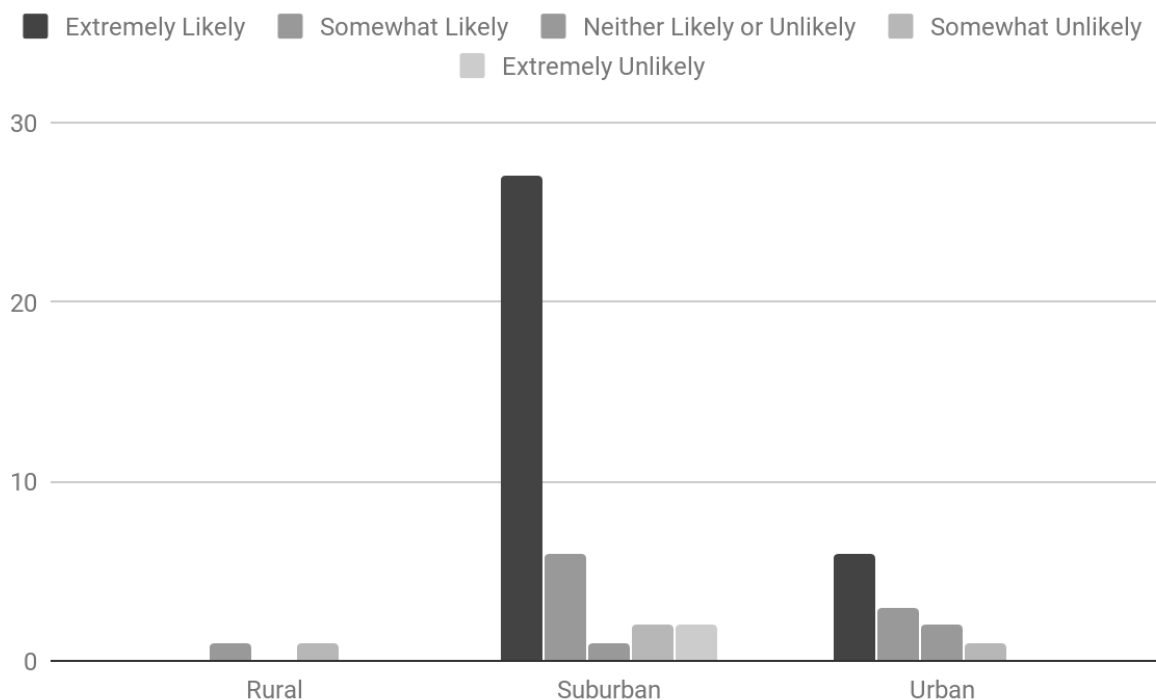
During teacher education programs and student teaching, new teachers gain valuable knowledge about the requirements and needs of teachers. Interestingly, participants shared that they still did not have a full understanding of the administrative responsibilities such as meetings, ongoing certification requirements, and attending school events. Keeping track of these professional responsibilities added to their perceived reality shock. Along with the additional factors that contribute to new teachers’ reality shock, the participants also reported on their likelihood to stay in the profession.

Likelihood of Staying in the Profession. In addition to gathering more information about the specific factors that contribute to new teachers' perceived reality shock, the researcher also wanted to determine the likelihood of these participants staying in the profession. Interestingly, the participants of this study report a very high likelihood of staying in the profession. 67% of the participants reported as "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely" to stay in the teaching profession. 6% reported as "neither likely or unlikely" to stay in the profession. 19% of the participants reported as "somewhat unlikely" to stay in the profession and 7% are "extremely unlikely" to stay in the profession.

The researcher also analyzed the data considering the school setting of the new teachers (refer to Figure 4.6). This breakdown determined that for this study no teacher working in an urban or rural school setting were "extremely unlikely" to stay in the teaching profession while the only 2 teachers who chose this likelihood are working in a suburban school setting. Teachers working in an urban school setting reported 75% as "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely" to stay in the teaching profession. Refer to Table 4.6 for the percentages of the likelihood of new teachers staying in the profession based on the school setting.

Figure 4.6

Likelihood of Staying in the Profession by School Setting



Participants were also asked to share “what is influencing your decision” to better understand the reasons for continuing in the profession or choosing to leave. These responses were coded and reported throughout the remainder of the results section to better understand the experiences of new teachers. Furthermore, the new teachers also identified supports that help them transition into the teaching profession as explained with the findings of the second research question.

Research Question #2. What do new teachers describe, from their own perspectives,

2. as the critical supports that helped new teachers manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?

In addition to understanding the factors that contribute to new teachers’ perceived reality shock, it is also important to understand the support that has helped their transition into the

teaching profession. Prior to becoming a teacher, pre-service teachers completed a teacher education program that required them to take undergraduate education courses and complete student teaching requirements. After entering the profession, novice in-service teachers are also required by the state to go through an induction program and have a mentor during their first year. Professional development sessions are ongoing throughout a teachers' career and are also identified as another possible support for new teachers.

In the survey, the 54 participants were asked to choose the impact each of these identified supports had as they managed their first years of teaching. After reviewing the demographics of the participants (refer to Table 4.1), there were no significant differences among different variables. For example, middle school teachers reported similar supports as did elementary and high school teachers. Men and women identified similar supports for their greatest and least impact on their transition into the in-service teaching role, as well.

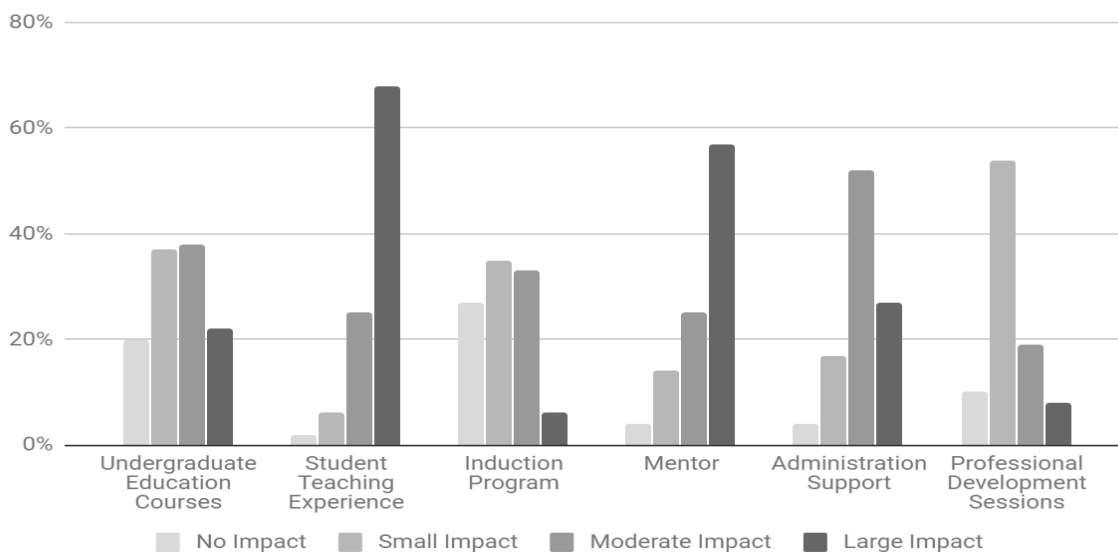
Overall the new teachers in this study identified student teaching as having the greatest influence on their transition to teaching. On average 68% of the participants identified this as having a "large impact" on their transition. The support of a mentor was ranked closely in second 57% of the participants identifying this as having a "large impact" on their transition. When combining the averages of "no impact" and "small impact" professional development sessions and induction programs are reported as having little impact as support when new teachers are transitioning into teaching.

The data gathered from this question gives a good understanding to the supports new teachers identify as having an impact on their teaching profession. Table 4.7 gives a breakdown of the percentages of the impact of each support as identified by the participants. The chart disaggregates the data to show the range for each factor. For example, the percentages for each

impact level (no impact, small impact, moderate impact, large impact) for each factor are included. For “induction program” the percentages have a small variance among each level (27% no impact, 35% small impact, 33% moderate impact, 6% large impact) indicating that overall the new teachers in this study identify this program as having a small influence on managing their transition into teaching. “Student Teaching Experience” and “Mentor” both have very high percentages of positive impact (68% and 57%) and very low percentages of small impact (6% and 14%). “Professional Development Sessions” and “Undergraduate Education Courses” shows a clustering of similar percentages which shows that the new teachers in this study differed on their opinions of this support. Refer to Figure 4.7 for the full report on the average percentage of the impact of each support as reported by the participants in this study.

Figure 4.7

Percentages of Level of Supports for each Factor



Additional Supports for New Teachers. With phenomenological studies, the purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. The researcher wanted to understand how certain teacher education program supports and K-12

school supports can impact new teachers' experience. In addition, participants were asked an open ended question asking to share with the researcher any other supports that were not listed that has also helped the participants manage the transition into the teaching profession. The overwhelming theme that arrived from this question stemmed from the support of various colleagues beyond their mentor that has helped them to manage this transition. This same theme emerged when asked why new teachers are likely to stay in the profession. The majority of responses always referenced the support of fellow colleagues, grade level partners or department members. The full description of the phenomenological theme of "Relationships" is explained in detail along with examples of participants' responses.

Phenomenological theme: Relationships. Beyond the support of a mentor, new teachers referenced their colleagues as a strong support they lean on when managing the transition into teaching. Participants referenced "colleagues" often but many went into further detail and explained that their grade level partners or department members were a great resource to have such as "*other teachers you lean on who aren't your mentor*" as stated by one participant. The support the new teachers receive from working as a team to develop lesson plans and share materials and also the relationships built during team planning time were common responses from the new teachers. The participants in this study referenced having other new teachers going through the same experience as helpful towards their transition into teaching. For example, one participant stated, "*I also started with 2 other first year teachers in my school which helped make me feel like I was not alone in a school with many veteran teachers.*" Other statements included: "*support from other new teachers*", "*colleagues & other first year teachers,*" and "*support from fellow educators in a similar role/point in their career*" as significant systems of support that have helped the participants manage their transition from a pre-service to an in-service teacher.

In addition, to the responses from additional identified supports by new teachers this same theme emerged with the responses given for the likelihood of staying in the profession. New teachers from this study shared that their co-workers make all the difference in teaching experience. For example, one participant stated the following: *“Currently, I co-teach and share a classroom with another special education teacher. We work extremely well as a pair and having the support of another teacher throughout the struggles of this job make it very manageable and enjoyable to come to work each day.”* New teachers also referenced the community of the school and the positive work atmosphere that has helped them to make the decision to stay in the teaching profession. *“As of right now, the district I currently teach in influences that decision. The community of this school has a family like sense to it. Everyone is very welcoming, kind, supportive & helpful They make this career ‘easier’.”*

In summary, the phenomenological theme of relationship is instrumental for new teachers. As determined in this study, relationships with their fellow grade level members, department members, or colleagues play a significant role in helping new teachers to manage their transition from pre-service to in-service teachers. Furthermore, relationships not only help with their transition, but these bonds are a major influence on new teachers’ decision to stay in the teaching profession. Next, the results of the level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self, task and impact are presented in the results section of the final research question.

Research Question #3. What do new teachers describe, from their own perspectives, 3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

Using questions from the TCQ enabled the researcher to discover the areas of concern of

new teachers for different teaching tasks over three areas: self, task, and impact. When determining the developmental pattern of concerns of new teachers, the data indicates that these new teachers are not only focusing on self-survival tasks in their first years of teaching. The results of this study determined that new teachers are also concerned with areas involving teaching tasks and student impact.

Results from 53 participants are disseminated and reported by each stage: self-survival stage, task-teaching stage, and impact-student stage. Throughout each stage, the data suggests that new teachers show varying levels of concern about certain factors in each stage. In addition, a phenomenological theme of student impact was uncovered among the reasons new teachers are likely to stay in the teaching profession. Further analysis of the results of the TCQ along with the open ended responses are reported.

Self- Survival Stage. Participants were asked a series of questions from the TCQ that measured their level of concern for certain teaching tasks that are connected to the self stage. Among the five questions, the results varied among the levels of concern: not concerned, a little concerned, moderately concerned, very concerned, and extremely concerned. “Doing well when a supervisor is present” on average was chosen the most among these questions with 33.96% of participants “very concerned” with this concept. “Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control” was more on the less concerned side with only 28.3% of participants “a little concerned” and 26.24% of participants “moderately concerned.” The results from these self-survival questions (See Table 4.8) also show several areas where new teachers ranked themselves as “moderately concerned” such as: “doing well when a supervisor is present” (28.3%), “feeling more adequate as a teacher” (30.19%) and “being accepted and respected by professional peoples” (28.3%).

Table 4.8

Self-Survival Questions

	Not Concerned	A Little Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
Doing well when a supervisor is present	7 (13.21%)	6 (11.32%)	15 (28.3%)	18 (33.96%)	7 (13.21%)
Feeling more adequate as a teacher	5 (9.43%)	11 (20.75%)	16 (30.19%)	10 (18.87%)	11 (20.75%)
Being accepted and respected by professional persons	7 (13.21%)	11 (20.75%)	15 (28.3%)	11 (20.75%)	9 (16.98%)
Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching	7 (13.21%)	15 (28.3%)	13 (24.53%)	14 (26.42%)	4(7.55%)
Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control	3 (5.66%)	15 (28.3%)	14 (26.42%)	10 (18.87%)	11 (20.75%)

The questions presented in the section refer to tasks that are connected to new teachers' survival. The data from this study shows lower percentage levels for these questions indicating that new teachers are not highly concerned with only areas of their "self-survival." Overall the results from this study show lower levels of concern for self-survival questions than the other

areas of task- teaching and impact- student stages. The results of the TCQ related to the task-teaching stage are presented next.

Task- Teaching Stage. Participants were also asked a series of questions from the TCQ that measured their level of concern for certain teaching duties that are connected to the task stage. Again, these questions had similar results as the self -survival questions and are listed in Table 4.9. Participants’ responses varied across each level of concern. “Feeling under pressure too much of the time” 9.43% participants marked this as “extremely concerned,” 41.51% of the participants marked this as “very concerned” and 33.96% of the responses were marked as “moderately concerned.” This question out of the five questions relating to teaching tasks received the highest marks of concern among these participants. “Working with too many students each day” also received higher levels of concern than the other questions. More than half of the participants rated this area of moderately to extremely concerned.

“Lack of instructional materials,” “too many non-instructional duties,” “the routine and inflexibility of teaching” were ranked as low levels of concerns for new teachers. More than 80% of the participants ranked “lack of instructional materials” as moderate to not concerned. “Too many non- instructional duties” and “the routine and inflexibility of teaching” also ranked low in the levels of concern with 70-80% of the responses showing low concern. Refer to Table 4.9 for a compilation of the percentage of answers for each question.

Table 4.9

Task-Teaching Questions

	Not Concerned	A Little Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
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Lack of instructional materials	18 (33.96%)	17 (32.08%)	8 (15.09%)	9 (16.98%)	1 (1.89%)
Feeling under pressure too much of the time	3 (5.66%)	5 (9.43%)	18 (33.96%)	22 (41.51%)	5 (9.43%)
Too many non-instructional duties	16 (30.19%)	10 (18.87%)	15 (28.3%)	8 (15.09%)	4(7.55%)
Working with too many students each day	10 (18.87%)	13 (24.53%)	15 (28.3%)	12 (22.64%)	3 (5.66%)
The routine and inflexibility of teaching	14 (26.42%)	16 (30.19%)	12 (22.64%)	9 (16.98%)	2 (3.77%)

Although new teachers reported high areas of concern for “feeling under pressure too much of the time” and “working with too many students” there were also teaching task related questions that the participants had low levels of concern. The results from these “task-teaching” questions also show similar varied results as did the “self-survival” questions. A further look at the last set of “impact-student” questions was examined to determine the variation of concerns.

Impact- Student Stage. Lastly, participants answered a series of questions from the TCQ that measured their level of concern regarding their impact on students that are connected to the impact-student stage (See Table 4.10). Unlike the “self-survival” and “task-teaching” questions, the responses from the “impact-student” questions were favored more towards higher areas of concern. For example, more than 50% of the participants were “moderately concerned” to “very concerned” about “challenging unmotivated students” and “guiding students towards intellectual

and emotional growth.” Only 16.98% of the participants were “a little concerned” with “meeting the needs of different kinds of students” while there were 30.19% “moderately concerned,” 37.74% were “very concerned,” and 15.09% of the new teachers were “extremely concerned.” The one question with the most concern revolved around determining if students are getting the appropriate support. For the question, “whether each student is getting what he/she needs” the majority of choices (67.92%) were in the “very concerned” and “extremely concerned” categories. Refer to Chart 4.10 for a compilation of the percentage of answers for each question.

Table 4.11

Impact-Students Questions

	Not Concerned	A Little Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
Meeting the needs of different kinds of students	0 (0%)	9 (16.98%)	16 (30.19%)	20 (37.74%)	8 (15.09%)
Diagnosing student learning problems	9 (16.98%)	20 (37.74%)	11 (20.75%)	10 (18.87%)	3 (5.66%)
Challenging unmotivated students	2 (3.77%)	16 (30.19%)	13 (24.53%)	17 (32.08%)	5 (9.43%)
Guiding students towards intellectual growth and emotional growth	3 (5.66%)	9 (16.98%)	19 (35.85%)	15 (28.3%)	7 (13.21%)

Whether each student is getting what he/she needs	1 (1.89%)	9 (16.98%)	7 (13.21%)	24 (45.28%)	12 (22.64%)
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The “impact-student” questions show higher percentages of concern than the “self-survival” and “teaching-task” stage concern questions. Findings from this study show a more cyclical pattern among the responses from new teachers. The information from this study determined that new teachers are not solely in one developmental stage (self-survival) upon entering the profession. Rather they are able to have concerns beyond areas of the self. The data suggests that new teachers have and are able to have concerns in all three of the areas of self, task, and impact.

TCQ responses reported by years of teaching experience. To determine patterns of concern, the researcher examined the responses to the survey based on the years of experience of new teachers (0-1 years, 1-2 years, or 2-3 years) to ascertain any major differences on the reported concerns. Based on the 15 TCQ questions, Table 4.12 gives an analysis of the number of responses for each question where the participants marked this as “very concerned” or “extremely concerned.” The table shows the breakdown of responses as reported by the number of years of teaching experience. The results determine that there are “self” concerns that teachers with 0-1 years of experience are more concerned with than teachers who have been teaching for 2-3 years. For example, teachers with 0-1 years of experience were much more concerned with “feeling more adequate as a teacher” and “maintaining the appropriate degree of class control” than teachers with 1-2 or 2-3 years of experience. On the contrary, teachers with 2-3 years of experience did report being more concerned with impact concerns such as: “meeting the needs of different students” and “challenging unmotivated students” than teachers with 0-1 and 1-2 years

of experience. In addition, teachers with 2-3 years of experience also reported higher concern for task related areas such as “lack of instructional materials” or “too many non-instructional duties” than the other participants. Although there were some elevated areas of self and impact for these groups of teachers, both groups did also have high levels of concern in all three sections.

Interestingly, the levels of concern across all three areas: self, task, and impact had no major differences among teachers with 1-2 years of experience. These participants reported having consistent concerns in all three areas rather than having one area with more elevated percentages. For example, where “lack of instructional materials” was a high concern for teachers with 2-3 years of experience, these teachers had low response rates, determining that they are less concerned with this task than teachers who have one more year of experience. In summary, these findings also determine that new teachers have concerns in all three areas of self, talk and impact regardless of their years of experience. Although teachers with 0-1 years of teaching experience had more elevated percentages for the self questions, they also demonstrated concern for the other areas. Teachers with 1-2 years of experience showed consistent concern across all three areas. Finally, teachers with 2-3 years of experience may have had some higher percentages in the area of impact; they continued to report concern in the areas of self and task. The overall findings as reported in Table 4.12 show consistent percentages of areas of concern across each type of question.

Table 4.12

Levels of Concern based on Years of Experience

Type	Question	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-3 years	Total Responses
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Impact	Meeting the needs of different kinds of students	28.58%	28.57%	42.85%	28
Impact	Diagnosing student learning problems	38.47%	23.07%	38.46%	13
Impact	Challenging unmotivated students	27.27%	27.28%	45.45%	22
Impact	Guiding students towards intellectual growth and emotional growth	45.45%	13.63%	40.92%	22
Impact	Whether each student is getting what he/she needs	33.34%	22.22%	4.44%	36
Self	Doing well when a supervisor is present	36.00%	28.00%	36.00%	25
Self	Feeling more adequate as a teacher	42.87%	23.80%	33.33%	21
Self	Being accepted and respected by professional persons	40.00%	20.00%	40.00%	20
Self	Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching	39.00%	16.66%	44.44%	18
Self	Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control	42.84%	19.04%	38.10%	21
Task	Lack of instructional materials	10.00%	10.00%	80.00%	10
Task	Feeling under pressure too much of the time	40.75%	25.92%	33.33%	27
Task	Too many non-instructional duties	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%	12

Task	Working with too many students each day	33.33%	40.00%	26.67%	15
Task	The routine and inflexibility of teaching	27.28%	36.36%	36.36%	11

In addition to the results from the TCQ, a strong phenomenological theme emerged from the participants involving their impact. Not only do the results show that new teachers early in their career have concerns of the impact they have on their students, this is also a driving force as it relates to their likelihood to stay in the teaching profession. A closer look at the participants' reasons for staying in the profession shows their desire to have a strong impact on their students as noted in the next section.

Phenomenological Theme: Impact. As mentioned previously, 67% of the participants reported as highly favored to stay in the teaching profession. When respondents articulated their reason for their likelihood to stay in the profession, a high volume of responses included their love for the profession and the impact they have on their students. For example, participants shared: *“Although this is a challenging job, I whole-heartedly love it. I cannot imagine doing any other job.”*, *“The love of teaching and having a positive impact on students”* and *“I love teaching and making a difference.”* This evidence helps to better understand that new teachers are in fact hitting the impact stage of concern during their first years of teaching. Results from this study show that new teachers are both concerned about factors that involve themselves such as a work/life balance, but also more importantly they are concerned with issues of teaching tasks and the impact on their students.

Response from the participants referenced their love for the profession which only comes

from a passion to support students. New teachers uniquely shared their desire to have an impact on their students even during their very first years of teaching. One participant highlights the power of her impact, *“Many times this year (it is my first year teaching) I had moments where I was driving home from school and thought to myself “do I really want to be struggling mentally like this most likely 3 out of the 5 school days there are in a week?”. But there are those moments when you know you've impacted a child's perspective on a topic or made them really appreciate a certain topic area, those are the moments I live for.”* Another new teacher shared, *“Despite the hardships of the first year of teaching, nothing brings me more joy than working with my 21 sweet, unique, caring students and seeing them grow each day.”* The responses also highlight the moments that they see their students grow as a result of their teaching and the impact it has on not only the students, but also the teacher as a person. One heartwarming response from a teacher highlighted the impact she has on her students of color who are a minority in their school. She shared,

“There are days that are REALLY REALLY HARD, days that are so mentally exhausting that I just want to go home and get into bed. There are days that I really feel inadequate as a teacher. BUT there are also days where my students open up to me and share personal information, tell me how much they love school, grasp a concept that they previously did not understand, laugh with my students, or even see them being kind to one another and showing tremendous amounts of empathy. I also teach in a predomintely[sic] white school, over the last few years I have had a hadnful[sic] of black students in my class. With these students I have talked about race and they are so proud to have a black teacher and I know that means a lot to them and to me. Those moments make me feel VERY blessed to be in this profession and make me want to continue to

experience them for the next 30 years.”

These sentiments establish the fact that new teachers are deeply concerned and motivated to have an impact on their students. Despite the stress of the job and new teachers navigating their transition into the teaching profession, these individuals are committed to making a difference in their students' lives and helping their students succeed. This determines that their developmental stage of concern reaches the impact stage even during their first years of teaching.

In conclusion, the data gathered from this study provides informative knowledge on the perceived reality shock and levels of concerns for teaching tasks of new teachers. Despite the amount of support or preparation, new teachers will experience a reality shock as they navigate the transition from pre-service to in-service teacher. This study shared specific factors affecting new teachers' reality shock. In addition, this study provides evidence that new teachers are indeed concerned about certain teaching tasks beyond the self-survival stage. This data suggests that new teachers are also concerned about the impact they have on their students as reported on the responses from the TCQ and their reasons for their likelihood of staying in the profession.

In the previous chapters, the background of the study, supporting literature, and the experiences of new teachers were presented. In the final chapter, a discussion of the findings in light of previous research, and implications for theory and practice, are explored.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This researcher examined the experiences of new teachers in their first years of teaching by taking a particular view of the factors that contributed the most to their “reality shock.” Review of new teachers’ identified supports that have helped to manage their transition into the profession was also analyzed. The top factors contributing to the reality shock as reported by these new teachers during their first years of teaching included: Supporting students with diverse needs, having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials, and managing classroom discipline. Identified supports that helped them manage their transition into the teaching profession included student teaching experience, mentors, and administrative support.

In addition, this researcher examined the perceived levels of concerns of new teachers regarding certain teaching tasks connected to the developmental stages of concern on self, task, and impact (Fuller & Bown, 1975). The results from this study indicate that new teachers are largely more concerned with teaching tasks related to student impact than with self and task concerns. In addition to these results the following phenomenological themes were uncovered: work/life balance, student systems of support, paraprofessionals, administrative support, relationships, and impact. The following chapter provides a detailed overview of the results of the study, an examination of the results of the study compared to recent studies, implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

Regardless of the training received during teacher education programs, many new teachers experience a reality shock in their first years of teaching as they manage the transition role from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher (Veenman, 1984). Research has indicated the

need to identify the developmental stages of concern for new teachers in an effort to provide targeted support during their first years of teaching. Providing targeted support that addresses both the factors that contribute to their reality shock and their level of concern will increase new teachers' desire to remain in the teaching profession (Correa et al, 2015). Although research studies have explored the reality shock and developmental stages of new teachers (e.g., citations), there was a need for a more recent study to determine the factors that cause stress to our new teachers in this day and age.

The goal of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to better understand the factors that affect new teachers in order to best support their development during the transition in roles from pre-service to in-service teacher. Using purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013), the researcher collected data from new teachers who are teaching in a metropolitan area located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In this study, the researcher invited participants who met the criteria to complete an online survey to gather data about new teachers. To be included in this study, participants met the following criteria:

- Criterion #1: Potential participants were recent graduates who successfully completed an undergraduate teacher education program in State Z.
- Criterion #2: Potential participants currently hold a State Z Level I (initial) teaching certification.
- Criterion #3: Participants have 0-3 years of teaching experience and were older than 18 years of age.

The researcher used an online survey to gather data about new teachers. For this study, questions were used from the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) that has been developed to

measure the concerns of teachers in three areas: self, task, and impact (George, 1978). In addition to using items from the TCQ, the researcher included demographic and open-ended questions to collect data on the other areas of the study of reality shock and supports new teachers currently receive. The questions guiding this research were:

What do new teacher participants describe, from their own perspectives,

1. as the most significant factors that contributed to the “reality shock” they have experienced in the first (0-3) years of teaching?
2. as the critical supports that helped them manage their role transition from pre-service to in-service teacher?
3. as their level of concern for specific job related tasks related to concerns of self-survival, task-instruction, and impact-students?

The findings of the study identified the factors contributing new teachers’ reality shock, supports that help manage their transition into the teaching profession, and their level of concern for tasks related to self, task, and impact are disaggregated. In addition, the phenomenological themes of: work/life balance, student systems of support, paraprofessionals, administrative support, and relationships are reported in the summary of results.

Summary of the Results

Analysis of the data from this study revealed insights into various aspects of the experiences of new teachers as they enter the teaching profession. Findings of this study provide a glimpse into factors currently contributing to the participating, new teachers’ reality shock. The data suggests that new teachers’ perceived meeting the diverse needs of students including

managing classroom discipline and having adequate teaching materials as the most significant concerns in regards to teaching. Balancing the demands of their work with their own personal life and learning the student support systems were a few of the additional factors uncovered that new teachers reported on as contributing to their reality shock. In terms of their support, the participants reported mentors and student teaching as their greatest help to manage their transition from pre-service to in-service teachers. Relationships with other colleagues and other new teachers were also uncovered as major reinforcements for their transition. Finally, the results of this study conclude that new teachers' level of concern is greatest for teaching tasks related to the impact they have on students' learning outcomes. Further reporting of new teachers' reality shock, support, and levels of concern are presented next.

Factors contributing to new teacher's reality shock. In the survey, participants were given a random order of factors and ranked them in order of the areas that have significantly contributed to their "reality shock" upon entering the teaching profession. The results of the ranking demonstrate a close margin between the top three factors with 23% of the participants ranking the factor of "supporting students with diverse needs" as the number one factor contributing to their reality shock. "Managing classroom discipline" and "having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials" and were ranked second and third with 21% of the participants ranking them in this order. "Addressing problems of individual students," "communicating with parents," "creating lesson plans," "assessing student work," and "motivating students" were the last four-eight ranked factors by participants in this study.

To determine any significant differences in perceptions between high school, middle school/junior high or elementary school teacher participants, the data was disaggregated by each level. On average, middle school teachers chose "managing classroom discipline" as their top

ranked concern related to reality shock, with 40% of the teachers choosing this factor. On the contrary, only 14% of elementary teachers and 7% of high school teachers ranked that as the greatest contributor to their reality shock. Also, 26% of elementary and 23% of high school teachers ranked “having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials” as a high contributor to their reality shock concerns, while only 7% of middle school teachers ranked this as their top choice.

Phenomenological themes. In addition to ranking the identified factors, the participants also shared other factors that contribute to their reality shock. Managing their work/life balance, learning student support systems, paraprofessionals and administrative responsibilities emerged among the coded themes. The majority of responses from participants, when asked to elaborate on any other factors contributing to their reality shock, involved the demands of the job. Participants mentioned feeling overwhelmed by the amount of time they have to devote to their work and the difficulty finding life balance. Also, they noted their increased learning curve related to navigating through the various student support systems, such as individualized education plans (IEPs), 504 plans, and the multi-tiered systems of support model, in order to provide the correct support to their students. In addition, participants identified a lack of knowledge or training on how to work with and/or manage paraprofessionals. Finally, the non-teaching requirements and administrative demands, such as attending numerous meetings and additional certification training requirements also added to new teachers’ perceptions of stress in their first years of teaching.

Critical supports for new teachers. Overall the new teachers in this study identified student teaching as having the greatest influence, with the support from a mentor as the second highest impact, on their transition to teaching. “Student Teaching Experience” and “Mentor”

both indicated high percentages of positive impact (68% and 57%) and low percentages of small impact (6% and 14%). For “induction program” the percentages have a small variance among each level (27% no impact, 35% small impact, 33% moderate impact, 6% large impact) indicating that overall the new teachers in this study identify these types of programs as having a small influence on managing their transition into the profession. “Professional Development Sessions” and “Undergraduate Education Courses” show a clustering of similar percentages which indicates that the new teachers in this study differed on their opinions of the impact of this support.

Phenomenological theme of relationships. In addition, participants were asked an open-ended question asking to share with the researcher any other supports that has also helped the participants manage their transition into the teaching profession. Beyond the support of a mentor, new teachers referenced their colleagues as a strong support they lean on when managing the transition into teaching. Participants explained that their grade level partners or department members were a great resource to have, such as “*other teachers you lean on who aren't your mentor*” as stated by one participant. The support the new teachers receive from working as a team to develop lesson plans and share materials and also the relationships built during team planning time were common, positive factor responses from the new teachers. The participants in this study referenced having other new teachers going through the same experience as helpful towards their transition into teaching. For example, one participant stated, “*I also started with 2 other first year teachers in my school which helped make me feel like I was not alone in a school with many veteran teachers.*” Other statements included: “*support from other new teachers*”, “*colleagues & other first year teachers,*” and “*support from fellow educators in a similar*

role/point in their career” as significant systems of support that helped the participants manage their transition from a pre-service to an in-service teacher.

Levels of concern for teaching related to self, task, and impact. Participants were asked a series of questions from the TCQ that measured their level of concern for certain teaching tasks that are connected to the self stage, task stage and impact stage. Participants’ varied responses across each level of concern determined that new teachers can in fact be concerned about issues beyond the self-stage in their first years of teaching. Unlike the “self-survival” and “task-teaching” questions, the responses from the “impact-student” questions were favored more towards higher areas of concern. For example, more than 50% of the participants were “moderately concerned” to “very concerned” about “challenging unmotivated students” and “guiding students towards intellectual and emotional growth.” For the question, “whether each student is getting what he/she needs” the majority of choices (67.92%) were in the “very concerned” and “extremely concerned” categories.

To determine patterns of concern, the researcher examined the responses to the survey based on the years of experience of new teachers (0-1 years, 1-2 years, or 2-3 years) to ascertain any major differences on the reported concerns. The results determined that there are “self” concerns that teachers with 0-1 years of experience are more concerned with than teachers who have been teaching for 2-3 years. In addition, teachers with 1-2 years of experience had consistent percentages across all three areas of concern rather than having one area with more elevated percentages. Lastly, teachers with 2-3 years of teaching experience did have higher percentages with impact concerns such as: “meeting the needs of different students” and “challenging unmotivated students” than teachers with 0-1 and 1-2 years of experience. Although teachers with 0-1 years of teaching experience had more elevated percentages for the

self questions, they also demonstrated concern for the other areas. Teachers with 1-2 years of experience showed consistent concern across all three areas. Finally, while teachers with 2-3 years of experience may have had some higher percentages in the area of impact, they continued to report concern in the areas of self and task.

Phenomenological theme of impact. The researcher determined that 67% of the participants reported as highly favored to stay in the teaching profession. When respondents articulated their reason for their likelihood to stay in the profession, a high volume of responses included their love for the profession and the impact they have on their students. For example, participants shared: *“Although this is a challenging job, I whole-heartedly love it. I cannot imagine doing any other job”*, *“The love of teaching and having a positive impact on students”* and *“I love teaching and making a difference.”*

This evidence helps to better understand that new teachers are in fact hitting the impact stage of concern during their first years of teaching. Results from this study show that new teachers are both concerned about factors that involve themselves such as a work/life balance, and also more importantly they are concerned with issues of teaching tasks and the impact on their students. This data counters Fuller and Bown’s (1975) research that suggests new teachers are not concerned with matters involving student impact in their first years of teaching.

Discussion

Considering the demands of teachers, the researcher wanted to pay particular attention to the experiences of new teachers as they transition into the profession. New teachers are entering the profession after completion of extensive teacher education programs and student teaching requirements that prepare them to be successful teachers. Despite their preparation, managing

the transition from pre-service to in-service teacher is still a daunting task and new teachers will continue to need support along the way. A further examination of the factors contributing to new teachers' reality shock, identified supports that help them manage their transition, and the findings on the developmental stages of concern of new teachers are discussed.

Veenman (1984) first coined the term "reality shock" after his research studies conducted in the sixties, seventies, and early eighties. He defined the term as "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training as a result of the confrontation with the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" (p. 143). From his research he was able to conclude specific factors that contribute to new teachers' perceived reality shock. In regards to this study, the researcher wanted to determine if these same problems were identified by new teachers in the present as the factors contributing most to their reality shock. A comparison of the factors that new teachers identified that contributes most to their reality shock is reported in Table 5.1. Veenman (1984) reported that new teachers in his study ranked "having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials" as the second to the last factor contributing new teachers' reality shock. Interestingly, the new teachers in this study reported this factor as part of their top three factors. In the Veenman (1984) study, "motivating students" was ranked high among the participants, but the new teachers in this study ranked that as their last factor.

Table 5.1

Top Ranked Factors Contributing to New Teachers' Reality Shock

Current Study	Veenman (1984) Study
1. supporting students with diverse needs	1. managing classroom discipline

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials | 2. motivating students |
| 3. managing classroom discipline | 3. supporting students with diverse needs |
| 4. addressing problems of individual students | 4. assessing student work |
| 5. communicating with parents | 5. communicating with parents |
| 6. creating lesson plans | 6. creating lesson plans |
| 7. assessing student work | 7. having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials |
| 8. motivating students | 8. addressing problems of individual students |
-

The rankings of this study help determine that factors involving individual students are top elements contributing to new teachers' reality shock. Although all of the listed factors may still contribute to their stress, the factors that contribute the most to their stress tend to focus more on meeting the needs of their individual students. The top four factors identified in this study align with teachers' pressure to provide targeted instruction to a group of diverse students. A challenge all teachers have is having the appropriate resources and class structure in order to address the needs of individual students. Since Veenman's study (1984), schools have made major advancements with their inclusive practices, including providing supports for individual

students in their classroom rather than being pulled out of their general learning environment. Today's push for more inclusive practices in education adds to the differences of the top reported reality shock factors as reported in this study versus Veenman's study.

In spite of the "reality shock" new teachers experience, the participants also mentioned the supports that have helped them manage their transition into the teaching profession. The researcher used this study as an opportunity to note the impact different teacher education program supports and K-12 school supports have on new teachers. The findings from this study suggest that there are a few supports that unanimously were chosen as having a large impact. For example, their student teaching experience and mentors were ranked high among the impact data. Professional development sessions and induction programs have lesser favored scores on the impact data. New teachers also identified any other support that has helped them manage their transition into the teaching profession. Most notably, new teachers also referenced the support they receive from their colleagues, beyond their formal mentor, as the driving force of their support. A closer look at the findings of new teachers' level of concern as it relates to Fuller and Bown's (1975) stages of concern theory is also discussed.

Theoretical implications. Much research has evolved around the development of new teachers. This researcher paid careful consideration to the work of Fuller and Bown (1975) on the stages of concern theory, which summarized the developmental patterns of concern that pre-service and beginning teachers move through in their career. The concerns theory proposes three developmental stages: concern for self, concern for teaching tasks, and impact stage. Fuller and Bown concluded that the three stages of concerns followed an ordered pattern that advances through the stages by addressing and resolving the problems at each stage before moving on to the next stage. (Watzke, 2007). Teachers begin their career focused on concerns about

themselves, such as personal success, and only later in their career did they progress to concerns for student learning (Burns & Danyluk, 2017).

In more recent studies, researchers have shared updated findings that suggest new teachers are in fact concerned about matters beyond themselves even in their first years of teaching. Conway & Clark (2003) conducted a study to extend Fuller and Bown's concern-based model and argued that "the patterns of concerns moves not only outward as suggested, but also inward with heightened reflexivity and self-regulation as Interns progress" (p. 475). Conway & Clark, (2003) stated,

"We would like to advance the hypothesis that teacher concerns are likely to be cyclic over the first few years of teaching. Thus, it is likely that novice teachers cycle through a pattern, similar to that depicted in this study, each year in the early years of teaching, with similar concerns emerging and then dissolving in cyclic fashion over a few years" (p. 478).

Mok (2005) and Watzke (2007) also concluded that Fuller's model is broad in its frame and that it is not surprising that task and impact concerns which "are highly associated with the job of teaching, naturally are of concern in most stages of teachers' careers" (Mok, 2005, p. 56).

Overall, the "impact-student" questions show higher percentages of concern than the "self- survival" and "teaching-task" stage concern questions. Findings from this study show a more cyclical pattern rather than a linear pattern of development based on the responses from new teachers. The information from this study determined that new teachers are not solely in one developmental stage (self-survival) stage upon entering the profession, which differs from the findings of Fuller and Bown (1975). Rather they are able to have concerns beyond areas of the

self. The data suggests that new teachers have and are able to have concerns in all three of the areas of self, task, and impact during their first years of teaching.

The results of this study concur with the more recent studies (Conway & Clark, 2003; Mok, 2005; and Watzke, 2007) appending the research that new teachers' issues of "survival" are also associated with how they affect student learning and student impact. The data from this study confirms that new teachers' developmental concern stages occur more in a cyclical pattern than a linear approach. The results show that participants reported higher areas of concern in the areas of impact than of the teaching and self phases. Also, the data suggests that there are specific areas in all three stages that new teachers reported as having "concern" for. Therefore, this study corroborates the findings from Conway & Clark (2003); Mok (2005); and Watzke (2007). This data concludes that beginning teachers are also concerned about tasks of teaching and their impact on students which Fuller believed to happen later in teachers' development. Rather than a more linear development, new teachers can move in and out through stages of concern regardless of their years of experience. The researcher agrees with Mok (2005), who suggests that new teachers' concerns will be of varying degrees of seriousness, and varying degrees of importance on values, in different teaching life stages.

Limitations. Despite the authentic data garnered about new teachers' experiences, the sample size and lack of diversity among the participants were two limitations to this study. In regards to the sample size, yielding a larger population would give more data to report on the identified factors that contribute to new teachers' reality shock and their developmental stage of concern. More participants in the study could provide further evidence to support the findings of this study and could also uncover further phenomenological themes that would provide helpful

insight to the lives of new teachers. This information would help to provide targeted support to new teachers.

In addition, the demographics of the participants of this study also are a limitation to the study. When considering the experiences of new teachers, it is helpful to hear from a variety of perspectives. In regards to the race of the participants, there were very few people of color who completed the survey. This limited the understanding of the experiences of teachers of color in regards to their reality shock, helpful supports and their stage of concern may very well be different from the responses from the white participant majority. Also, a significant amount of teachers who participated in the study teach in a suburban school context. Eight participants taught in an urban school context, and two participants taught in a rural school setting. It would be beneficial and provide more robust data if more teachers in urban and rural schools are included, to determine if there are differences in contributing factors to their reality shock and levels of concern when teaching in these school settings.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study helped to uncover certain experiences of new teachers and ways to target these areas by providing additional support during teacher education programs, student teaching experiences and ongoing support in their K-12 school settings. Key themes that are important for educators who are working with pre-service and in-service teachers transitioning into the profession include: working with school personnel, teacher wellness, student impact, and the power of relationships.

As mentioned by participants, learning how to manage support staff or working with other school personnel to support a student can have its challenges. Teacher education programs

can look to provide additional training on working collaboratively with a team with special attention on how to manage another adult's work. Perhaps during student teacher requirements, student teachers could interview staff members who have to manage or work with school personnel to gather tips to use when they enter the profession. In addition, paying particular attention to the wellness of individuals has become more apparent in today's society. The same focus should include one of our most valuable assets, our teachers. Teacher education programs and K-12 supports should continue to promote teacher wellness and provide wellness opportunities and resources to address the stress level of teachers. Addressing their well-being will help them balance their school/life balance which participants reported was a major contributor to their reality shock.

The results of this study are also helpful to know the starting point for new teachers' developmental stages of concern. It can be inferred from the findings that the knowledge and experience new teachers are experiencing in their teacher education programs and student teaching experiences are allowing them to enter the teaching profession with a focus on student impact (though this would have to be confirmed through additional study of their teacher preparation programs). New teachers in this study reported that they are not solely focused on tasks that involve self-survival, but show concern for the impact they are having on their students. This is important information for K-12 administrators who plan induction programs and professional development sessions for new teachers. As determined in the findings from this study, although new teachers show levels of concern for all areas, teachers with 0-1 years of experience did report higher percentages of concern for self-related tasks than did teachers with 1-2 and 2-3 years of experience. In order to best support our brand new teachers, particular attention should also help focus on the areas of their self-worth ("feeling more adequate as a

teacher” and “being accepted and respected by professional persons”) and their classroom management skills (“maintaining the appropriate degree of class control”) based on the responses to the (TCQ) self questions. After new teacher’s very first year, more of the focus for professional development sessions can shift to include less self survival areas and more towards the areas of task and impact. The focus of these sessions should include tasks involving student impact such as: meeting the needs of different kinds of students, detecting student learning problems, engaging students in learning, guiding students towards intellectual and emotional growth, and determining if each student is getting what he/she needs to support growth.

Lastly, conclusive knowledge uncovered from this study reiterates the importance and power of relationships (Richards et al, 2013), but especially for new teachers. In every area, new teachers highlighted the importance of their professional relationships, be it with their mentor, other colleagues and fellow new teachers, in supporting their transition from pre-service to in-service teaching roles. Teacher education programs and K-12 schools, then, can support new teachers effectively by continually providing opportunities and supports (e.g., common planning time) to build and foster relationships among their staff. Relationships will not only help improve the school climate and positively influence the likelihood of new teachers staying in the profession; they will also be the motivation of new teachers to strive for excellence as they seek to positively impact their students’ emotional and academic path to success.

Recommendations for Future Research

Results from this study yielded helpful information to better understand the experiences of new teachers. Recommendations for future research could include a longer study that would gauge new teachers’ levels of concern and factors contributing to their reality shock. An analysis

of three different years, would give insight to any patterns that may occur from the start to the end of their novice teaching years. Also, conducting this study in different pockets of the country that would target different school settings would be helpful. Conducting this study in areas that also include responses from more urban school teachers and rural school teachers is needed. In summary, future considerations for research should include an extension to the time frame of the study and administer this study with new teachers in diverse school contexts.

Appendix A: Survey Questions



Survey

Thank you for participating in my study! Please look over the procedures and terms of consent before proceeding.

[Qualtrics Markle Consent Form.pdf](#)

- Yes, I consent
 - No, I do not consent
-

Please complete the following questions:

Q1. How would you identify yourself?

- African American/Black
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - Asian Pacific Islander
 - Caucasian
 - Hispanic/Latinx
 - Prefer not to say
-

Q2. What pronouns do you use to describe yourself?

- he/him
 she/her
 they/them
 prefer not to say
-

Q3. Please state your highest academic qualification?

- Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree
-

Q4. What best describes your student teaching experience?

- Traditional (12 weeks)
 Professional Development School (1 year)
 Teacher Residency (1 year)
 Other
-

Q5. Which Level I Teaching Certifications do you currently hold? Click all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art, Music, Technology, Physical Education, Health, or Library Science K-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics 7-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 7-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Specialist PreK-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign/World Languages K-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Any Science 7-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 7-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies 7-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 4-8 ELA | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education PK-8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 4-8 Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education 7-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 4-8 Science | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades 4-8 Social Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grades PreKindergarten-4 | |
-

Q6. How many years of full time (ie. LTS or TPE) teaching experience do you have?

- 0-1 years
 - 1-2 years
 - 2-3 years
 - Other
-

Q7. What best describes your current school setting?

- Urban
 - Suburban
 - Rural
-

Q8. What type of school do you currently teach in?

- Public
 - Private
 - Charter
-

Q9. What best describes the school level of where you teach?

- Preschool
 - Elementary
 - Middle School/Junior High School
 - High School
-

Q10. What is the average number of students you teach per class?

- less than 10
 - between 11-20
 - between 21-30
 - More than 30
-

Q11. Reality shock is defined as "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training as a result of the confrontation with the harsh reality of everyday classroom life" (Veenman, 1984). Rank in order the areas that have significantly contributed to your "reality shock" upon entering the teaching profession. Move the text box to rank the options.

- communicating with parents
- supporting students with diverse needs
- assessing students' work
- having insufficient or inadequate teaching materials
- creating lesson plans
- addressing problems of individual students
- managing classroom discipline
- motivating students

Q12. What other areas not listed that may have contributed to your "reality shock?"

Q13. To what level did the following help manage or support you during your transition to teaching:

	No Impact	Small Impact	Moderate Impact	Large Impact	N/A
Undergraduate Education Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student Teaching Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Induction Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	No Impact	Small Impact	Moderate Impact	Large Impact	N/A
Administration Support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Development Sessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14. Are there any other supports not listed that helped manage your transition to teaching?

Q15. I consider you to be "concerned" about a thing if you think about it frequently and would like to do something about it personally. You are not concerned about a thing simply because you think it is important--if it seldom crosses your mind, or you are satisfied with the current state of affairs, do not say you are concerned about it.

When I think about my teaching, how much am I concerned about the following:

	Not Concerned	A Little Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
Lack of instructional materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling under pressure too much of the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing well when a supervisor is present	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting the needs of different kinds of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too many non-instructional duties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diagnosing student learning problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling more adequate as a teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenging unmotivated students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not Concerned	A Little Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned
Being accepted and respected by professional persons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with too many students each day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guiding students towards intellectual growth and emotional growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whether each student is getting what he/she needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The routine and inflexibility of teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q16. At this point in your career, how likely are you to stay in the teaching profession?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Q17. Based on your response to question 16, what is influencing your decision?

Appendix B: Invitation Email

Dear Prospective Survey Participant,

My name is Meghan Markle. I am a current Educational Leadership Doctoral Student from Arcadia University. My Dissertation Committee Chair is Dr. Peggy Hickman, Director of Doctoral Programs and Associate Professor at Arcadia University (email: hickmanp@arcadia.edu).

As part of my Dissertation, I am conducting an anonymous, online survey about the perceived reality shock new teachers experience upon entering the profession and new teachers' level of concern for certain teaching tasks. The purpose of this survey is to gain knowledge of the opinions of teachers who have recently entered the teaching profession. You are receiving this email because you are currently teaching full time in a PreK-12 school setting. To participate in this study, you must be 18 years or older, hold a PA Level 1 Educator Certification, and have 0-3 years of teaching experiences. The survey is completely voluntary, anonymous and you are free to skip any question you choose not to answer.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

The results will be reported for the group of respondents as a whole, not on an individual basis. The survey is completely anonymous, meaning at no time can anyone link your name or email address with your responses. This research project has been approved by Arcadia University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), Study # [1550337-1].

If interested in participating in this research, please click on the following survey link and read the consent form, which outlines the risks and benefits to participation, prior to completing the survey:

Survey Link: https://arcadiau.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0VcDjklxubPBlz

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meghan Markle

Appendix C: Consent Form

Meghan Markle, Arcadia Doctoral Student

Dear Prospective Survey Participant

My name is Meghan Markle. I am a current Educational Leadership Doctoral Student from Arcadia University. My Dissertation Committee Chair is Dr. Peggy Hickman, Director of Doctoral Programs and Associate Professor at Arcadia University (email: hickmanp@arcadia.edu).

As part of my Dissertation, I am conducting an anonymous, online survey about the perceived reality shock new teachers experience upon entering the profession and new teachers' level of concern for certain teaching tasks. The purpose of this survey is to gain knowledge of the opinions of teachers who have recently entered the teaching profession. You are receiving this email because you are currently teaching full time in a PreK-12 school setting. To participate in this study, you must be 18 years or older, hold a PA Level 1 Educator Certification, and have 0-3 years of teaching experiences. The survey is completely voluntary, anonymous and you are free to skip any question you choose not to answer.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

The results will be reported for the group of respondents as a whole, not on an individual basis. The survey is completely anonymous, meaning at no time can anyone link your name or email address with your responses. This research project has been approved by Arcadia University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), Study # [1550337-1].

Purpose:

This study is designed to gain knowledge of the perspectives of teachers who have recently entered into the teaching profession. The goal of this study is to learn more about the perceived reality shock new teachers experience and new teacher's level of concern for specific job related tasks

Results:

The results of this study may be presented at professional meetings. It may be published in a professional journal. All data will remain anonymous. If you wish to see a copy of the final work, send a request to mmarkle@arcadia.edu.

Duration:

You will be filling out an anonymous self-administered survey over approximately the next 5-10 minutes. Once you finished with the survey, you will have no other responsibilities for the research that is being conducted.

Inclusion Criteria:

By consenting to participate in this survey, you are verifying that you are 18 years or older, hold a PA Level 1 Educator Certification, and have 0-3 years of teaching experiences. If these criteria do not apply to you, please close your browser and do not take the survey.

Study Procedures:

The procedure consists solely of the survey. Filling out the survey is the only responsibility of you as a participant, and once you have completed it, you are finished.

Protection of Subjects:

Names will not be collected in this study. The electronic survey does not store IP addresses nor any links that could identify the participants. The final published work will include only grouped results, and therefore it will not be possible to identify individual participants. Surveys and survey data will be collected and kept on a personal, password protected computer to which only the principal investigator has access.

Potential Risks or Discomforts:

It is expected that participation in this survey does not carry any risks other than those experienced in everyday life. However, you can choose to not participate in the survey, without any negative consequences, simply by closing this browser. You can also skip any questions in the survey that you do not want to answer. You will not be penalized in any way for leaving questions blank.

Compensation:

There is no financial compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to not participate, or to withdraw at any time. If you begin the survey then choose to withdraw, all responses to the survey questions up to that point will be saved.

Consent:

This study protocol was approved by the Arcadia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). To ensure that this research continues to protect your rights and minimize your risk the IRB reserves the right to examine and evaluate the data and research protocols involved in this project. If you wish additional information regarding your rights in this study you may contact the Office of Research Subject Protection at 267-620-4111. If you have additional questions or comments, please contact the principal investigator or faculty advisor:

Principal Investigator: Meghan Markle- mmarkle@arcadia.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Peggy Hickman- hickmanp@arcadia.edu

“I have read the consent form. By clicking “Next” at the bottom of the screen, I agree that I meet all the inclusion criteria, and I agree to have the information collected from the following survey to be used anonymously in this study. I understand that I can choose to not participate, to leave a question blank if I would rather not answer it, and that I can exit the survey at any time.”

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