ABSTRACT

HEFFNER, JUDITH. Influence of Spirituality, Family, and Self Efficacy on Teacher Effectiveness. (Under the direction of Dr. Lance D. Fusarelli.)

Spirituality, family influence, and teacher efficacy are the focal points of this research project. Research supports family influence as a powerful support in career selection and the positive effects spirituality has on a teacher’s personal and professional life. Self efficacy possessed by a teacher gives them an “I can do attitude.” They don’t let children fail. This mixed method research project surveyed National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists on measures of spirituality, family, and self efficacy. Seven participants were interviewed and were located in various regions across the United States, to attain richer data to support the quantitative data gained from the surveys. Previous to responding to the surveys, the participants were asked to answer questions about their background such as education, family, and teaching as a calling, ministry/missionary, and years of teaching. Of the ten questions asked on the spirituality survey, the lowest positive rating was 82.34% while the highest was 100%, 7 of 10 responses were above 96%. The survey on family yielded positive rating from 85.29% to 88.57%, while several respondents rated positively in the 70% range. Respondents rated themselves high in self efficacy at 88.24%. Participants believed their spirituality led them to know themselves; believe life is a positive experience; and feel good about the future. Those respondents to the family survey valued communication between family members, closeness with family members, and the family’s ability to resolve conflict. The self efficacy survey yielded rich data from the participants and elicited these responses about their belief in their ability to affect change, effectively dealing with unexpected events, able to handle whatever comes my way, and solution oriented.
Influence of Spirituality, Family, and Self Efficacy on Teacher Effectiveness

by
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Biography

Judith Maples Heffner was born in Jacksonville, North Carolina. She has an Associate of Arts from Sandhills Community College and an undergraduate degree from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in business and economics. Judith also holds a Masters of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Masters of School Administration, 18 graduate hours in Business and Marketing Education, and doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from North Carolina State University. She is a public school administrator in North Carolina. Her research interest include effective teachers, second language learners, teacher working conditions, literacy, school law, public school funding, and school leadership.
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that knew it all, and for inspiring me to do more than just get by. Your career selection and caring contributed to this moment. I share it with you.

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Chapter I
Introduction

The need to employ highly qualified and effective teachers is vital for K-12 education institutions to meet state standards as measured by end of grade/course scores. Researchers as well as human resource personnel seek to determine predictors that will assist them when evaluating a prospective teacher’s application. In their quest to develop optimal learning environments for students, school districts have steadily raised the bar for existing teachers and teacher candidates (Charlton & Kristsonis, 2009). For most school systems, the largest expenditure is personnel, and it is vital with the cost of human capital that systems invest wisely. Unlike the private sector, which has virtually no constraints in hiring throughout the calendar year and freedom to negotiate salary, educational administrators do the major portion of their hiring before the first day of school and offer a rate of pay that is predetermined by the prevailing pay scale of the state department of education. By applying valid predictor, Human Resources is better able to make a hire with assurance the employee will be effective earlier in his or her career. School systems and students will be at an advantage due to cost savings and improved academic growth.

This research project involved surveying and interviewing National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists from the United States to identify common characteristics, behaviors, and background information that has positioned them to be effective as judged by their professional peers. This inquiry sought to provide statistics to support the concept that specific background experiences position teachers to be effective earlier in their career than those not exposed to those experiences. This study examined teachers whose students have
successful academic achievement to determine there is an association between those teachers and their relationships with family, spirituality and teacher efficacy.

Dr. James Stronge’s Qualities of Effective Teacher framework design was selected because it reflects the teacher as a person, qualities they bring to teaching, such as disposition. National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists are judged on their skills as a teacher and as a person, a person that can effect change in their students. The 1994 National Teacher of the Year winner, Sandra McBrayer, spoke to the NEA on July 5, 1994 about her teaching experience and she said, “It is not about your kids and my kids. It’s about our kids. It’s not about waking up and saying you’re going to teach. It’s about waking up and saying, “I’m going to change the course of a life. I’m going to change the course of a city and a state and country. It’s about making a difference.” She is speaking as a person, who happens to be a teacher. Her vehicle to change is educating children. This is the kind of person Stronge speaks about in his framework and the kind of person the education profession selects to represent teachers. Mrs. McBrayer concluded her speech by saying, “I’m asking you to stand up for kids. And stand up for public education, because we have the power and we will make the difference.”

Statement of the Problem

School administrators spend a large quantity of time on recruitment activities, pre-interview tasks, and face-to-face interviews to identify the most effective teacher candidate. Hiring an experienced teacher can be different than hiring an effective teacher. Experienced teachers have years of service while data on effective teachers reflect student academic growth. A teacher’s influence is far reaching, so it is challenging to define what characteristics might show effectiveness and how those characteristics should be measured.
In addition, many variables outside the teacher’s control affect each of the potential measures of effectiveness (Strong, 2007). Effective teachers have skills beyond lesson planning, content knowledge, classroom management skills, verbal ability, college course work, and so forth that contribute to their ability to positively impact student achievement. They have skills that are rooted in their sense of spirituality, their family’s influence on their career choice, their skills for employment and relationships, and their sense of belonging, and their belief in themselves to impact student learning with all students regardless of background and ability.

The common pronouncement of a career in public service as a “calling” echoes with a decidedly spiritual cord (Houston & Cartwright, 2007). Since the founding and growth of America, our forefathers have served with a sense of calling. We as a culture have even referred to these workers as civil servants or public servants. Thus, the common pronouncement of public service as a calling echoes with a decidedly spiritual chord (2007, p. 89). Brewer (2003) found that public employees score higher on attitudinal items related to social trust, altruism, equality, tolerance, and humanitarianism. As Houston and Cartwright state, “feelings of empathy, moral conviction and other prosocial desires may have their genesis in the spiritual attitudes of individuals, inclining them to channel this awareness or need toward a meaningful career in public service” (2007, p. 89).

A warm and supportive relationship with one’s parents and, in some cases, one’s siblings facilitate a more secure sense of identity, higher levels of aspirations and expectations, increased career self-efficacy, and a greater sense of commitment to one’s career choice (Whiston & Keller, 2004).
Bandura (1977) identified teacher efficacy as a type of self-efficacy: the outcome of a cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of competence. These beliefs affect how much effort people expend, how long they will persist in the face of difficulties, how much resilience they have in dealing with failures, and how they experience stress in coping with demanding situations.

This research project confirms the impact spirituality, family support and teacher efficacy have on effective teachers. This research project included surveys of National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists in the areas of spirituality, family support, and teacher efficacy. The process will also include interviews with a select group of responders.

*Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this mixed method study is to describe how spirituality, family support, and teacher efficacy impact teachers who have been deemed effective by various groups of professional peers. It did so by exploring characteristics of an effective teacher, family influence, spirituality, and teacher efficacy by using a survey for each area of investigation and interviews with a select group of participants.

*Definition of Terms*

**Classroom management:** An ability to successfully manage student behavior, instructional planning, instruction, and materials to create an environment that maximizes student learning.

**Content knowledge:** Knowledge in a specific content area (English, Spanish, Reading, Chemistry, etc.).
**Disposition:** The usual attitude or mood of a person or animal, a tendency to act or think in a particular way.

**Effective:** producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect

**Effective teacher:** A teacher who produces a desired outcome related to student academic achievement.

**Family:** Any group of persons closely related, as parents, children, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins.

**Family Support:** Emotional, physical, and/or financial support of members of ones family.

**Formative assessment:** Assessments that are used by teachers to inform and adjust their instruction.

**High ability students:** Students that have an academic ability to work or succeed at a level above expected proficiency.

**High-risk students:** Students from families that are economically and socially disadvantaged, who are experiencing personal trauma, who do not speak English as a first language.

**High-stakes testing:** Testing that is used to measure students’ and teachers’ achievement in order to determine major educational decisions.

**National Teacher of the Year:** A teacher selected from each state, local districts and The Department of Defense to represent teachers as the most outstanding. The process has many layers of interviews and competence review before the final candidate is selected.

**Pedagogy:** The art or science of teaching, education and instructional methods.
Pre-service teachers: Teachers in training.

Self Efficacy: A belief in one’s ability to accomplish a task successfully.

Summative assessment: Assessments that are used to define the effectiveness of instruction after it is completed and labels the level at which the student or program is achieving.

Spirituality: The essential lens through which one sees the world; it’s the way an individual makes meaning and how he or she feels about universal questions of purpose, connection, and self-concept.

Teaching efficacy: The belief that teaching can make value-added changes to students’ academic and social development despite their various backgrounds.

National Teacher of the Year

The National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) Program began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The NTOY is chosen from among the State Teachers of the Year by a National Selection Committee representing the major national education organizations (ccsso.org). A candidate for National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) is a State Teacher of the Year who is an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher in any state-approved or accredited school, prekindergarten through grade twelve, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status. The National Teacher of the Year candidate should

- inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn
- have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues
- play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school
be poised, articulate, and possess the energy to withstand a taxing schedule (ccsso.org)

Each year the 50 states, five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity name a state teacher of the year. Within the states the selection processes vary, but each state conducts a rigorous selection procedure in validating the State Teacher of the Year’s abilities in the classroom and in communicating the recipient’s message to a broad audience (ccss.org). To achieve the level of state teacher of the year the candidates go through several layers of competition. School winner, district winner, regional winner and finally, state winner. School level teacher of the year are chosen from the faculty of the school within certain guidelines as outlined by the school district. The school level teacher of the year are then interviewed for the district teacher of the year. The district teacher of the year is then interviewed by a region within the state to then compete with regional winners for the state teacher of the year title.

At the national level each State Teacher of the Year submits a written application containing biographical and professional information, eight essays on topics ranging from personal teaching philosophy to the issues facing education, and letters of endorsement. A National Selection Committee, composed of representatives from fifteen national education organizations, meets in early December to choose four finalists from the nominations received and, following personal interviews with the finalists in Washington, D.C. in late February, selects the National Teacher of the Year. In April, the National Teacher of the Year is introduced to the nation by the President and honored in a series of events in Washington, DC. The National Selection Committee is represented by these esteemed organizations.
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
American Federation of Teacher (AFT)
Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
Association for Middle Level Education
ASCD
Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
National Education Association (NEA)
National PTA
National School Boards Association (NSBA)
National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

These organizations represent all the major, noncurricular based national associations representing the education profession (The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development represents all curricular areas). Because of the broad range of constituencies within these associations, their consensus view embodies what is current and needed in education. This consensus view truly makes their selection the nation’s Teacher of the Year (ccss.org).
Overview of Research Design

A mixed method design was utilized to determine the influence of spirituality, family, and teacher efficacy on National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. Phase I of the research will utilize 3 surveys; General Self Efficacy Survey (GSES), Family Behavior, and Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB). Phase II of the study will focus on interviews with selected teachers. During the survey section of the study, candidates were asked to participate in an interview. From those affirming their willingness to be interviewed, a cross section of candidates will be selected to include a fair representation of gender, ethnicity, age, education, and experience. The proposed interviews included face to face and through electronic means when distance prohibits an in person interview. The majority of questions for the interviews were derived from the responses on the surveys. Interviewing participants gave them the opportunity to expand on their responses in the survey while giving the study richer data.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it uncover characteristics and skills that have previously been unidentified as having an impact on teacher effectiveness. This mixed method study bare the importance of spirituality, family, and teacher efficacy on National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. Recognizing these characteristics as contributing to teacher effectiveness will allow school systems and colleges of education to recognize the importance of these skill sets and translate them into professional development for experienced teachers and also recognize them in teacher candidates.
Effective teachers have a mastery of skills required to affect student learning. Under *No Child Left Behind* (NCOTQ & U.S. DOE, 2004), the federal government requires states to set teaching standards for public schools and requires that teachers have mastery in their field. Hiring and retaining effective teachers is imperative to student success which translates into a more educated society. With the pool of teaching professionals coming of retirement age and the high stakes testing environment, it is more important than ever to hire beginning teachers who are equipped to be more effective in their teaching practices at an earlier point in their career. A better understanding of what constitutes teacher effectiveness has significant implications for decision making regarding the preparation, recruitment, compensation, in-service professional development, and evaluation of teachers (Strong, Ward, & Grant, 2011). The effective teacher is one who contributes to a student’s acquisition of knowledge and skill by using a number of techniques associated with the promotion of learning and who displays personal characteristics commonly associated with a positive learning environment (Jahangiri & Mucciolo, 2007).

Finally, this study is significant because the review of literature did not reveal any research on effective teachers based on the influence of spirituality, family influence and teacher efficacy. Yet, there are volumes of research on spirituality, career selection and family of origin, or teacher efficacy. This research will contribute an undiscovered concentration of characteristic that affect teacher effectiveness.

*Organization of the Study*

Chapter I laid out the various reasons and research that support the value in completing a study of this nature. Effective teachers are vital to the academic success of students in the K-12 setting. This is the point in the study design that the National Teacher of
the Year program is explained in detail as the winners and finalist are the basis of this study. Chapter II utilizes James Stronge’s framework of a Quality teacher. This chapter details the skills, talents, and knowledge a teacher must embody to maximize their students’ academic success. The literature review goes on to dissect the research on family influence in career selection and overall development as an adult, spirituality delves into what spirituality is and how people are influenced by it in their personal and professional lives. The concluding topic in Chapter II is teacher efficacy. The development of teacher efficacy is born of self efficacy. This section defines and evaluates the value of teacher-efficacy in the teaching of K-12 students. Chapter III outlines the importance and value of three surveys that have been selected to use when collecting data for the quantitative section of the study. In Chapter 4 the results of the surveys and interviews will be dissected and results discussed. Interviewing the participants gives the research a depth and breadth that cannot be found in data secured through the quantitative method. Chapter 5 will look forward to how the result may be utilized and what future research may be undertaken from this point forward.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This study investigates key components that position teachers to be more effective earlier in their career because of the influence of their family, teacher efficacy, and spirituality. First, characteristics of an effective teacher are organized in James Stronge’s Qualities of Effective Teachers Framework. After mapping out the effective teacher qualities the literature review focused on family influence, spirituality, and teacher efficacy.

Teacher Background

Verbal Ability

A discernible link exists between effective teachers’ vocabulary and verbal skills and student academic success, as well as teacher performance. Because communication skills are a part of verbal ability, teachers with better verbal abilities can more effectively convey ideas to students and communicate with them in a clear and compelling manner (Stronge, 2007). In order for teachers to provide the highest quality learning experiences for students, they must first understand and be able to communicate the subject matter (NCES, 1999). In 2009 the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance presented a paper titled “An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through Different Routes to Certification.” The study reveals that the most robust finding in the research literature is the effect of teacher verbal and cognitive ability on student achievement. Every study that has included a valid measure of teacher verbal or cognitive ability has found that it accounts for more variance in student achievement than any other measured characteristic of teachers (Ehrenberg & Brewer, 1994; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Greenwald, Hedges, & Lane, 1996; Kain & Singleton, 1998). Yet an analysis of SAT and ACT scores of the highest performing students,
top quintiles reveal that these students select the arts or sciences (26%) or mathematics/computer science (37%) more often than education (14%) for their major. “In addition, those who did not prepare to teach but became teachers were much more likely to have scored in the top quartile (35%) than those who prepared to teach and became teachers (14%)” (Ehrenberg & Brewer, 1994; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Greenwald, Hedges, & Lane, 1996; Kain & Singleton, 1998). In order for teachers to provide the highest quality learning experiences for students, they must first understand and be able to communicate the subject matter (NCES, 1999). When student academic achievement was compared to teacher characteristics, teacher cognitive ability had two times as much influence as focused training. Experience and content knowledge one half of focused learning and certification, masters degree and workshops attended had a lesser effect on student performance than experience and content knowledge.

Between 1964 and 2000 the number of students in the top of their graduating class that selected teaching as their career dropped from 20% to 10%. As selections of acceptable careers for women have increased, more of the top performing female high school students have chosen careers that were predominately filled by men in generations past. Women have more choices and they have not been selecting teaching. Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education (2008) reported that the U.S. teacher pipeline seems to discourage individuals with competitive academic skills from entering and remaining in the profession.

College students with high SAT and ACT scores are less likely to train to become teachers, less likely to take a teaching job, and less likely to stay in the classroom after a few years (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008). Many other countries recruit teachers from the top
of their college graduating class to enter teaching profession: Korea 5%, Finland 10%, and Singapore 30%. It is becoming apparent to nations with high expectations that they must empower teachers, support them, and expect rigorous instruction.

Janet S. Hyde and Marcia C. Linn did a study in 1988 titled, “Gender Differences in Verbal Ability: A Meta-Analysis.” Their study challenged the previous research on the gender differences in verbal ability. Previous research repeatedly stated that females have higher verbal ability compared to their male counterparts. Their research findings failed to confirm previous research, “Our meta-analysis provides strong evidence that the magnitude of the gender difference in verbal ability is currently so small that it can effectively be considered to be zero.” (p. 64) Hyde and Linn (1988) recommended the use of verbal tests for the selection of students for academic programs when selection tests are used. This point was made because the majority of teachers are female, especially at the elementary school level. Many of the studies done on verbal ability of teachers affecting student outcomes have derived data from the study Equality of Educational Opportunity (EEO) or the Coleman Report (1966). The EEO report addressed whether teacher characteristics, including verbal ability and race, influenced “synthetic gain scores” of students (mean test scores of upper grade students in a school minus mean test scores of lower grade students in a school). The study applied an econometric model allowing for the possibility that teacher characteristics in school are endogenously determined (Ehrenber & Brewer, 1994). Their research focused more on student outcomes relationship to teacher or a black teacher and the teachers’ verbal aptitude and ethnicity. They also had concerns that the study was completed during a time of rapid change in our society. Ehrenber and Brewer suggested that, before drawing any policy
conclusions about the importance of teacher skin color, per se, analyses should be replicated using more recent data.

Teachers’ verbal ability has been thought to predict students’ academic achievement ever since a relationship between these two variables was found in the classic *Equality of Educational Opportunity* study (Aloe & Becker, 2009). In this research paper the authors referenced the value of the research reported in the EEO study. Forty-four years have passed since this original data were reported and concluded by Ehrenber and Brewers’ study that teachers’ verbal ability is not as strongly correlated to school outcomes as has been suggested, nor is the evidence as extensive as might be inferred from prior reports. In other words, having teachers with high verbal ability alone will not likely make a meaningful difference in our classrooms.

*Educational Coursework*

Ever so slowly, the United States is taking a harder look at how its teacher preparation schools are improving the quality of the teachers they produce (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2013). K-12 education has not been the only sector of education that has been under the microscope; higher education institutions with schools of education have also been scrutinized by the government and test scores have become the measure of a successful public education program. Schools have had to evaluate and adapt their teacher preparation programs to meet the needs of the changing measures of teacher effectiveness. Research based and data driven decisions currently drive education reform. Actions and decisions should be research and data driven to provide scientific proof (National Council of Teacher Quality, 2004). Teacher preparation has traditionally included a series of courses focusing on child development, instructional and assessment techniques, and methods and materials
related to specific content areas; however, in recent years, teacher preparation programs and their usefulness to the teaching field have received considerable scrutiny (Stronge, 2007).

Government officials and private foundations have seen teacher education program requirements as a barrier to getting effective teachers into the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2000). One approach would replace university-based preparation with on-the-job training that focuses on the pragmatics of teaching, whereas another would expand professional training to prepare teachers for more adaptive, knowledge-based practice while simultaneously tackling the redesign of schools and teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Harris and Sass, (2010) “find scant evidence that the amount of undergraduate coursework in education effects future productivity, and our work and that of others does not find education majors are significantly more productive as teachers than non-educaiton majors. It seems worthwhile to rethink the structure of traditional preparation programs and continue experimentation with so called ‘alternative certification’ programs that facilitate the entry of non-education majors into teaching.”(p. 811) Their research found professional development did not have a positive effect on teacher production with the exception of math, but that there was a positive impact from having a teacher with an advanced degree. If professional development was not effective for teachers with education degrees, how would it be effective with content degreeed future teachers? Isn’t a fast track teaching program a form of professional development?

In fields ranging from mathematics and science to vocational education, reading, elementary, and early childhood education, researchers have found that teachers who have greater knowledge of teaching and learning are more highly rated and are more effective with students, especially at tasks requiring higher order thinking and problem solving (Hammond,
Learning that is grounded in the practice of teaching—such as that proxied by the capstone project, studying curricula, and oversight of student teaching—is associated positively with student achievement gains in the 1st year and content learning— as proxied by disciplinary coursework requirements—is associated positively with learning in the 2nd year (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2009). The mixed findings regarding the impact of teacher education and training underscore the importance of additional research.

Teacher Certification

Teacher education shifted in the 19th century from “normal” schools (which often served as a substitute for high school for those who wished to go into teaching) and less formal apprenticeship program, to college and university baccalaureate degree programs that required meeting a series of state-level standards for accreditation (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). President Bush advocated for all students to have a highly qualified teacher as a means to level the playing field for all children, based on the idea that U.S. schools were failing. The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) defined a “highly qualified teacher” as one who possessed full state certification; however, alternative certification routes have become more common, along with alternative recruitment and preparation programs (Stronge, 2007).

Traditional teacher preparation programs have been the primary source of teacher supply in most states. These programs are shaped by a combination of state regulations, the criteria of accreditation groups, and the choices made by individual programs and institutions (Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009).

The two national organizations primarily concerned with teacher certification are the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification and the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards.
Directors are responsible for granting teacher certificates and supervision of teacher education in the states (Mayor, 1956). The rapidly growing trend among the states in recent years toward vesting in the chief state education agency the authority to set requirements and to issue, reissue, and revoke certificates is now virtually nationwide (Gartner, Eaton, & Parker, 1977). Licensing typically requires prospective teachers to complete a standard set of college-level courses in pedagogy or in the subject area in which they wish to teach, and that they pass one or more standardized tests. Because of a tighter teacher labor market, many states now permit schools to employ nontraditionally-licensed teachers (Godhaber & Anthony, 2003).

In 1967 T. M. Stinnett wrote about teacher certification for the *Review of Educational Research*. In the article Stinnett wrote, The unexpectedly large teacher shortage which became evident with the opening of schools in the fall of 1966 doubtlessly adds new impetus to the perennial flurry of criticism leveled at certification requirements. The increase in shortages is attributed to the inroads on teacher supply caused by the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965, the manpower demands of the Viet Nam war, the increased appeal of graduate work, and the stiffer competition of industry for college graduates. He went on to write, “The pressure to adapt certification requirements for college graduates with substandard backgrounds of experience with some relevance to teaching will increase in intensity.” (p. 248) Forty-eight years have passed and we are still trying to figure out how to attain an ample supply of qualified teachers.

Because of the teacher shortage there has been an increase in alternative teacher preparation (ATP) that typically targets individuals with degrees who seek a fast-track route to full-time paid teaching employment (Boe, Shin, & Cook, 2007). Alternative entry to
teaching can be attained in several different ways. The foundation for such entry is that the candidate has an undergraduate degree in a specific content area (some states will have a minimum grade point average requirement). States require specific courses be taken and a teacher practicum completed under the direction of college, university, or program specifically designed to train those seeking a teaching license. In many states, holders of temporary and emergency credentials are primarily individuals who are fully qualified to teach but are entering from another state are re-entering teaching after a hiatus, are fully qualified in another field and teaching out-of-field (while becoming qualified or simply taking over classes for a year), or are mostly qualified in the field of employment but need to complete a test or a course (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001).

North Carolina is one of the leaders in National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers. Research findings are varied regarding the effectiveness of teachers with NBPTS certification. According to Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2007), teachers who are board certified are more effective than those who are not. There are two possible interpretations of this finding. One is that National Board is identifying the most effective teachers. The other is that the process itself (or possibly the recognition associated with certification) makes the teachers more effective than they otherwise would have been. In North Carolina teachers earn a 12% salary increase for earning a NCPTS certification and a 10% increase for completing a Masters degree.

An additional alternative route to teaching is Troops to Teachers. Their organizational goal is to get more men and minorities into the teaching workforce. Troops to Teachers started in 1992 as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 but was reauthorized and named “Troops to Teachers” in 1999. To qualify for the program the
ex-soldiers, retired or reserve, are required to have an undergraduate or advanced post secondary degree. With the military downsizing and a looming shortage of teachers, the partnership was deemed to be ideal. The government had a $29 million budget line allocation for the program, its largest allocation, the first year. Allocations stayed at approximately $15 million in the following years. Participants are required to obtain certification or licensure in at least one of the following areas: elementary, secondary, vocational, or technical education. They must teach in a school of high need for at least 3 years. Veterans in the program qualify for a $5,000.00 stipend to offset the cost of course work. They receive a $10,000 bonus for the years they teach in a school of high need. If a soldier accepts the $5,000.00 stipend, is being subtracted from the $10,000 bonus.

Demographics of teachers hired from Troops-to-Teachers contrast greatly to the existing teacher work force: 82% male, 22% African American/Non-Hispanic, 64% enlisted rank, 35% officer rank, 33% Army, and 26% Air Force. States with the largest concentration of military personnel are the states that employ the largest number of teacher candidates from the program. The federal government has a sister program called The Transition to Teaching program. The goal of both programs is to recruit mid-career professionals to fill teaching positions in high-need schools. Funding for The Transition to Teaching programs is primarily allocated to college and universities for alternative certification programs whereas the Troops-to-Teachers funding is allocated to states and school districts.

Maura Banta from the IBM Corporation reported that in 2006 IMB launched Transition to Teaching, a private initiative to address the K-12 STEM pipeline issues, by facilitating retiring IBMers’ to move into science and math education as a way to encourage young people to enter STEM careers. This is just part of the portfolio of education initiatives
aimed at bolstering early childhood education, strengthening middle school math skills, and designing an innovative grades 9-14 school model to confer both high school diplomas and a no-cost Associate’s degrees in Technology (U.S. House of Representatives, 2012).

Another program, Teach for America (TFA) is the result of a Princeton senior’s thesis. It is designed as a kind of peace corp for teaching. Its goal is to recruit a diverse group of high performing college graduates from national ranked colleges and universities to commit to teach, for at least 2 years, in content areas and school districts of high need. On their website, www.teachforamerica.org, seven attributes of their program graduates are listed: (a) Teachers of color - TFA 50%, Non-TFA 20%; (b) First year teachers that return for a 2nd year – TFA 90%, non-TFA teachers 86% and low income school teachers 83%; (c) a graduate student or professional; (d) TFA Alumni Teachers – Public Schools 48%, Public School Charter 42%, Private Schools 6%, and 3% other; (e) TFA corp members represent 850 colleges or universities; (f) 95% of Principals say TFA teacher make positive difference; (g) TFA is ranked in the top 1% of non-profits for fiscal transparency, efficiency, and reporting quality.

A large percentage of the 2014 corp came from low income backgrounds and 34% were the first in their family to graduate from college. The 2005 National Teacher of the Year was a TFA corp member. Washington, DC has been known for its utilization of Teach for America candidates. The Durham (NC) Public School system is in its final year of a 3 year contract with TFA, it decided not to renew its TFA contract at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. TFA teachers will be allowed to complete their 2-year obligation, according to Linda Darling-Hammond (1994),
It is clear from the evidence that TFA is bad policy and bad education. It is bad for the recruits because they are ill-prepared…. The schools don’t get the help they need, and more lasting solutions are not pursued…. It is bad for the children because they are often poorly taught…. Finally, TFA is bad for teaching. By clinging to faulty assumptions about what teachers need to know and by producing so many teaching failures, it undermines the profession’s efforts to raise standards and create accountability.

It should be noted that Dr. Darling-Hammond is not a proponent of alternative licensure programs.

On July 24, 2012 the 112th U.S. House of Representatives Congressional Sub Committee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing. The topic of the hearing was Education Reform: Discussing the Value of Alternative Teacher Certification Programs. Speakers at the hearing were advocating for alternative certification programs, accountability for all teacher certification programs, and continued funding. Cynthia G. Brown, Vice President for Education Policy, Center for American Progress Action Fund, advocated that teacher effectiveness is critical to the success of education reform efforts, and forward-thinking leaders should be focused on reforming teacher certification. Adding urgency is a growing consensus that the supply of new teachers has not met the demand, particularly for subject area shortages and hard-to-staff schools. Alternative certification programs have provided a promising strategy to create policies that ensure the programs are high-quality, innovative, and effective.
Content Knowledge

Strong content knowledge has consistently been identified as an essential element for strong teachers by those who study effective teaching. Subject-matter knowledge positively affects teaching performance; however, it is not sufficient in and of itself (Stronge, 2007). Subject-specific coursework in conjunction with pedagogical training is the most ideal combination. Teachers’ knowledge of their subject and how to make it accessible to others relies on an understanding of both the content and of the learning process. Teachers need to possess a rich, coherent conceptual map of a discipline; an understanding of how knowledge is developed and validated within different social contexts, and an understanding of how to communicate knowledge of that subject to others (National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education, 2007). In mathematics, more knowledgeable teachers were more likely to present problems in contexts that were familiar to the students and to link problems to what students already learned. Teachers who understood multiple representations of mathematics concepts were able to use these presentations to further students’ understanding. In contrast, teachers with less mathematics knowledge tended to focus on algorithms rather than on the underlying mathematics concepts. More knowledgeable teachers tended to approach students’ questions mathematically and solve problems collaboratively, rather than looking up correct answers in response to students’ questions. Similarly, in science, teachers with deeper content knowledge
were more likely than those with weaker knowledge to pose questions, suggest alternative explanations, and propose additional inquiries. (Horizon, 2008, p. 1)

A teacher’s content knowledge also influences the evaluation of the instructional material available to their instruction. Effective teachers were better able to discern instructional materials worth to the specific topic being taught (Horizon, 2008).

*Teaching Experience*

As expected, the evidence clearly shows that teachers with more experience are more effective in raising student achievement than those with less experience (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).

Teaching experience matters in teacher effectiveness and student achievement, at least to a certain point. Experienced teachers differ from rookie teachers in that they have attained expertise through real-life experiences, classroom practice, and time. These teachers typically have a greater repertoire of ways to monitor students and create flowing, meaningful lessons. Teachers who are both experienced and effective are experts who know the content and the students they teach, use efficient planning strategies, practice interactive decision making, and embody effective classroom management skills. These experienced and effective teachers are efficient—they can do more in less time than novice educators can. (Stronge, 2007, p. 11)
Experienced teachers are more likely to have acquired the skill and talent to improvise because of their varied experiences in the classroom. Novice teachers are more likely to stick to the plan because they lack the experience to make sudden deviations based on students’ immediate needs (Stronge, 2007). Schools with more beginning teachers tend to have lower student achievement (Betts, Rueben, & Danenber, 2000; Fetler, 1999; Goe, 2002), and schools with student performance in the lowest quartile have more inexperienced teachers than those schools with student performance in the highest quartile (Esch et al., 2005).

**Teachers of At-Risk Students**

By 1987, the buzzword *at-risk* was a commonplace adjective used by the academic community to mean any student who, for one or more reasons, was likely not only to experience failure in school but also to meet with failure in life (Nardini & Antes, 1991). Little is more tragic in American education than a student who hopes to learn and benefit from education taught by teachers who do not expect success and therefore do not impart curricula necessary for progress (Muller, 2001).

As for students at risk of failing, findings suggest that a higher percentage of teachers in schools with high percentages of minority and poor students have not performed as well on tests of verbal ability; consequently, some of these teachers took remedial courses in reading and writing themselves (Stronge, 2007). Improving teaching effectiveness is a hot topic for policymakers around the country these days. The gathering movement marks an important step forward in the ongoing effort to strengthen our nation’s schools. In many cases, however, these efforts start and stop with improving outdated, inadequate teacher evaluation systems. Such approaches fail to address a key problem: the most vulnerable
students are consistently and disproportionately saddled with the weakest teachers and seldom have access to the strong instruction they need and deserve (Almy & Tooley, 2012).

As many studies have found, the credentials of teachers in schools with disadvantaged students have not been as strong as their counterparts. The Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University (2007), found in their study, “Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects,” how teachers with differing qualifications are distributed among classrooms and schools matters. To the extent that the teachers with weaker credentials end up in classrooms with more educationally disadvantaged children, schools would tend to widen, rather than reduce, the already large achievement gaps associated with socioeconomic differences that students bring to the classroom (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007). Many studies report a positive effect on student performance when their teachers attended a college with above-average entrance requirements. This effect is most pronounced with high school students and lower-income students (McREL, 2012). For math, having a teacher with weak credentials has negative effects generally comparable in size to those associated with having poorly educated parents. For reading, the negative effects associated with having a teacher with poor credentials, though still harmful for achievement, are not as harmful as having poorly educated parents (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).

Dr. Julie Wilkins an assistant professor at Presbyterian College in South Carolina, directed a study titled, Good Teacher-Student Relationships: Perspective of Teachers in Urban High Schools (2014). She used data gathered from surveys and interviews of teachers from the Andover Public School District. The teachers were selected because they were identified via student surveys as the go to teacher for open communication and trust.
Andover Public School District is comprised of over 30,000 students, with 79% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The majority of the students were members of racial and ethnic minorities. For this state, Andover had the highest turnover rate of teachers.

This excerpt from an interview with a teacher about trying hard in class speaks to the research about the caring level of teachers from some of our neediest schools.

All teachers claimed to have good relationships with students who tried hard in class. The students with whom Mrs. Sabatino had the best relationships were those who developed original ideas or novel ways to present work, as well as a kid who’s a complete idiot but really tries hard in my class, I will have a great relationship with them because, you know, they’re trying. She also explained: If I see a child who’s not trying, then I’m not going to put myself out there either if I’ve been trying this whole time. For Ms. Sabatino the interactive nature of good teacher-student relationships was important. In situation where she felt that students were not contributing anything to the relationship, which to her meant not trying in class, she refused to put effort into the relationship, which meant not devoting any extra time to helping the student (Wilkins, 2014, p. 62).

Mrs. Stewart shared a similar view. She felt that her “investment” was wasted on students who did not make any effort in class themselves. She gave all students the first few
weeks into the new term “to prove themselves” by getting extra help from her. If they didn’t show any improvement, “I don’t even try, it’s not worth it—you don’t get the pay back.” Mrs. Stewart stated her belief that those students are missing an opportunity to have an “amazing social studies teacher,” as she describes herself as one of “the most creative teachers I’ve encountered.”

In general, students who are identified as being at risk of dropping out of high school may give school less effort. The students’ perceptions that teachers care may be especially important for these students because of the greater vulnerability of the students to negative teacher attitudes and poor academic performance. That teachers care and are trustworthy may provide the students an assurance that their investment in the relationship with teachers and in school will be supported with a commitment on the part of teachers to support success. (Muller, 2001, p. 44)

Students’ trying hard appears to be the gateway to teacher assistance in these two teachers’ classrooms. Yet, the research speaks to teachers believing in their ability to positively impact a student’s learning. It takes a special attitude to educate the students that are in the process of making a decision to drop out of school.
One of the characteristics of an effective teacher is one who cares, who puts in extra time to help students attain academic success. Caring about students has been identified as an important aspect of difference-making. Some teachers believe that their active caring make them difference-makers (Calabrese, Hummel, & Martin, 2007).

Another characteristic of a successful teacher of at-risk students is teacher efficacy, a belief that all students can learn (Haskins, Walden, & Ramey, 1983). Indeed, the researchers propose that the teachers’ choice of instructional techniques to use with low-group students is based on two general considerations. First, teachers provide low-ability students with more instruction, more drill, more positive reinforcement, and more corrective feedback because, as every study of intraclass ability grouping has shown, these students are less academically advanced and more prone to commit errors in their academic work. Second, teachers keep low-ability students together as a group in order to supervise them carefully and use high levels of control statements to offset these students’ tendency to be disruptive and off task. Studies have indicated that at-risk students benefit from a heterogeneous grouping. Researchers have even gone to the extent of ascertaining that teacher effectiveness is negatively impacted by the mismatch between teachers’ race and ethnicity and the increasingly diverse student population (Singh & Stoloff, 2008).

Teacher of High Ability Students

The research shows that teachers of high ability students are more effective when they have received at least 12 credits in coursework focused on this category of students. Effective teachers of gifted students are characterized as having in-depth subject-matter knowledge as well as in-depth knowledge of gifted education (Stronge, 2007). According to Garn and Jolly (2014), many of the high ability students suggested that teachers who were
most effective at motivating them at school were the ones who took the time to know their learning interests and goals. Rosemarin, (2009), in the majority of the subjects (teachers and students) believed that teachers of gifted students need special characteristics (high intelligence, high level of creativity, expertise in the material and in methods of search in databases, openness, ability to arouse curiosity, ability to speculate about the self-evident, acceptance of the different, warmth and patience).

One central principle of gifted education and of the concept of teaching differentiation in general, is the importance of providing learning opportunities that are challenging to students and appropriate for their level of cognitive development and learning readiness (Tomlinson, 2001). The implication is that such differentiated learning opportunities will promote both greater challenge and greater achievement among students because of the appropriate match to their learning needs. For gifted learners, this often involves the development of learning tasks that (a) incorporate advanced content, (b) present more complex demands, (c) require more in-depth investigation, or (d) include some combination of these strategies (VanTassel-Baska, 2002). In the study Teacher and Student Behaviors in High- and Low-Ability Groups (Haskins, Waldent, & Ramey, 1983) teachers were asked to rank the characteristics of high-ability students in priority order; teachers indicated that these students showed high interest in achievement, needed and wanted chances to do creative work, and completed work at a fast pace. Studies have indicated that high achieving students benefit from homogenous grouping.

Disposition

Studies suggest that instructional and management processes are key to teacher effectiveness, but many interview and survey responses about effective teaching emphasize
the teacher’s affective characteristics, or social and emotional behaviors, more than pedagogical practice (Stronge, 2007). Techniques of teaching can be handed down from teacher to teacher but are most effective when they are the product of one’s personal experiences and thinking. As other understandings are gained, techniques develop naturally (Nations, 1962). Very little recent research of effective teachers speaks to the disposition of the teacher; the personal skills and experiences the teacher brings to the profession. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) describe dispositions “the values and commitments” that define teacher performance. NCATE standards call for dispositions as teacher behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities that affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth (Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2010). The most recent NCATE definition is:

Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development. The two professional dispositions that NCATE expects institutions to assess are fairness and the belief that all students can learn. (p. 6)

Teachers’ dispositions directly impact their effectiveness as educators. Moreover, the values and principles that guide professional conduct and development (i.e., dispositions) are just as critical to effective teaching as skills and knowledge (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2011). As dispositions are often viewed as beliefs, personal values, and commitments, they
may be conceptualized as a moral compass and ethical strand that provide direction to teacher decision-making over time (Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2010). Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one’s subject, being efficient, having the correct competences, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge, and joy (Hargreaves, 1998).

Taking the time to listen to students’ problems or worries, giving advice or guidance to them, and showing warmth and love are all examples of emotional work in teaching. Thus, emotional work is clearly one of the ways caring is built in relationships between teachers and students (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Recently textbooks have been developed for courses (teacher education) aimed at preparing novice teachers to create classrooms and professional identities centered on caring relationships with children (Goldstein & Lake, 2000). Lynn was part of a study (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006) involving her teacher student relationship with a student named Reed. The Emotional Labour of Caring in Teaching study was conducted at an elementary school in Illinois. It was a cooperative relationship between two professors from Cyprus and Michigan State University. They followed Lynn for 2 years as they focused on her caring relationship with Reed. Reed was known throughout the school as a difficult/defiant young man. Lynn saw it as her responsibility to make a difference in Reed’s school experience.

I am not seeking for myself through my teaching, but rather for my students. Everything you do is for the good of the child.

While I do find teaching fun, exciting, rewarding, and
fulfilling, (oh my goodness, do I ever!! I love it!), that is secondary to why I teach. I teach because of how I perceive children and because I have a deep love for them. I teach because it is more like a calling to me, if you will, not simply a job or a career. There is far more to teaching than that, at least for me. Helping children meet their needs makes me feel good (Isenberg & Zembylas, 2006, p. 130)

There appears to be a positive impact on Laura’s self-esteem because of her caring for her students.

“I love it! I love biology! I love my teacher!” We hear this phrase being used on a regular basis by students and educators. Appropriate love in teaching might be defined as an intellectual love and a combination of love for humanity and friendship. A teacher’s disposition of love is an unconditional love involving feelings or dispositions of care, concern, and compassion. An interest in overall well-being of students is a characteristic of this love. Loving teachers delight in social and academic progress that students make and in successful learning that occurs (Smith, 2013). Teachers feel good when they see their students grow academically and emotionally. Though much of the literature centers on classroom environments, caring pedagogical relationships also benefit teachers (Goldstein & Lake, 2000).

Teacher enthusiasm, humor, and optimism are mediators between a teacher and student that create an emotionally positive classroom environment that sustains both the teacher and student (Shepherd, 2013).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2011) described
reflection as an integral part of everything a teacher does, but is critical to planning and implementing instruction. Accomplished teachers know that reflection is a recursive process that, ideally, occurs before, during, and after instruction; therefore, teachers purposefully build in time within each day to engage in reflective thinking or writing. Accomplished teachers reflect on ongoing assessments, observations, and curricular expectations as they make or adjust instructional plans. They reflect during daily lessons, considering the level of student engagement or performance, and adjust instruction accordingly. They reflect on how lessons affect student learning and strive to improve future lessons even when lessons go well. They reflect on their use of time, resources and instruction strategies, always looking for effective ways to refine and improve their own practice. They seek student input on the effectiveness of their teaching and reflect on ways they might enhance future learning engagements. Recognizing the power of reflection, they purposely plan for opportunities for students to self-reflect as well. (p. 57)

As reflective practitioners, educators embark on a holistic journey whereby they explore the depth and breadth of their experiences spanning the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual domains (Munro, 2005). When educators progress beyond
intellectualizing their vocation, which according to Palmer (1998) “distances self from the world and deforms our relationships with our subjects, or students, and ourselves” (p. 27), substantial advances are made in understanding and appreciating that which uniquely defines teaching and learning. Educators become cognizant of the interconnection between intellect, emotion, and spirit and how these factors are “interwoven in the human self and in education at its best” (Palmer, 1998, p. 4).

National teacher of the Year winners and finalist are selected because they are skilled teachers. Webster dictionary defines skilled as: Having acquired mastery of or skill is something (as a technique or trade). Synonyms for skilled are; accomplished, complete, consummate, educated, experienced, expert, great, master, practiced, proficient, versed, veteran, and virtuoso. Related words are; gifted, talented, effective, efficient, capable, competent, qualified, knowledgeable, schooled, well-rounded, and multitalented. These synonyms and related words to skilled are the virtues of an effective teacher as James Stronge has written Qualities of an Effective Teacher. Dr. Stronge list the positive qualities of teacher as a person,

- Assumes ownership for the classroom and students’ success
- Uses personal experiences to provide real-world examples in teaching
- Understands students’ feelings
- Admits mistakes and corrects them immediately
- Thinks about and reflects on practice
- Displays a sense of humor
- Dresses appropriately for the position
- Maintains confidential trust and respect
• Is structured, yet flexible and spontaneous
• Is responsive to situations and students’ needs
• Enjoys teaching and expects students to enjoy learning
• Finds the win-win solution in conflict situations
• Listens attentively to students questions, comments, an concerns
• Responds to students with respect, even in difficult situations
• Communicates high expectations consistently
• Conducts one-on-one conversations with students
• Treats students equally and fairly
• Engages in positive dialogue and interaction with students outside the classroom
• Invest time with single students or small groups of students outside the classroom
• Maintains a professional manner at all times
• Addresses students by name
• Speaks in an appropriate tone and volume
• Works actively with students
• Provides tutoring to students before and after school

Skilled teachers are multi-talented. They are people who bring skills and talents to the profession that are not measured by a Praxis test or other assessments that can be viewed on paper or a computer screen. Dr. Stronge’s framework speaks to the skill set brought by teachers to the classroom that are all about the person. He writes about the teacher as a person and their interactions with students at risk, gifted, disengaged, etc. His research and that of others he references in his book speaks to the value brought by a person of quality to the classroom and their work beyond the classroom while working with students. National
Teacher of the Year winners and finalists are expected to engage with students outside the classroom, beyond the school day. Investing time with single students or small groups of students outside the classroom is aligned with Dr. Stronge’s research, hence framework. National Teacher of the Year winners and finalist have the same characteristics that reflect a teacher’s disposition – that which is exuded from a person of high quality.

**Teacher Skill and Practices**

**Classroom Management**

There is widespread agreement among school personnel that classroom management is an essential part of their work particularly in light of the frequently expressed perception that children are becoming increasingly unruly and difficult to teach, especially in inner city schools (Stoughton, 2006). Although it may not be directly relevant to a particular academic content area, classroom management skills are critical to the process of educating students across all content areas. The expectations placed on teachers to manage a wide array of nonacademic behavioral needs in the classroom have important implications for both students and teachers (Alvarez, 2007).

Elements of effective classroom management include establishing routines and procedures to limit disruption and time taken away from teaching and learning, maintaining momentum and variety in instructional practices, and monitoring and responding to student activity (Stronge, 2007). Order is achieved through specific managerial strategies (e.g., establishing rules), while caring is demonstrated by nurturing, willingness to listen, rapport, and accessibility (Weinstein, 1998). The more students perceive their classroom settings as characterized by clear behavioral limits, the more challenged and competent they feel (Kunter, Baumert, & Koller, 2007). Teachers use a variety of activities to create a highly
organized and functioning classroom organization. Student buy in is believed to increase when … “students as a community of learners decided the guidelines for acceptable behaviors and consequences. Appropriate expected behaviors were modeled, taught, and re-taught along with visual reminders at the beginning and throughout the year” (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2012, p. 5). Questions about matters of discipline are certainly not limited to American teachers but are of concern for the international teaching community as well (Stoughton, 2006).

Tom is a teacher in a Dutch multicultural classroom that has been identified by his principal and students as a teacher who has created a positive working atmosphere in his classroom. Eleven other teachers along with Tom were selected for a study to identify “shared practical knowledge about classroom management strategies of teachers who were successful in creating a positive working atmosphere in their multicultural classrooms. The teachers talked more about strategies aimed at promoting student attention and engagement” (p. 453) than about rules and enforcement. However, Tom, the teacher who was most successful in creating a positive working atmosphere in his classroom, talks far more about how he tries to simulate student attention and engagement than the other teachers. This suggests that engaging curriculum and learning activities are effective as a proactive approach to preventing problems with discipline, which has positive consequences for creating and maintaining a positive working atmosphere in the classroom (Van Tartwijk, den Brok, Veldman, & Wubbles, 2009).

Effective classroom management contributes significantly to student learning and development. The findings of this study (Ritter & Hancock, 2007), exploring the relationship between certification sources, experience levels, and classroom management orientations of
classroom teachers, suggest that a sound teacher education background acquired through a traditional certification program combined with years of experience in the classroom is the best way to encourage teachers to reflect upon best practices related to classroom management. Specifically, the fact that graduates of traditional teacher education programs demonstrate less positive classroom management behaviors only after they have been in the classroom several years suggests that teacher educators may want to enhance the field experiences that are a part of most traditional teacher education programs (Ritter & Hancock, 2007).

**Qualities of Effective Teachers**

Effective teaching research shifted from exclusively studying teacher behaviors to include their effects on students. The goal has been to discover which teacher behaviors promote desirable student performance. What has emerged from the research is a rich and varied picture of effective teaching that includes teacher knowledge, pedagogical skills, and dispositions (Shulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2014). Harry and Rosemary Wong (2005) write about the three characteristics of an effective teacher: positive expectations for student success, extremely good classroom management, and know how to design lessons for student mastery. In order to initiate and implement a major paradigm shift from a traditional school to an effective learning community, the teachers should take the position of leaders who possess the following characteristics: creativity (since teaching is an adventurous activity), efficiency, flexibility, lifelong learners, sense of humor, responsible risk-takers, and strong interpersonal sense and skills (Rosemarin, 2009). The highly effective teacher demonstrates with-it-ness or the state of being on top of, tuned in to, aware of, and in complete control of three critical facets of classroom life: management and organization of the classroom,
engagement of students, and the management of time (McEwen, 2002). The law defines a highly qualified teacher as

[a person who] has obtained full State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in such State [and who has] not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provision basis. (NCLBA, 2001, s9101, Imig & Imig, 2006)

Displaying quality teaching behaviors in classroom management and organization, organizing instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential are all important components of an effective teacher. Teachers have a profound influence on the students under their tutelage. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers exhibit behaviors that will lead to student success (Stronge, 2007).

**Instructional Delivery**

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires all teachers to be “highly qualified.” Yet a recent study of teachers meeting the NCLB’s definition of highly qualified has found little to no relationship between teacher qualifications and instructional quality (McRel, 2012). Two important activities effective teachers engage in prior to the delivery of instruction are material preparation and time organization (Stronge, 2007). In the area of organizing instruction, key elements such as the objective, individual or group activities, and assessments were included in the daily lesson plan. The structure of the lesson delivery, the different leaning styles of students, and the critical concepts and skills students needed to
learn by the end of the lesson were considered when planning a lesson (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2012). Because a teacher cannot meet the instructional needs of their diversified student body with a single method of instruction, they must integrate various strategies throughout the instructional period.

In a recent research study, teachers utilized various instructional strategies when implementing instruction to challenge all learners, accommodate different learning styles, and ensure student success. These strategies included small-group instruction; cooperative grouping; activities that incorporate visual, tactile, and audio intelligences; think-pair-share; peer tutoring; manipulative; video clips; and choice on forms of assessments and projects (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2012). Best practices acknowledge the transformational nature of teaching and learning and equip educators with the tools to proactively and continuously adapt to change. Housed within this model are the following components: conducting needs analyses, encompassing academic-business partnerships and learner profiles, developing an effective feedback system and engaging in personal reflection (Munro, 2005). These domains are intended to support educators as they experience the continual change of the educational landscape.

**Monitoring Student Progress and Potential**

One of the basic roles of the teacher is a diagnostic role which comprises the need to identify the learner’s affective and cognitive capabilities, clarify the aim and objectives of instruction in concert with the student’s needs, and solve the student’s learning problems (Rosemarin, 2009). Constantly determining if a student understands the content and finding a way for a student to express understanding are behaviors effective teachers exhibit daily. It is imperative in the age of high stakes testing that teachers know the content strengths and
deficits students possess. This knowledge can only be gained developing strategies to consistently monitor student progress (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2012).

Effective teachers monitor student progress informally through such techniques as scanning and circulating around the room or simply talking to individuals or small groups of students about specific tasks or activities. These teachers make notes about difficulties they observe and spend time thinking about how they can better reach students. More formal monitoring of student progress includes teacher-made or standardized tests, projects, and writing assignments. Furthermore, assessment of student learning is not limited to just the individual; these approaches can be applied to a group of students as well. (Stronge, 2007, p. 91)

Formative assessment can be a valuable tool to support a teacher’s diagnostic role. The informal monitoring of student progress and adjusting the teaching – learning process is called formative assessment (FA). Feedback becomes formative when students are provided with scaffolded instruction or thoughtful questioning that serve as prompts for sustained and deeper discussion. This instructional approach closes the gap between their current level of understanding and the desired learning goal (Clark, 2011).

Additional means of formatively assessing students can be through questions, questions that require them to think deeply about the content, feedback without grading, student self-assessing, and formative use of summative assessments. Feedback, therefore, becomes formative when learners: (a) are engaged in a process which focuses on meta-
cognitive strategies that can be generalized to similar problems of varying degrees of
uniqueness; (b) are supported in their efforts to think about their own thinking; (c) understand
the relationship between their prior performance, their current understanding, and clearly
defined success criteria; and (d) are activated as owners of their own learning (Clark, 2011).

Essentially, formative assessment must be treated as a multi-faceted concept with
greater attention given to pragmatic challenges associated with particular techniques. In
doing so, teacher educators can improve the quality of their professional development
programs and foster a more balanced assessment framework in K-12 schools (Volante &

**Spirituality**

It appears from the literature that it is very difficult to agree upon a definition of
spirituality. There are varying opinions. Love and Talbot (1999) have synthesized a number
of definitions of spirituality taken from the literature of theology, social science, and other
helping fields (e.g., nursing, counseling, social work). Spirituality is an internal process of
seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity
development; the process of continually transcending one’s current locus of centricity (e.g.,
egocentricity); the development of a greater connectedness to self and others through
relationships and union with community; the process of deriving meaning, purpose, and
direction in one’s life; and involves the process of an increasing openness to exploring a
relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence or center of value that exists
beyond human existence and rational human knowing.

Miller (1999) has written about the essential motivation in the drive for a spiritual
way of being. Posing these questions: If there are such drives, when in the life span might
they “kick into gear?” Are we born with the spiritual instinct in a manner similar to Kant’s categorical imperative? Does a spiritual inclination of sorts reside in people from the beginning in a manner similar to the drive to actualize or individuate as discussed by theorists such as Maslow (1968) and Adler (1927)? Perhaps there is a developmental stage, such as that espoused in Jung’s midlife transition, where a spiritual instinct is awakened? Does one’s search for a spiritual way of being, religious understanding, moral improvement, and genuine connectedness ever end? Is this propensity the same for all people? Does this need or desire increase or perhaps decrease in the later years? What are the forms that these strivings take?

At the Summit on Spirituality of 1995 participants produced what was intended to be a normative definition of spirituality. According to the participants, spirituality is the animated force in life, represented by such images as breath, wind, vigor, and courage. Spirituality is the infusion and drawing out of spirit in one’s life. It is experienced as an active and passive process. Spirituality also is described as a capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. This spiritual tendency moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion. Spirituality includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a value system. Spiritual exist in your spiritual behavior, your lifestyle and interaction with others (Moore-Davis, 2007). “Without spiritual foundation there can be no society. Without spiritual practice there can be no society. Without spiritual practice confusion reigns.” (Albanese, 2001 p. 464) To Keen (1994), this spiritual orientation or journey manifests a striving to discover our higher selves and to explore the depths, to allow ourselves to be moved, animated, inspired, by that sacred “no-thing” that keeps us human…”[It is] the
impulse to go beyond the ego and to explore the heights and depths, to connect our individual life with something beyond the self, something more everlasting than the self” (p. 5). To be spiritual then, is to take energy of spirit and direct it to commitments and connections, to personal development, or to that which is perceived as the ultimate (Miller, 1999). It also brings a different perspective on life, a different set of values, and a different worldview, a process often described as self-transcendence or coming to know oneself as part of a larger whole that exists beyond the physical body and personal history (Bjorklund & Bee, 2008, p. 268).

Vocabulary used most often in writings on spirituality is seeking, journey, renewal, and awakening. Dillon, Wink, and Fay (2003) agree that for “spiritual seekers” individual autonomy takes precedence over external authority and the hold of tradition-centered religious doctrines. The point of spirituality is to grow closer to your higher power. This may be exhibited through prayer, good deeds, meditation, sacrifice, actions that demonstrate worship, a movement from human centeredness to awareness of others. Fromm (1999) defines five central existential needs of human beings; one of them is meaning. Many scholars recognize the human need to find meaning in their life, an answer to the questions “Why am I here?” and “What happens when I die?” As Fowler (1981) theorized humans have a quest for meaning. People that define themselves as spiritual speak of it as a way of living that is more than they could create alone, it is a relationship with a higher power. It is not obedience or an adherence to any one organization or idea but rather a journey to discover the meaning and direction for their individual life. It is moment to moment and day to day.
Fowler (1981) provided the initial theory that considers issues of faith development and meaning-making. Parks’ (2000) focused her attention to the depth and importance of how individuals make meaning as providing a wide view that embraces deep aspects of being and becoming. James Fowler (1981) had developed his stages of faith development based on Piaget’s four stages of cognitive development and Kohlberg’s six stage-like positions in the development of moral reasoning. Each stage is related and dependent on the previous. Cartwright (2001) proposed human development as a lifelong process characterized by both predictable patterns and individual variation in multiple domains.

Fowler (1981) characterizes a “universalizing faith” as one with many images— in particular the Christian image of the kingdom of God— made manifest in a particular person. He seems to suggest two fundamental tenets of this stage that individuals demonstrate (a) an utterly selfless courage void of personal concern for security, and (b) conscious membership in a universal community in which particularities are cherished as vessels of the universal (pp. 200-211). He claims Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are at Kohlberg’s sixth stage of faith and the first tenet. Thomas Merton, a Catholic monk, would be in second tenet because of the cloistered life he lead with minimal physical risk. The theories of Oser and Gmunder (1991) and Fowler (1981) are similar in that they propose stage-like changes in spiritual development from a lifespan perspective. These theories also share a focus on relationships, especially the relation between humanity and a Higher Power (Cartwright, 2001, p. 216).

In many of the writings on spirituality there are discussions about the developmental journey and/or a way of being. Love and Talbot (1999) have written extensively about the two individual pathways and their intersections. As a point of context, they also explain
three assumptions that underlie their concepts, the quest for spiritual development as an innate aspect of human development; that spiritual development and spirituality are interchangeable concepts, representing a process; and that openness is a prerequisite to spiritual development (Kiessling, 2010). Spirituality and adult education writer Elizabeth Tisdell states that if William James (1902-1982) were titling his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* today it would be *The Varieties of Spiritual Experience*.

*Spirituality at Work and School*

Many organizations prohibit the practice of religion at work. Religion is viewed as personal and does not always relate or transfer well to others. Appropriate etiquette calls for one to refrain from discussions of religion because it can be controversial causing a dissonance for people in the work place. Government employees are prohibited from religious practices at work to adhere to the separation of church and state governance. Spirituality, historically, has been rooted in religion. However, its current use in business and the workplace is most often not associated with any specific religious tradition (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002).

The epilogue of *The Superintendent as CEO Standards-Based Performance* (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2004) claims that the position of CEO superintendent is more than a vocation, it is a calling. Change guru Margaret Wheatley (2002) believes that the concept of vocation comes from a deep spiritual sense of self. The statement that one’s vocation is a calling expresses a spirit of service. Dr. Herman Smith, superintendent of the Bryan Texas Independent School District, represents most education CEOs in that he describes his job as a calling. He believes that spiritual guidance reminds him each day that his behaviors and daily decisions represent a larger purpose than himself or his job. Great superintendents are
spiritual leaders who strive to do the right things for the right purposes and realize that they must lose self in a greater cause. Wheatley (2002) says it best: “We can only develop a sense of purpose or vocation from believing in a power greater than our own” (p. 43). Thus, the superintendency is an exciting leadership position that not only challenges the intellect but offers a plethora of opportunities to make a positive difference in numerous lives. This statement represents a surprising twist as the text had not previously mentioned spirituality and its role in school leadership. Yet, this is not uncommon to hear from CEOs as they speak of their role in leading people in large and small organizations. By engaging in spiritual leadership, leaders can effectively facilitate (a) building shared values, (b) vision setting, (c) shared meaning, (d) enabling, (e) influence and power, (f) intuition, (g) service, and (h) transformation (Moore-Davis, 2007). Religious and spiritual identities are important parts of culture and hence identity development (Kiessling, 2010). Tisdell (2008) urges educators to acknowledge that an individual’s culture is relevant to her or his identity and to integrate this knowledge into learning environments.

To bring commonality to the States and Territories of Australia the Director of Staff Development and Research of the Anglican Church Grammar School of Brisbane, Anthony H. R. Chittenden, believes the incorporation of the National Goals for Schooling will help states “schooling provides a foundation for young Australians’ intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development” (MYCEETYA, 1999). According to Chittenden (2003), spirituality is about feeling a part of some community; it shapes ones actions and is directly related to individual values and ethical behavior. Teachers need to reflect the spirituality in themselves that they strive to develop in their students. To enable students to
participate in society and prepare them for life after school, there is clearly a link between citizenship and spirituality (Chittenden, 2003).

Spirituality in leadership was explicit throughout history. However, in the last century it became implicit, only recently to resurface as a viable complement to existing leadership theory (Moore-Davis, 2007). The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s school of education emphasizes that the focus of their education curriculum is social justice and servant leadership. Servant leaders (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, & Kakabadse, 2002) embody seven characteristics: they are servants first, articulators of goals (vision); inspirations of trust; knowledge in the art of listening; masters of positive feedback (accept a person, not necessarily a person’s effort or performance); foresighted (use intuitive sense to bridge information gaps to better foresee the unforeseeable); and proponents of personal development (the process of change starts in the servant, not out there). (p.169). To treat people in their entirety means understanding and responding to both their material and immaterial needs. These may be said to include spiritual needs. (Cunha, Rego, & D’Oliveira, 2006. p. 212)

Alexander Astin, Helen S. Astin, and Jennifer A. Lindholm (2011), educators at the University of California at Los Angeles conducted a spirituality study focused on college students. The study began in 2003 with an initial survey of 112,000 college freshman in America. A follow up of the initial survey included 14,000 students after their junior year of college. The study showed that college students who; (a) questioned their religious beliefs, (b) eschewed the rituals of organized religion, (c) embraced cornerstones of spirituality (asking existential questions, working to improve community, and showing empathy towards others), (d) students more spiritual typically performed better academically, had stronger
leaderships skills, more amiable, and generally more satisfied with college, (e) liberal arts majors were more likely to become spiritual, (f) math and science majors were less likely to become spiritual, (g) partying and the use of video games tended to inhibit spiritual growth, (h) community service, time for reflection, along with class assignments that encourage/support these activities encouraged spirituality.

Workplace spirituality resolves around a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and job satisfaction (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). For leaders, this behavior is evidenced when people effect change by exceeding demands, overcoming restraints, and seizing opportunities (Moore-Davis, 2007). Spiritual influence is dependent on the inner attitude. What is important is the spirit of offering put into the work. Emmons (1999) defined the religious and the spiritual as “that realm of life which is concerned with ultimate purpose and meaning in life, a set of principles and ethics to live by, commitment to God or a higher power, a recognition of the transcendent in everyday experience, a selfless focus, and a set of beliefs and practices that is designed to facilitate a relationship with transcendent” (p. 92). According to Piedmont (1997), religiousness concerns the social and organizational aspects of relations with the divine, whereas spiritual transcendence, his term for spirituality, is a “personal search for connection with a larger sacredness” (p. 989).

**Family Influence**

All of us are influenced by our family of origin. These are the people we have spent the most amount of time with since birth. They are our parents, foster parents, stepparents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. These are the people we are most
influenced by. We are connected by genes, time, and experience. Is it farfetched to believe we are influenced in our career decisions based on our family experience? No! Families operate as a system, as the system develops so do patterns of behavior and interaction. These relationships influence behavior, which includes career decisions.

Susan Whiston and Briana Keller (2004) have done extensive research on the influence of the family of origin on career selection. They have pulled together the research through various stages of career development; childhood, adolescence, college student, and adulthood. The data reflects children in the early years of elementary school are more influenced by their parents than those in the later years of elementary school. Young children are influenced by their parents’ occupation and/or their parents’ occupational expectations. There is some indication that children whose mothers are employed are likely to consider a greater number of occupations, including nontraditional occupations, than children whose mothers are not employed. A child raised in a home with a single parent is likely to have limited occupational aspirations in contrast to children raised in a two-parent family. Adolescents are given opportunities through school to start exploring a limited number of careers through Career Technical Education (CTE) programs which are offered to 6th-12th grade students. They may register for classes that include, but are not limited to, business, accounting, drafting, carpentry, computer programing, computer engineering, medical, and cosmetology. This is the point in a child’s life that they begin to include these experiences into their career development. Yet,

recent research indicates that family process variables may influence adolescents’ occupational aspirations and expectations to a greater extent than structural variables. Our
review indicates that higher occupational expectations are associated with a family environment that is supportive and where parents have high expectations for the adolescents. Family support and parental expectations also influence females’ career orientation. Parental support for a certain occupational area or career direction (e.g., entering the military) seems to have an influence, particularly on older adolescents’ interests and preliminary career direction. (p. 536)

College students are influenced by their family of origin in an array of career functions: career development and maturity, occupational exploration, vocational identity, assessment of career-related abilities, career commitment or decidedness, and occupational selection. The research indicates that families have less direct influence on college students’ career decisions-making self-efficacy and career indecisions (Whiston & Keller, 2004, p. 548). Regarding family dynamic variables, attachment, emotional support, autonomy support, encouragement, and boundaries seem to be more important than other dynamic variables such as psychological separation (Whiston & Keller, 2004). While looking at career development in adults it is obvious from the research that race and economics play an important role in research findings. It is noted that family demographics and family dynamics play crucial roles in career development. Like causation adults, adults of color attributed their career development to being influenced by relational and attitudinal variables such as role modeling, emotional support, autonomy support, and aspirations (p. 553). Adults of color emphasized the importance their parents put on education; this impacted their
occupational selection and attainment. These adults also recognize the importance of the financial support and career information their parents have shared with them.

Some family bonds are so closely aligned that children will seek the same professional degree/career as their parent(s).

The nature of the relationships and interactions established between parents and children constitute the foundation of the vocational exploring process. The quality of parent-child relationships, open communication, support offered and trust can influence exploring activities, vocational aspirations, future plan, the perception of barriers which may occur in choosing a career. The type of attachment developed by the child helps us understand its career evolution but also the efficiency of career-related decisions, because internalized working models influence the child’s openness to exploring, to learning experiences, through behaviors of approaching or avoiding them. (Paloua & Droboth, 2010, p. 3408)

It is much easier for students to become successful with family members that have completed college and have achieved success based on the sharing of experience by their family of origin. Sometimes students are influenced by their family because of a lack of college experience. It can be very exciting for a parent that has not completed a college degree to experience their own child attending college. For some students who have seen their parents struggle with finances and difficult jobs, this is their motivation to achieve a college degree and have a career, not a job. Parents of students that are first-time college students struggle to support
their child as they move through the process of career development. They don’t have the personal experience to pull from to offer the highest level of support for their college student. It is not that they don’t want to or see the importance, they just don’t have the prior knowledge to share. Tate, Caperton, Kaiser, Pruitt, White, and Hall (2015) interviewed 15 first-year college students as a research project to determine external influences, internal beliefs about, and career development process. One participant talked about his motivation to succeed,

> It’s like a drive and a push, to get further through college, or pick a better major, so you can be, if not the same, better than what our family came from, because they didn’t go to college and didn’t get a degree, so they’re living paycheck to paycheck. So you want to make it better and make them feel like they raised you the right way. (p. 301)

There can be a pressure that failing is not an option; the whole family is vested in your academic success. Another student talked about the pressure he feels to be the role model for their siblings.

> For me first, and for my little brother who’s a sophomore in high school now … I want him to see that we can do the same thing … we can both go to college and we can both be successful also. It’s not just for me. (p. 301)

First-generation college students are more aware of their opportunity and responsibility in attending college. They see themselves as role models and pioneers to their family of origin.

Our family of origin influences us in ways we are not aware of on a daily basis. According to Maslow (1954), the need to belong is fueled by a hunger for affectionate
relations with people in general and for a place in a group or family. The theory suggest that, in order for an individual to have a desire for knowledge and understanding, they must first fulfill their need to belong. There is no doubt that family of origin gives one a sense of belonging and foundation that supports making critical decisions about career selection.

**Self-Efficacy**

Efficacy is a future-oriented judgment that has to do with perceptions of competence rather than actual level of competence. This is an important distinction because people regularly overestimate or underestimate their actual abilities, and those estimations may have consequences for the courses of action they choose to pursue and the effort they exert in those pursuits (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Teacher efficacy is a teacher’s expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning (Ross & Bruce, 2007). According to social cognitive theory, teachers who do not expect to be successful with certain students are likely to put forth less effort in preparation and delivery of instruction and to give up easily at the first sign of difficulty, even if they actually know of strategies that could assist these students if applied. Self-efficacy beliefs can therefore become self-fulfilling prophesies, validating beliefs either of capability or of incapacity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2006).

Many studies have been conducted to measure teacher efficacy. The Rand Measure (TE – teacher efficacy) posed two questions to a group of teachers. Rand item #1 asked teachers, when it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment. Teachers that agreed with this statement believe they do not have the power to make a difference. The teacher sees a multitude of barriers to their influence on the academic success of the student. They see race, gender, economics, family function, commitment, support, special education
needs, motivation, community, and psychological issues as possible attributes that keep a
cchild from progressing in their class. The teacher sees them self as somewhat powerless with
these particular students. Item #2 asked teachers, if I really try hard, I can get through to even
the most difficult or unmotivated students. Teachers that agreed with this statement believed
in their ability to make a difference in the academic success of their students. They were
confident in their ability to teach all children, regardless of their background. These teachers
believe that factors under their control ultimately have greater impact on the results of
teaching than factors in the environment or in the student – factors beyond the influence of

Guskey designed an instrument to measure responsibility for student achievement as
perceived by the teacher. In general, teachers assume greater responsibility for positive
results than for negative results, [that is, there were more]. Teacher efficacy influences
behavior through (a) cognitive processes (especially goal setting), (b) motivational processes
(especially attributions for success and failure), (c) affective processes (especially control of
negative feelings), and (d) selection processes (Bandura, 1993). Teachers who believe that
they will be successful set higher goals for themselves and their students try harder to
achieve those goals, and persist through obstacles more than do teachers who are not sure
they will be successful (Bandura, 1989, Ross & Bruce, 2007 ). Teachers with a resilient sense
of efficacy act in a certain way, they set challenging goals for themselves and maintain strong
commitment to them, they are active cognitive processors of information, and they remain
highly efficient in their analytic thinking in complex decision situations. Such teachers
heighten their efforts in the face of failures or setbacks and they ascribe failure to insufficient
effort, which supports a success orientation. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy
after failures or setbacks. They approach potential stressors or threats with assurance that they can exercise some control over them.

For teachers who are unmotivated due to low personal efficacy, corrective efforts should be focused on teacher training and developing self-confidence. For teachers who experience low outcome efficacy, modification of conditions in which they work may be necessary (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Professional development is important for all teachers, but especially for beginning teachers and those who are seeing no or low growth in their students’ academic performance. Ross and Bruce (2007) consider the potential of professional development (PD) as a stimulus for enhancing teacher beliefs about their ability to bring about student learning. It is important to examine the various possibilities influencing low effectiveness: absences, lack of content knowledge, special needs of students, working environment, etc., before assuming it is due to low teacher efficacy. In a study conducted by Fiedman in 2000 beginning teachers pointed to criticisms from colleagues, isolation, work overload, lack of recognition or reward, and inappropriate initial teacher training as sources of stress and threats to efficacy. While teachers experienced a significant drop in efficacy. (Hoy & Spero, 2005, p. 346)

Research shows that teachers’ belief in their own abilities to make a difference in the lives of students is a contributing factor to school and student success (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). Beginning teachers may not get the support they need due to a lack of knowledge by administrators of the importance of support and guidance. Mentor teachers structure time to support beginning teachers as they have a roster of students they
are responsible for; however, beginning teachers can be fearful about asking for help or may not even realize that their instruction, classroom management, and planning needs support. Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy suggests that efficacy may be most malleable early in learning, thus the first years of teaching could be critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy (Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Recent initiatives to provide support can assist such development, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) can be an avenue of support for beginning teachers and teachers with low teacher efficacy. PLCs are structured to give teachers support and allow them the time to plan together for the growth and academic success of their collective group of students. In the PLC format, the school attempts to institutionalize effective group practices and teachers challenge each other to enhance teaching practice in an effort to improve student achievement (Momourquette & Head, 2014). Coaching has also become a popular means to assist teachers, both beginning and experienced, in developing their teaching effectiveness. The coaches are highly qualified and have a history of effective classroom instruction. Their job is to model and teach teachers the skills required to be an effective teacher. It is very important for the teacher to see them as a coach, not an administrator assessing their job skills; trust is a key to successful change. “Coaches are in classrooms with teachers and students. The work is job-embedded, which is how teachers best become skilled and effective” (Wong & Wong, 2008, p. 61).

Chapter Summary

This literature review begins by outlining Stronge’s Qualities of Effective Teachers framework. The framework is divided into two sections. Section 1 covers the qualities of a teacher’s background. The prerequisites of effective teaching section includes: verbal ability,
educational coursework, teacher certification, content knowledge, teaching experience, teacher of at-risk students, and teacher of high ability students. Teacher as a person characterizes various aspects of a disposition for teaching. Section 1 outlines all the effective skills and knowledge a person would need before taking over the helm of a classroom. Verbal ability and disposition would be two characteristics that would we acquired or possessed before starting the appropriate coursework to be an effective teacher.

Section 2 covers the skills and practices that would take place in a classroom once the students have arrived. These would include: classroom management, qualities of effective teachers, instructional delivery, and monitoring student progress and potential. These skills and practices are coordinated to effective each student each day. Effective teachers need to practice these skills each day, sometimes individually but mostly in coordination with multiple other skills and practices.

The framework defines the skills, practices and parameters of what an effective teacher knows and does each day in their classroom. Spirituality, family influence, and teacher efficacy are the focal points of the research. The research maintains family influence is a powerful influence in career selection. The research also supports the positive effect spirituality has on a personal and professional life. People that have a positive self-efficacy possess a can do attitude. Teacher efficacy is the belief that all students can learn and a teacher attitude that will not let a child fail.

The research supports the idea that a family, particularly the mother, influences their child’s career selection. It reflects and supports the idea that spirituality is a belief in a calling to something greater than oneself. And finally, teachers with a strong sense of teacher efficacy will not let their students be unsuccessful.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 3 of this dissertation describes the methodology selected to undertake this study. A mixed method approach involves integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses in a single study or program of enquiry (Creswell, 2003). The purpose of this form of research is that both qualitative and quantitative research, in combination, provide a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone (Bulsara, 2014). By utilizing a mixed method approach to data collection the research questions posed can be answered from a number of perspectives. It also ensures that any gaps in the data collected are minimized. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods lead to greater validity.

Even though a mixed method approach can be labor intense, the positives outweigh the negatives. Because it involves multiple types of data collection there are more opportunities to provide a greater depth and breadth of the perspectives informing the research questions. A single method of research would lead to certain deficiencies. A mixed method approach can help define more “nebulous” concepts (Bulsara, 2014) and it breaks through barriers such as language and trust.

Research Design

The best design for this study is an explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), which entails quantitative data collection followed by a collection of qualitative data. Reasoning for this method of inquiry includes: (a) qualitative research questions or hypotheses to address the research question or issue (b) information from the first phase can
be explored further in a second qualitative phase (c) qualitative data collection can be used to explore important quantitative results with a few participant and (d) follow up with qualitative research in the second phase can inform understanding and explain the quantitative results (Bulsara, 2014). Explanatory method of data collection is useful because statistics and surveys do not include the humanistic aspects of the data: why people act the way they do and make the choices they do. The data from a survey method is richer because of the rich detail the qualitative data brings to the study. Additional information can be uncovered by using the mixed method approach, thus initializing a new phase of quantitative data collection

Research Questions and Methodology

Research Questions

The following research question, and sub questions, will be explored:

1. How have National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists been influenced by a sense of spirituality, their family, and self efficacy?
   a. Have these aspects contributed to National Teacher of the Year winners and finalist effectiveness as a teacher?
   b. Which one of these aspects has been the largest contributor to National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists’ effectiveness as a teacher?
   c. How has spirituality, family, and self efficacy influenced National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists as a person?

Phase I quantitative data collection involved three surveys addressing spirituality, family influence, and self efficacy. “Explanatory research focuses on finding a clear answer for why something occurs or how specific variables are related to each other.” (Butin, 2010,
The data collection protocol for the mail/email component of this study is based on Dillman’s Total Design Method (TDM; Dillman, 2000). The TDM integrates a number of techniques to encourage survey response, specifically the use of multiple follow-up attempts to convey the importance of respondent participation.

Approximately 1 week before the survey mailing/emailing, the investigator sent an advance letter/email to the teachers in the sample. The letter/email included the following information: who is conducting the research, why the individual has been chosen to participate, the time commitment that will be involved in filling out the survey, and the purpose of the study. The investigator included her name, email address, and phone number in the event any participant had questions or concerns about the survey or the overall study. The introductory letter also included information about confidentiality and indicated that participation is voluntary. A week after emailing/mailin the introductory letter, the questionnaire packets with the survey (hardcopy and electronic were available) and any additional cover letter including a postage-paid return envelope was mailed/email out requesting return in 2 weeks. After the 2 week period passed an additional email with survey attached was mailed to the non-respondents. Once the final follow-up is complete, a request for participation in telephone interview was made with an email or phone call.

Phase II qualitative data collection encompassed teacher interviews from selected individuals who completed the three surveys. This was an opportunity to gather richer data that could be collected by using only one means of data assembly. Semi-structured interviews used questions that arose out of information collected from the three surveys. This type of questioning allowed the researcher to have a list of questions to keep the process on topic and yet provide just enough flexibility to “allow for the discovery of or elaboration
on information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the researcher” (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p. 291).

Data Collection

This mixed method study sought to survey all living and able National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. A National Teacher of the Year and finalists have been recognized every year since 1952. Since this group of teachers has been scrutinized via their professional data and various levels of interviews including, state district level, the state regional level, to the state level, and the national-level interview. Multiple national-level professional organizations have representatives on the final interview for the National Teacher of the Year interview team. National Teacher of the Year winners’ and finalists, names are available from the ccss.org website. The CCSS organization does not have much available contact information. Each state has an office at their department of public education, but not many were helpful in locating viable addresses to reach past winners and finalist. As expected, a certain percentage of the teachers had died or were not able to complete a survey, a certain percentage have retired from the profession, a certain percentage have moved out of the classroom while still being involved in education, and a certain percentage have left the teaching profession. Seven semi-structured interviews took place via phone while utilizing TapeACall app following the survey completion to further investigate some of the quantitative findings from the mailed or emailed electronic survey.

Teachers who indicate on the survey their willingness to be contacted for additional comments and questions were eligible for selection as part of the follow-up interviews. Teachers chosen for a follow-up interview were initially contacted via a consent email or phone call which asked them for a time to be interviewed. The investigator had over 66% of
the survey participants volunteer to be interviewed. Some of the survey participants completed the survey by utilizing the electronic version while other completed a paper copy they received through mail service. The data was collected with identifiers. Each participant was asked questions about themselves, such as name, location, gender, race, degree(s) earned, years of experience, and college attended. The participants were also asked to share the portfolio they prepared and submitted to the National Teacher of the Year interview committee. The two portfolios gave an insight to the accomplishments of the winners and finalists. It is a representation of their accomplishments through pictures and words of praise from professionals and family on how they are distinguish as successful teachers.

Participants

The National Teacher of the Year program announced its first winner in 1952. At this point in time 63 teachers have been named National Teacher of the Year while there have been 161 finalists selected during the same time period. Sixty-six percent have been female while 33.3% have been male, 6.3% have been exceptional education teacher, 17.7% English/language arts, 12.6% science, 3.1% music, 1.5% art, 22.2% elementary, 6.3% mathematics, 1.5% English as a Second Language, 11.1% social studies, 9.5% history, 1.5% vocational education, 1.5% humanities, 1.5% government, 1.5% International World Problems, and 1.5% speech. The 1952 winner was from California while winners have covered states from the Pacific to Atlantic Ocean; California – 7, Washington – 4, Connecticut – 3, Oregon – 3, North Carolina- 3, Maryland – 3, Virginia – 2, Ohio – 2, Minnesota – 4, South Carolina – 2, Florida – 2, New York – 2, Missouri – 2, Texas -2, Michigan -1, West Virginia -2, Tennessee – 1, Kentucky – 1, New Hampshire – 1, Colorado

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– 2, Arizona – 1, Oklahoma -2, Kansas – 1, Wisconsin – 1, Iowa- 2, Montana – 1, Illinois – 1, Rhode Island – 1, Alabama – 1, Vermont – 1, Georgia – 1, Arkansas – 1, and Washington, D.C. – 1. In the states, including North Carolina, within a manageable driving proximity for face to face interviews there are 15 National Teacher of the Year winners and 27 finalists. The states in close proximity are; North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Georgia, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Phone and Skype interviews will be possible for all 50 states.

Instrumentation

These three instruments were selected because of their reliability and validity to measure spirituality, family, and self-efficacy in National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. There are a total of 34 items in the combined surveys. Participants were offered a paper pencil or electronic copy to complete. Total estimated time for each survey is 4 to 10 minutes. There is some concern about the length of time a participant must commit to complete the survey. The letter asking for participants to complete the surveys emphasized the opportunity to depiction the quality people they are because of their spirituality, family, self efficacy and their determination to solve educational problems that arise with their students.

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) – is a general indicator of perceived well-being used for the assessment of individual and congregational spiritual well-being. The scale is composed of 20 items. Ten of the items assess Religious Well-Being (RBW) and the other 10 assess existential well-being (EWB). The SWB provides a subscale for Religious and Existential well-being as well as an overall measure of the perception of an individual’s spiritual quality of life. The Existential Well-Being subscale gives a self-assessment of an
individual’s sense of life purpose and overall life satisfaction. The Religious Well-Being subscale proves a self-assessment of an individual’s relationship with God. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) is currently available only in English and Spanish and is a paper-pencil instrument, taking about 10-15 minutes to complete (Ellison & Paloutzian, 2015). For research purposes the 10 questions that assess existential well-being were used for research purposes. Respondents rated each item on a 6-point scale: SA (strongly agree), MA (moderately agree), A (agree), D (disagree), MD (moderately disagree), and SD (strongly disagree).

Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS) consists of 10 items designed to measure family cohesion and adaptability. The characteristics of strong families as identified by various researchers; communication, encouragement of individuals, commitment to family, religious orientation, social connectedness, ability to adapt, expressing appreciation, clear roles, and time together (Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990, p.4). The Family Satisfaction Scale was developed by a team headed by David Olson. FSS has 10 items designed to measure family cohesion and adaptability. Respondents rate each item on 5-point scale: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (generally satisfied), 4 (very satisfied), and 5 (extremely).

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) is a ten-item scale, which has been translated by Mary Wegner from the original German version by Schwarzer and Jerusalem. “It assesses the strength of an individual’s belief in his or her own ability to respond to novel or difficult situations and to deal with any associated obstacles or setbacks. The survey has been utilized by professionals, health care, teachers, public servants and students around the world in an array of languages since its creation in 1997. Respondents rated each item on a 4-point scale: 1 (not at all true), 2 (hardly true), 3 (moderately true), and 4 (exactly true).
Research Validity and Reliability

Validity in mixed methods research is often impacted by representation and legitimation. Legitimation involves sample integration, inside-outside, weakness minimization, sequential, conversation, paradigmatic mixing, commensurability, multiple validities, and political and integration of methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Reliability in quantitative research involves: consistency (stability), accuracy, predictability, equivalence, replicability, concurrence, descriptive and casual potential. Reliability in qualitative research involves accuracy, fairness, dependability, comprehensiveness, respondent validation, “checkability”, empathy, uniqueness, explanatory and descriptive potential, and confirmability (p. 12).

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) has had several authors stated that this test has good face validity (Bufford, et al., 1991; D'Costa, 1995; Ellison, 1983; Schoenrade, 1995). Researchers found sufficient content validity regarding the items in the test. Ellison (1982) reported that the correlation between the subscales for the 20-item version of the scale was .32 (p< .001), the correlation between RWB and SWB is (r = .90) and between EWB and SWB is (r = .59). "Test-retest reliability coefficients obtained from 100 student volunteers at the University of Idaho were .93 (SWB), .96 (RWB), and .86 (EWB). Coefficient alphas were .89 (SWB), .87 (RWB), and .78 (EWB)" (Ellison, 1983, p. 333). These numbers showed that sufficiently high reliability and internal consistency (Bufford, et al., 1991, p. 57).

Family Satisfaction Scale alpha coefficient is .92 for the total scale, with high internal consistency for both subscales, cohesion (alpha = .85) and adaptability (alpha = .84. The internal consistency coefficient for the present sample ranged from .94 to .97. Family Satisfaction Scale is one part of the FACES, IV survey package. It is not necessary to use all.
parts of the package to derive valid data. Based on a sample of 2,465 family members, the
10 item family satisfaction scale has an alpha reliability of .92 and test re-test of .85. The
mean score for the scale is 37.5 and standard deviation of 8.5.

General Self-Efficacy Scale reliability in samples from 23 nations, Cronbach’s alpha
ranged from .76 to .90, with the majority in the .80s. The scale is unidimensional. Criterion-
related validity is documented in numerous correlation studies where positive coefficients
were found with favorable emotions, dispositional optimism, and work satisfaction.
Negative coefficients were found with depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, and health
complaints. In studies with cardiac patients, their recovery over a half-year time period could
be predicted by pre-surgery self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). In 2002 data was
released on the psychometric properties of this instrument utilizing 19,120 participants in 25
countries. The data was collected to measure whether it “corresponded to only one
dimension.” (Scholz, Dona, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002, p.242) The number of U. S.
participants, 1633, was second to German participation. Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) for
the United States was .87, the mean for each question ranged from 2.59 to 3.33. Japanese
had the highest coefficient at .91 while the Indians had the lowest at .75. The total sample
coefficient was .86 (Scholz, Dona, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002).

Subjectivity Statement

A mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of quantitative and qualitative
approaches (Creswell, 2003 p. 22). Researchers employing a mixed-methods design, select
those methods that best fit the study’s purposes and integrate the data at one or more stages
of analysis (Parylo, 2012). Researchers bring a specific lens to their study as they have
interacted in life by various means: family influence, work knowledge and relationships,
formal and informal education, world events, feelings, and religious and spiritual experiences and knowledge to name a few. All experiences color the lens which new events and information are too been seen. The researcher’s job is to keep their biases in check and to employ designs that bring more depth and breadth to the study. A brief statement of the researchers’ background is included to reflect transparency in the study.

I have a varied background that includes both education and business as I have Masters of Business and Master of Education Administration degrees. After a fulfilling career in the business community, I decided to seek a career in education. I moved from the classroom to school administration. The diversity of my background allows me to look at data analytically while transferring it into an action plan.

It is vital to hire teachers who are effective because of a combination of important traits. As a teacher, administrator, and mother, I have seen the results of students taught by a talented teacher. They just will not let a student leave their class without trying anything and everything to assist the student in reaching academic success. I believe it to be a combination of education, determination, and a calling of sorts. It is obvious from a teaching perspective that all students want to be successful.

**Limitations of the Study**

1. The researcher’s role as a teacher and administrator may have affected her ability to conduct and analyze the study objectively.

2. The study focuses on National Teachers of the Year winners and finalists and the overall sample size for the study is small. The ability to draw conclusions from tests of statistical significance is limited by the sample size. Sample size also constrains the number of
variables that can be examined simultaneously in this analysis. Data are examined here only in a univariate or bivariate context.

3. Since some teachers chose not to respond to the survey, there is the possibility that results may be biased. This bias will be present if respondents differ from non-respondents on the survey measures.

4. There is some concern that there were not more participants at this time. If there are approximately 175 National Teacher of the Year winners and finalist alive than the 35 winners and finalist that responded would make a 20% participation rate.

5. Self-reported data are subject to respondent errors in comprehension, recall, and misreporting of socially desirable behavior. People may convey themselves as they think a good teacher should be, rather than reporting their true personality characteristics. This is termed social desirability (Dillman, 2000). Additionally, respondents may lack motivation to provide accurate and complete responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM) can perform basic statistic functions such as descriptive statistics to determine the variance, frequency, etc. For more advanced feature, there are also functions for analytic statistics, bivariate statistics, predictions for numerical outcomes and prediction for identifying groups. To simplify data processing, SPSS allows the researcher to rearrange data. You can rename data and edit groups several times as required. In fact, there are only two types of data that are numbers and strings (text). After that, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences processes the data sequentially. After treatment, you can export the results you have achieved, i.e the tables or graphs in other
programs such as Microsoft Word (Clarity Content Manager, 2015). Kendall’s and Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient, measures the strength of the relationship between two variables, has been used and reported for each question on the survey with results reported in Chapter 4. Assume correlation is significant at the 0.01 level unless noted otherwise.

**Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data were collected via individual and small group sessions utilizing semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p.291) Interview questions were developed based on responses to the 3 surveys being used to collect quantitative data. Interview questions started with those easily answered and move to questions that require more thought. This type of timing allows the interviewee to become comfortable in the setting, with the questioning, and with the interviewer. Establishing rapport with participants prior to the interview is also important as this can also have a positive effect on the subsequent development of the interview (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p.292).

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology utilized in this study. The research methodology began with an introduction of the mixed method design followed by the research questions, instrumentation, participants, validity and reliability, subjectivity statement, and the final section outlining the limitations of the study. Chapters 4 and 5 will
present the outcome and discussion of the study. The study will conclude with recommendations for school leaders, teachers, and higher education staff and faculty.
Chapter 4

Findings

Teachers’ Background

This section documents the distribution of survey respondents according to the study’s major teacher background variables. Of the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) \((n=35)\) finalists, 30 (88.24%) were finalists and 4 (11.76%) were winners. As the collection of data began to unfold, it appeared that many of the respondents were baby boomers. There was a baby boom after World War II, 1946-1964. After 16 years of depression and war people that had put off having children no longer had a reason to do so. This coupled with younger women having babies made for a surge in population growth that had not been seen in past generations. There was a belief the economy was growing and life would be prosperous. Baby boomers today (2016) are between 52 and 70 years old. These baby boomers were also more likely to become first generation college students. Those participating in data collection via an interview were not as likely to be a baby boomer as at least 3 were in their 70’s or 80’s. Tom Brokaw referred to this age group as the greatest generation, those that came of age during the depression and World War II. He ascertains the greatest generation made sacrifices and persevered to help shape a stronger and more economically successful country.

Years of Teaching

One participant skipped this question. Teachers were asked to report their total years of teaching by responding to a scale grouping their years of service in increments of 5. See Figure 4.1 below:
Of the National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists, 10 (28.57%) reported working 31-35 years whereas 11 (31.43%) reported working more than 35 years. Of the National Teachers of the Year winners and finalists, 11 (29.03%) retired from teaching in a K-12 school and 3 (8.57%) left teaching to pursue other options in education. The second largest group, 5 (14.29%), left teaching to pursue other options outside education. Participants were given the opportunity to expand on their responses to each question in the comment box provided. Some of the responses follow:

- “During my career I taught 22 years in junior high school and 11 years in high school. I also taught in the Upward Bound Program at the University of Colorado for 23 summers.”
- “36 years in third and two years as a Supplemental Teacher.”
- “With a non-profit involved in students’ academic, social and ethical development.”
- “Ran and served on school board for 15 years.”
- “I taught for 43 years, retired in 2005.”
- “Museum Curator; historian at East H. S. Denver (oldest H. S. in Colorado).”
- “I taught (10 years) & was a school administrator for 21 years.”
“Retired – teaching higher ed.”

“I left the classroom to work for the Governor of our state at his invitation.”

“This does not include many years as a part-time instructor at El Paso Community College.”

“I am currently director of a National Writing Project site.”

**Geographical Distribution of Sample**

Nearly half of the teachers, 13 (38.24%), responded that they were from the Midwest, 7 (20.59%) reported being from the Northeast, and 7 (20.59%) reported that they were from the Southeast. Of others responding, 5 (14.71%) were from the Northwest and 3 (5.88%) from the Southwest. One respondent skipped this question. Figure 4.2 below illustrates the geographic distribution of the sample by region.

![Figure 4.2 Region](image)

- “NE, IA, IL, SD, HI, Philippines, Thailand”
- “I was runner up to the Minnesota Teacher of the Year in 1975. He was also a junior high school science teacher.”
- “SC and GA.”
- “Always Midwest.”
• “West Coast (SF) but live in AR, San Fran – Fayetteville, AR.”

• “I am a New Hampshire native born and raised. Born in Claremont, NH, moved to Manchester, NH in 6th grade and then on to Keene State College in Keene, NH. I have lived in Hillsboro, NH for the past 16 years.”

• “NC”

• “Born and raised in small rural Colo Lived in Denver 1961-Present.”

• “Ohio, New York, Utah, Alabama, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Taiwan, Poland, Iowa.”

• “Mostly Alaska.”

• “Denver!”

• “West-CA San Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Nepal, Syracuse, NY, NYC.”

• “I was born in Cody, WY and have lived most of my life in WY, although I studied violin in NYC and in Baltimore, MD. with famous violinist Berl Senofsky, this was during the tumultuous 60s and what I took back to WY was a deep and fundamental understanding and advocacy for human and civil rights lessons that have propelled my teaching in many ways.”

• “Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Mexico and Colorado (presently).”

• “Bloomington, IN home of Indiana University flagship campus.”

• “Northeast, Middle Atlantic, Great Plains, Great Lakes regions.”

• “Military brat – grew up in Japan until I was 4, then moved to Phoenix, AZ where I stayed through college. Then lived briefly in Florida, and moved to Oklahoma in 2009 and have been here ever since.”

• “Iowa”
“El Paso, TX”

“Pennsylvania and Maryland.”

“I was born in Canada, moved to San Diego when I was 7, Colorado at 11 and Washington state at 17.”

“ Mostly in central and western Massachusetts. Two years in Florida as a child.”

“Napa, California & Los Angeles, California.”

“I’ve lived in NC my entire life.”

College/University Preparation

When National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists were asked where they went to school, their responses were varied. State schools were attended by the majority 23 (65.71%), private 7 (20%), liberal arts 6 (17.14%), church affiliated 5 (14.29%), online 0 (0%), and the response to other was 8 (22.86%). Figure 4.3 below illustrates the types of schools attended by respondents in the sample.

![Figure 4.3 College](image)

Specific responses included:

- “Dominican University”
• “Columbia College, Columbia, SC – small Methodist college; BA History and English 1959.”
• “Church aff. – ungrad State – grad school.”
• “History/Degree Univ of Denver Journalism.”
• “HBCU”
• “I had a dual major in elementary and special education at the University of WY.”
• “University of New Mexico and Kent State University.”
• “My BA degree was at a private school. My MA was at a state school.

Only 2 (5.71%) reported a bachelor degree as the highest level of education. Those with masters’ degrees were the largest reporting group of 25 (71.43%), followed by 7 with doctoral degrees (20%), and 8 with special certifications (22.86%).

![Education Chart](image)

Figure 4.4 Education

Comments regarding highest level of education follow:

• “Honorary Doct. From Dominican.”
• “NBCT”
“Lifetime Clear Credential in fifth grade.”

“M. Ed. In Social Science Education; Univ. of GA, (1971 or 1972).”

“Halfway completed with my PhD in Education currently.”

“MA History/Eng Adams Sate College, CO.”

“I have about 50 hours of credit past my MA.”

“2 Post Doctoral Certifications.”

“3 Masters – Television Radio (MS), Asian Studies (MA), Educational Administration (MA).”

“PLUS 60 credit hours beyond that.”

“I did all but 5 credit hours of coursework for a doctorate.”


**Family Members’ Education and Career Status**

National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists were questioned about their family members’ education and career status. The data reflect that most respondents 23 (65.71%) did not have parents who were teachers; however, 4 (11.43%) responded “yes, both my parents were teachers.” Of the 31 respondents, 6 (17.41%) had a mother who was a teacher and 2 (5.71%) had a father who was a teacher. See Figure 4.5 below:
Six respondents had siblings who were teachers 6 (17.14%) and 29 (82.86%) did not. When asked about grandparents who were teachers, 29 (82.86%) did not have a grandparent who taught but 6 (17.14%) did have a grandparent employed as a teacher.

Of the 31 respondents, 26 (74.29%) of respondents’ mothers did not have a college degree while 9 (25.71%) did. The number of fathers with a college degree was 11 (31.43%), with 24 respondents reporting their father did not have a college degree (68.57%). Comments included:

*Parents*

- “Mom taught in a village in China.”
- “for a portion of his career as a physician – in medical school.”
- “My mother had an education degree but never worked.”
- “Mother in pre-school, father was college administrator and adjunct.”

*Mother*

- “Housewife; mother.”
- “Floral designer”

Figure 4.5 Teachers in Family
• “Retail”
• “AB – taught elm. Ed – 36 years.”
• “Immigrant from Ireland 8th grade education/PhD in life.”
• “BA from Oberlin College in Ohio.”
• “Early childhood education; pre-school teacher and early childhood interventionist.”
• “Did not finish high school. Later became an LPN.”

Father

• “Masters, management.”
• “Mechanic/Machinist/Truck Driver/State Plow Driver”
• “Bachelor’s – taught in a vocational school, printing.”
• “Poultry geneticist MS.”
• “MD & PHD – professor at Univ. of CA San Francisco & physician in private practice.”
• “Divinity Degree: BA +3 years of seminary. He was a pastor.”
• “Community Organizer, then college administrator.”
• “My dad has his Bachelors in Education, Masters in Divinity and Masters in Special Education.”

Sibling

• “BA, management”
• “BA – Commercial Broker”
• “Music BA and MA at UNC (Colorado) and music teacher for 30 years.”
• “Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio and the College of Charleston in South Carolina.”
• “Graduate of a state college and an art teacher.”
• “But both my brothers have their music education degrees. One is professional
musician and the other is a music pastor. They are both married to music teachers.”

Grandparents

• “Great-grandmother taught music in 1918 with a degree from Ohio U.”
• “Grandmother until married”
• “I Grandmother taught Greek/Latin in public high school.”
• “But I learned about longstanding goodness and kindness from them. Our family
lived with them for about 16 years.”
• “Grandmother stayed home, but both had college degrees. One grandfather was a
bank president and the other did wealth management.”

Major Influence in Becoming a Teacher

Teachers had the greatest influence on National Teacher of the Year winners and
finalists becoming teachers. Mothers and fathers had equal influence on teachers becoming
teachers. Grandparents had the least amount of influence on career selection of the
respondents. It is possible that grandparents, friends, and family members suggested a
different career selection.

As shown in Figure 4.6 below:
Sample responses included the following:

- “My Great Grandmother was a teacher.” Greatest influence in the respondents selecting teacher as their profession were; mothers 11 (37.93%), teachers 17 (58.62%), and fathers 11 (37.93%), friends 7 (24.14%), family member 7 (24.14%), and grandparents 4 (13.79%). Six participants did not respond to this question. This was a large number in comparison to all the skipped questions in the questionnaire.

An array of responses:

- “Dr. John T…, Adams State.”
- “I played school before I could talk. We all knew I was a teacher.”
- “Only options were nurse or teacher.”
- “None of the Above I knew I could be a better teacher than what I had.”
- “0”
- “My mother-in-law, who was a special education teacher at a junior high, encouraged me.”
- “My high school principal.”
- “No one thought I should be a teacher. Everyone discouraged me from teaching except a few friends.”
- “A principal at a school in Florida encouraged me to teach when I was working as a substitute teacher.”
- “I can’t pinpoint any one individual. I just had the leadership and nurturing skills.”
- “I don’t remember anyone encouraging me to do so.”
- “Teachers inspired me to be a teacher.”
● “My husband.”

● “No one encouraged me to be a teacher.”

● “None of the above – I determined to follow a career in education.”

Religious/Spiritual Orientation

Participants were asked to complete this sentence, I consider myself spiritual and practice this through religion (21 respondents, 63.64%), non-religious (6 respondents, 18.18%), religious (5 respondents, 15.15%), spiritual (5 respondents, 15.15%), and non-spiritual (2 respondents, 6.06%). See Figures 4.7 and 4.8 below.

Figure 4.7 Consider Myself

A negative (-.048) correlation exists between whether respondents “I consider myself …and I have a minister or missionary in my family by utilizing Kendall’s and Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.
Eleven respondents (31.43%) reported they had a minister or missionary in their family while 24 (68.57%) did not. Only 2 respondents skipped this question. Many comments were offered to enrich responses:

- “United Methodist all my life.”
- “I am a Buddhist (23 years) and attend a Zen meditation center.”
- “If I have to be labeled, then I am probably a secular humanist. I believe in the worth of all human beings and live my life through a lens of love and understanding, sorrow and happiness. I guess it is a psychological lens.”
- “I am a Christian.”
- “I belong to a denomination that encourages free thinking.”

Ministry

- “Uncle priest, cousin a priest, aunt a nun – although I love (d) them they did/do not influence my life.”
- “My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all ministers.”
• “My father-in-law is a worship pastor. My mother-in-law graduated and they both graduated from Southern Seminary.”

• “My husband is a pastor at a non-denominational evangelical Christian church, my dad was a pastor for 5 years in the middle of his teaching career, my father in law just retired from the ministry and my brother is a worship pastor. They are amazing men of God.”

• “Older brother with Billy Graham.”

A large portion of the participants 30 (85.71%) see teaching as a calling much like a minister is called to their profession whereas only 5 (14.29%) disagreed with this view. Figure 4.9 below illustrates the distribution of responses.

![Figure 4.9 Calling to Teach](image)

Figure 4.9 Calling to Teach

There were varying comments by the participants:

• “Yes and No Only option other than nurse available to women in the early 60s.”

• “I have always been drawn to the profession of teaching from the time I was in elementary school. School offered a safe place for me and teachers that cared about my well-being which was not the case at home. In many ways, school was an escape
I wanted to be that safety for so many students that need an advocate and a positive place to learn.”

• “There weren’t many choices for college grad. in the early 60’s – I was fortunate that I loved teaching!”

• “Never Planned on Teaching was inspired by MA work – stayed 1 more year to license.”

• “I have always attempted to be a positive influence in the lives of students.”

• “But I rarely refer to it as a “calling” because it often presents a challenge to professionalizing our work. Teaching isn’t mission work and we should be paid accordingly.”

• “Teachers came into my life during a time of crisis and shepherded me through abuse and anguish. I resolved to pay that forward for other young people.”

• “Teaching is a way of life for me, in or out of the classroom. I think its disposition as well as a calling.”

There is a significant correlation at the .001 level (.541) between a calling to teach and whether respondents would select teaching again utilizing Kendall’s and Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.

When asked if they would choose education if they had it to do over again the majority said teaching would be their career selection (33 respondents, 97.06% of the total) if given the option again and only 1 respondent (2.94%) would select another profession. One participant did not respond to this question and no comments were added by the participants. See Figure 4.10 below:
Participants were asked, would you like to share anything about your teaching career, spirituality, your family, and your self efficacy? Twenty-six (74.29%) responded affirmatively. Sample responses are found below:

- “God guided my career!”
- “The glorious times and the hard times all helped me be more open to what my students face. My journey is about learning more and more how God wants me to use my gifts given by Him to reach students and others where they are.”
- “I began attending the Salvation Army as a middle school student for church (after being in the food pantry/bread line and getting clothes from the clothing closet there). I didn’t know that it was a church at the time. This became my second home next to school. Another safe place where I found friends. I worked at summer camp and taught at vacation bible school. I entertained the idea of becoming an offer (which are the equivalent of ministers), but decided to become a teacher in the educational setting rather than spiritual I am currently a member of a congregational church and was the choir director for over a decade when I stepped down two years ago while
working on my PhD. I am spiritual in that I believe in something greater than ourselves exists, however, I still question so much about the traditional church structure.”

- “I did not like school when I was a student. I wanted to make it a different experience for others.”

- “I am most proud as an educator to have a (small) school named after me. At the end of my professional teaching career I taught “music” to 2, 3, & 4 year olds that was particularly delightful. I also specially enjoyed directing an after-school reading project (targeting K-6) with a non-profit organization following my teaching career. Important to me as a teacher was having the autonomy to create curriculum and work within a loosely supervised environment. I am extremely fond, and proud of my family I am blessed by three terrific children and wonderful, wise wife. They are my greatest source of happiness.”

- “My spirituality guided/influenced my teaching. From morning prayer to help my teaching, to sitting at students’ desks in their chairs and praying for that specific child, to speaking up and out on issues with teachers’ groups, administrators and parents.”

- “In addition to teaching biology and marine biology to the students in the classroom, I have taken students backpacking in the Grand Canyon, on bicycle tours from Lakewood, Colorado to Taos, New Mexico and on international trips to various countries throughout the world. I feel that these activities instilled many positive attributes in the lives of the students.”

- “I am a person of deep faith. This has enabled me to be a wife, mother, grandmother and now great grandmother. It has influenced my everyday life and given me
compassion for teaching the young child – first grade and even college students – master’s students.”

- “Teaching in urban, high poverty schools and seeing how conservative religious groups constantly fight to harm the poor is the primary reason why I am now “non-religious.”

- “I work hard to trust God with my life and believe that when I truly trust Him, He provides guidance and leads me. I believe that my success as a teacher is attributed to trusting God.”

- “I am the last of 19 children, 5 died while infants; yet, my parents unofficially adopted a boy, & my aunt lived with us until she passed away. My parents were model parents in love with the Lord & the Catholic Church. They were involved in different ministries, but more importantly, they lived their faith. (Much more to contribute).”

- “I grew up Christian, left the church and grew apart from God during my teenage and college years, slowly began to come back while dating the woman who is now my wife.”

- “I cannot imagine being a teacher without my relationship to Christ. I feel that He guides me daily in the thousands of decisions I make inside and outside my classroom.”

- “Although I have always taught public schools. I do feel that my spirituality has influenced my teaching.”

The teacher background questionnaire resulted in the collection of rich data across a broad spectrum of topics. Gathering this information gives additional depth to the
respondent’s survey results. It allows the researcher to better know the participants on a more personal level with less parameters as required by the other 3 surveys. The following section analyze the data collected from the surveys, Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB), The Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS), and The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES).

Analysis

The following section reports the findings from the study. The investigator searched for the answers to the research questions initially formulated. As stated in Chapter 3, the research questions and sub questions are as follow:

1. How have National Teacher of the Year winners and finalist been influenced by a sense of spirituality, their family, and self efficacy?

   a. Have these aspects contributed to National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists effectiveness as a teacher?

   b. Which one of these aspects has been the largest contributor to National Teacher of the Year winners’ and finalists’ effectiveness as a teacher?

   c. How has spirituality, family, and self efficacy influenced National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists as a person?

Spirituality

Teachers were posed very specific questions based on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) which is a general indicator of perceived well-being used for the assessment of individual and congregational spiritual well-being as outlined in Chapter 3. The participants’ answers were based on a 6-point scale: strongly agree, moderately agree, agree, disagree, moderately disagree, and strongly disagree. Each selection was weighted for data collection
purposes. Question #1 asked the teachers to respond to the statement, “I don’t know who I am, where I came from, or where I’m going.” See Figure 4.11 below:

![Bar chart showing responses to the statement](image)

**Figure 4.11** I don’t know who I am, where I came from, or where I’m going.

Of the responses 29 (82.86%) strongly disagreed, 4 (11.43%) moderately disagreed, 1 (2.86%) disagreed, and 1 (2.86%) strongly agreed. No one responded moderately agree or agree. Sample responses include the following statements:

- “Humm…this question confused me. My heart and mind must be open to new experiences so I don’t know where I am going. I have faith I will be led.”
- “I know who I am and where I came from. I know that I will go to Heaven when I die. Jesus is Lord of my life.”
- “I’m a child of God & have purpose while on Earth.”
- “Because of my age, most of my life is behind me. When most of one’s years are behind you, it is difficult to think of one’s future besides living out one’s life in peace & contentment.”

The highest correlation with this question was at .627, I don’t enjoy much about life. I feel that life is a positive experience was the lowest correlation at .066.
Question #2 stated, “I feel that life is a positive experience.” The responses were 25 (75.76%) strongly agreed, 6 (18.18%) moderately agreed, 1 (3.45%) agreed, and 1 respondent (3.03%) moderately disagreed. See Figure 4.12 below:

![Figure 4.12 I feel that life is a possible experience.](image)

No one responded to disagree or strongly agree. Two participants skipped the question while 7 commented:

- “Life is what you make with talents given by God.”
- “Too many things happening in our communities & globally that negatively impact the quality of life.”
- “For me – strong[ly] agree. However, I know that life is not positive for many people.”
- “I have always felt positive and pass this feeling on to other people.”
- “Life also includes “negative” experiences that can also teach us & help us mature. Our Church believes in the redemptive elements of suffering since it is at that time when we are closest to Christ on the Cross.”
The highest correlation with this statement at .512, I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness, while the lowest at -141 is I believe there is some real purpose for my life. Question #3 asked about participants’ future: “I feel unsettled about my future” met with varied responses: 21 (61.76%) strongly disagreed, 4 (11.76%), moderately disagreed 3 (8.82%) disagreed, 2 (5.88%) agreed, 4 (11.76%) moderately agreed, and no one responded to strongly agreed. See Figure 13 below:

![Figure 4.13 I feel unsettled about my future.](image)

One respondent skipped this question while 7 of the participants responded in the comment box:

- “More settled than at any time before.”
- “Am facing retirement after 38 years. Family and health issues, may be moving out of community I’ve come to call home.”
- “Know where I am going to spend eternity.”
- “The only reason I feel unsettled is the aging and health issues.”
- “I have had a wonderful career and, now that I am retired, continue to give back to society.”
• “Teacher retirement systems are being targeted for destruction across the country.”

• “Temporarily, yes I don’t know what’s going to happen. Eternally, I feel very settled.

Tough question to answer depending on what you’re getting at.”

The highest correlation was .480, I feel good about my future, while the lowest is .050, I believe there is some real purpose for my life.

Question #4 stated, “I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.” Participants responded, 23 (67.65%) strongly agreed, 7 (20.59%) moderately agreed, 3 (8.82%) agreed, and 1 (2.94%) strongly disagreed. Strongly agree had no responses while 1 skipped the question. See Figure 4.14 below:

Three respondents added comments:

• “SEE NOTES between strongly agree and moderately agree.”

• “Have health physically & continuing to seek spiritual growth – financial sound.”

• “Mostly due to the fact that I feel an urgency to share with others the importance of spiritual/religious aspect of life & the meaning of the “Good News.”
I feel good about my future is correlated at .528, while I feel there is a real purpose for my life was correlated at .043.

Question #5 asked respondents whether they feel a sense of well-being about the direction in which their life is headed. This question received the following responses: 25 (71.43%) strongly agreed, 6 (17.14%) moderately agreed, and 4 (11.43%) agreed. As shown in Figure 4.15 below:

![Figure 4.15](image)

Figure 4.15  I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.

No one responded to disagree, moderately disagree, and strongly disagree while 5 respondents left the following comments:

- “As in question #21 aging issues and health in the future concern me. Five years ago I didn’t think about that and I am not old.”
- “You need to change “moderately agree” and “agree” on our Likert scale. “Agree” is stronger than “Moderately Agree” and should be further to the left. Same on the “disagree” side. Or change to “Somewhat.”
- “As a retired person, God has provided me with the love for learning & sharing. I spend from 1 ½ hours of prayer, reading of the daily Scripture readings, & reflecting
& my wife & I try to attend Mass every day. In addition, we watch EWTN, a Catholic television network that provides invaluable teachings, conferences, news, etc.”

- “I feel blessed with job, family, friends, health.”
- “At 95, not much heading left in this lifetime.”

I feel good about my future was highly correlated at .683 and the lowest at .082, I don’t enjoy much about life.

Question #6 asked participants whether they enjoy much about life. This question elicited the following responses: 29 (82.86%) strongly disagree, 3 (8.57%) moderately disagree, 2 (5.71%) disagree, and 1 (2.86%) moderately agree. Strongly agree and agree had no responses. See Figure 4.16 below:

![Figure 4.16 I don’t enjoy much about life.](image)

Two responded posted comments:

- “This is a personal issue. My husband is constantly working so I feel we don’t do activities that would be enjoyable.”
- “Each day is a gift we should not take for granted.”
I don’t know who I am had the highest correlation at .640 while, the lowest at .063 is, I feel that life is a positive experience.

Question #7 stated, “I feel good about my future.” Twenty-three respondents (67.65%) selected strongly agree, 7 (20.59%) moderately agree, 3 (8.82%) agree, and 1 (2.94%) moderately disagreed. Disagree and strongly disagree were left blank. See Figure 4.17 below:

![Figure 4.17 I feel good about my future.](image)

One participant skipped this question while 4 commented:

- “Health is only concern.”
- “Retired”
- “As per question #21 and @4.”
- “If I move, it will be a major stressful event.”

The highest correlation at .683 is with, I feel a sense of well being about the direction my life is heading in. The lowest at -0.54, I feel life is full of conflict and unhappiness.

Question #8 stated, “I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness” received the following responses: 15 (42.86%) strongly disagree, 8 (22.86%) moderately disagree, 8 (22.86%)
disagree, 1 (2.86%) agree, 2 (5.71%) moderately agree, and 1 (2.86%) strongly agreed. See Figure 4.18 below:

This question evoked 8 comments:

- “Make lemonade from lemons.”
- “As well as much joy & contentment.”
- “I believe in seeing [and] focusing on the positive despite the ugly side of life.”
- “For me personal I answered [disagree], but again I realize that for others life is challenging.”
- “It depends on the circumstances into which you were born and the cards of fate that you are dealt. I was born into good circumstances and had many advantages in this country due to my upbringing, so for me this is not a problem. For others, life is rough.”
- “Life has challenges which strengthen us, but I don’t see that as conflict.”
- “There is much conflict in society mostly due to the secular view of religion & the lack of God in their life.”
- “Conflict yes, unhappiness no.”
Life is a positive experience had the highest correlation at .512 while, While I feel good about my future had the lowest correlation at -.049.

Question #9 was: “Life doesn’t have much meaning.” Responses were 23 (94.29%) strongly disagree, 1 (2.86%) disagree, 1 (2.86%) agree, and no participants responded to moderately disagree, moderately agree, and strongly agree. See Figure 4.19 below:

![Figure 4.19 Life doesn’t have much meaning.](image)

- “This is another one. In here and now, yes…eternally, so much of life is meaningless…see Ecclesiastes.”

- “Again, I believe we each have a purpose & it’s my responsibility to make the most of each day. That is how I may impact others through my actions.”

I believe there is some real purpose for my life has a high correlation of .436. The lowest correlation at -131, I feel life is a positive experience.

Question #10 asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement: “I believe there is some real purpose for my life.” Answers were 31 (93.94%) strongly agree, 1 (3.03%) moderately agree, and 1 (3.45%) strongly disagree. Two participants did not answer
this question and no one responded strongly agree, moderately agree, or moderately disagree.

See Figure 4.20 below:

![Figure 4.20](image)

Figure 4.20  I believe there is some real purpose for my life.

The comments offered to enrich the data collection are as follows:

- “Not heaven.”
- “Don’t know! Purpose? I worked hard, did the very best I could in the work setting. I am gregarious & generally like people, & I enthusiastically embrace life. But purpose? Not really, I think I fall into the category of giving life my very best shot, and then, at the end, well, it’s “dust to dust.”
- “Every day offers a way to make a difference.”
- “1) To reach the beatific vision in heaven; to help my wife & children do so as well, & share what God has given me with others. This included time, talents, & treasure.”
- “There was when younger, but at 95, there must be reason that I am still here.”
- “In my teaching career, the reception I get from former students leaves me very satisfied I have had a real positive influence.”
- “There’s nobody else on Earth like me. I am unique & have a purpose!”
I don’t know who I am had the highest correlation at .533 while, I feel life is a positive experience was the lowest at -.141.

**Family**

The Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS) consists of 10 items designed to measure family cohesion and adaptability as detailed in Chapter 3. Responses were based on a 5-point scale: very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, generally satisfied, very satisfied, and extremely satisfied. The responses were weighted for data collection purposes. Question #1 asked the respondents about the degree of satisfaction between family members and found 14 (40.00%) very satisfied, 7 (20.00%) extremely satisfied, 6 (17.14%) generally satisfied, 5 (14.29) somewhat dissatisfied, and 3 (8.57%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.21 below:

![Figure 4.21 The degree of closeness between family members.](image)

Sample comments included:

- “I was an only child with lots of cousins.”
- “7 children.”
- “As adults we work more to be a part of family.”
- “Closeness among siblings & family grew as we all grew older.”
• “Extremely Satisfied – immediate family Generally Satisfied – One sibling – with he and his family.”

• “My father was fairly remote and alcoholic, and my mom’s determination and very hard work kept our family together. They loved my brothers, my twin sister, and me. I was extremely close to my grandparents, with whom we lived.”

• “I wouldn’t say we’re very close, but I also think that’s ok and it works for our family. Geographically, we’re spread across the country and it’s difficult to get everyone together in person, so we keep up via calls/text/Facebook.”

• “As in any family, there are some members that are still overly impacted with the “noise of society.” & do not see the importance of a close relationship with the Lord.”

• “My parents divorced. My mother was an alcoholic and we were estranged at the time of her passing.”

The highest correlation at .713 is, The amount of time you spend together as a family. Your family’s ability to resolve conflict, is .458.

Question #2 asked respondents about their family’s ability to cope with stress. It received the following responses: 16 (45.71%) very satisfied, 8 (22.86%) generally satisfied, 6 (17.14%) extremely satisfied, 3 (8.57%) somewhat dissatisfied and 2 (5.71%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.22 below:
Figure 4.22 Your family’s ability to cope with stress.

Comments about coping included:

- “My father was a dirt, tenant farming Surviving on weather, drought, factors I…to find balance.”
- “Father Nervous Breakdown.”
- “We could be better with communication among one another.”
- “Both of my parents are/were functioning alcoholics.”
- “Since all my children are no longer at home, I can say that my wife & have a very good relationship & we help our children to place their trust on the Lord. Obviously, with 8 children, some of whom are married with children, the response is not always what we would like. Generally speaking, most of them are doing well.”

The highest correlation at .771 is, The quality of communications between family members and the lowest at .361, The amount of time you spend together as a family.

Questions #3 addressed their family’s ability to be flexible. Answers were 16 (45.71%) very satisfied, 10 (28.57%) generally satisfied, 5 (14.29%) extremely satisfied, and 4 (11.43%) somewhat dissatisfied. See Figure 4.23 below:
Comments included:

- “The fact we moved several times as my Dad was assigned to different churches helped build resiliency.”
- “We, as parents, have learned to be much more flexible in reference to how our children choose to think, behave, attend church, etc.”

The way problems are discussed, has the highest correlation at .641 and the lowest at .407, Family members concern for each other.

Question #4 asked respondents about their family’s ability to share positive experience. Data reflected 15 (42.86%) extremely satisfied, 10 (28.57%) very satisfied, 6 (17.14%) generally satisfied, and 4 (11.43%) somewhat dissatisfied. See Figure 4.24 below:
One respondent offered this comment:

- “We don’t “brag” a lot & are more inclined to be low key on events.”

The fairness of criticism in my family was the highest correlation at .756, while the lowest correlation was .463, Your family’s ability to be flexible.

Question #5 concerned the quality of communications between family members. Answers showed 14 (40.00%) very satisfied, 7 (20.00%) generally satisfied, 6 (17.14%) extremely satisfied, 5 (14.29%) somewhat dissatisfied, and 3 (8.57%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.25 below:

![Figure 4.25 Thea quality of communication between family members.](image-url)
Two respondents offered comments:

- “Because of the variety of ways of perceiving things, most of us have learned that there are things that we choose to keep to ourselves. Yet, we know that we love each other & accept our differences.”

- “Not all siblings are inclined to share & prefer to sit and listen. We do not have or express affection because it just wasn’t done as we grew up.”

The way problems are discussed, had the highest correlation at .790. Lowest correlation is, Family’s ability to be flexible, at .447.

Question #6 asked respondents about their family’s ability to resolve conflicts. It received the following responses: 10 (28.57%) generally satisfied, 7 (20.00%) extremely satisfied, 8 (22.86%) very satisfied, 8 (22.86%) somewhat dissatisfied, and 2 (5.71%) very dissatisfied.

See Figure 4.26 below:

![Figure 4.26](image-url)  
Figure 4.26 Your family’s ability to resolve conflicts.

Family and conflict drew fewer comments than some of the other questions:

- “My mother avoided conflict by going silent, my father avoided it too. We were generally a happy family, but we did not deal with conflict.”
• “There have been some unresolved conflicts between siblings in the past.”
• “Some back biting goes on. I don’t like to hear everyone’s complaints about one another.”
• “Mother would resolve conflicts before our father got home, or he would resolve them. We did not want him to resolve them.”

The fairness of criticism in my family, was the highest correlation at .782 and the lowest being .438. The amount of time you spend together as a family.

Question #7 inquired about the satisfaction with the amount of time spent together as a family and it found 10 (29.41%) very satisfied, 9 (26.47%) extremely satisfied, 8 (23.53%) generally satisfied, 6 (16.13%) somewhat satisfied, and 1 (2.94%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.27 below:

![Figure 4.27 The amount of time you spend together as a family.](image)

One respondent skipped the question and many offered comments as follow:

• “We are all over the map.”
• “We are a very close family – living in different parts of the country, we travel to visit often and find time for family dinners and celebrations.”
• “We have to consider that each child & family has their own needs & commitments, yet we normally come together many times but especially major celebrations. For example, my mother passed away on Christmas day in 1971. Since then, we have been meeting for Mass as a family, with the family providing the music, then we have a family reunion/breakfast where one family is in charge of making the arrangements & providing some type of skit – usually comedy. Several years back, we had a four-day celebration for Christmas where people from various parts of the U.S. and Mexico attended. This included a four-hour talent show & a day of volleyball & basketball where many of our children, who do not live close by or whom they did not know (Mex) enjoyed each other’s company.”

• “This question is in the present tense, but the family I grew up with I would consider as gone. I am very close with my current family, which I’d define as my wife, son, and in-laws. We all bought a large home together, for instance.”

• “We live far apart and don’t see each other often. That makes me sad.”

• “Distance to travel & road conditions can deter regular gatherings.”

• “We are all scattered throughout the county. Email & phone help tremendously.”

Your family’s ability to share positive experience, was high at .755 and the lowest at .361.

Your family’s ability to cope with stress.

Question #8 asked about the way problems are discussed. Of respondents, 14 (41.18%) were generally satisfied, 6 (17.65%) very satisfied, 5 (14.71%) extremely satisfied, 5 (14.71%) somewhat dissatisfied, and 4 (11.76%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.28 below:
One participant skipped this question while 8 offered comments:

- “I don’t remember any problems – parents were older.”
- “Some just want to complain. I prefer a different mindset/approach but I can get caught up in the grumbling!”
- “We didn’t discuss them.”
- “No religion or political discussions.”
- “It was not unusual for families not to discuss much years ago.”
- “We had “family council meetings.”
- “Most of the time, my wife & I have learned to agree to disagree & we realize that we are not to focus on changing the other person; that we need to focus on changing ourselves.”
- “Again, this is difficult in the present tense.”

The correlation of .790 was the highest for, The quality of communications between family members. The amount of time you spend together as a family, is .522, the lowest.
Question #9 is measuring perceptions of the fairness of criticism in respondents’ families. It drew the following responses: 12 (35.29%) very satisfied, 12 (35.29%) generally satisfied, 5 (14.71%) extremely satisfied, 3 (8.82%) somewhat dissatisfied and 2 (5.88%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.29 below:

![Figure 4.29 The fairness of criticism in our family.](image)

One respondent skipped this question and one offered a comment:

- “Pretty much, the same as #36. With our children, we have all learned to laugh at ourselves & at each other in a playful manner. Yet, we need to be cognizant of not truly hurting each other.”

Correlation high is .782, Your family’s ability to resolve conflict. The lowest correlation is, The amount of time you spend together as a family, .495.

Question #10 asked about family members’ concern for each other. Responses were 15 (42.86%) extremely satisfied, 9 (25.71%) very satisfied, 6 (17.14%) generally satisfied, 3 (8.57%) somewhat dissatisfied, and 2 (5.71%) very dissatisfied. See Figure 4.30 below:
The comments offered to this question offered some variation:

- “Lots of affection.”
- “Siblings have different dynamics around one another. There are stronger alliances with various sibling coupling.”
- “We had a hard life, but at the same time we learned a huge amount about music and literature and art, and we did know they loved us.”
- “As parents, they all know that in spite of their way of thinking, acting, dressing, etc. they know that we love them & pray for them daily. I think that, fundamentally, they all know that they love each other.”

The highest correlation at .707 is, The quality of communications between family members, while the lowest is .407, Your family’s ability to be flexible.

*Self Efficacy*

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) is a ten-item scale that “…assesses the strength of individual’s belief in his or her own ability to respond to novel or difficult situations and to deal with any associated obstacles or setbacks.” The responses were based on a 4-point
scale: not at all true, hardly true, moderately true, and exactly true. Each answer selection was weighted for data collection purposes.

Question #1 stated, “I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.” Participants responded: 52 (58.82%) exactly true, 13 (38.24%) moderately true, and 1 (2.94%) hardly true. See Figure 4.31 below:

One participant skipped the question while numerous comments were added:

- “Some problems are beyond solving – like health issues.”
- “The word ALWAYS stopped me from checking exactly true.”
- “I have come to realize it’s not my job & I’m not in control of everyone’s issues.”
- “Although my original family life was pretty difficult, my own family now is very open, honest, productive, happy, and loving.”
- “Sometimes we have to do our best & then leave it up to God’s compassion & love to solve the problem in His time.”

I can usually handle whatever comes my way, has the highest correlation at .649. The lowest correlation is .216, It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
Question #2 called for a response to the statement “if someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.” The included 22 (64.71%) moderately true, 8 (23.53%) exactly true, 3 (8.82%) hardly true, and 1 (2.94%) not at all true. See Figure 4.32 below:

![Figure 4.32](image)

Figure 4.32  If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

One question was skipped and many respondents left comments, including:

- “Get what I want?? – achieve a satisfactory outcome.”
- “Interesting question “get what I want” sometimes we need compromise.”
- “If someone is quite oppositional, I try to discover (through my psychological lens) why they feel the way they do and try to reach common understandings through friendly dialogue.”
- “It is not always what I WANT but what is good for the family unit.”
- “I don’t feel the need to always get what I want. Compromise is key.”
- “Although, I usually find a way to collaborate or find a common ground.”
- Of course, it depends on the issue. If is often not worth “getting what I want.” Priorities & faith are important.”
- “My temperament is NOT to challenge/fight but back away.”
The highest correlation at .521 is, Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities; this is the lowest correlation and is significant at the .005 level.

“Not a matter of getting my way, but reaching a way of understanding each other.” Question #3 stated, “It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.” Participants responded 23 (65.71%) exactly true and 12 (34.29%) moderately true. See Figure 4.33 below:

![Figure 4.33](image)

Figure 4.33  It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Sample comments included:

- “Yeah, but I’ve had a lot of help from wonderful people along the way.”
- “Sometimes I learn that my goals evolve into something I didn’t expect at the beginning.”
- “Depends on the importance of the goal.”
- “I can persevere & work towards a goal til it’s achieved – I may fail but I try again to reach goal/do better.”
Question #4 asked respondents, “I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.” It elicited the following data: 20 (57.14%) exactly true, and 15 (42.86%) moderately true. See Figure 4.34 below:

![Figure 4.34 I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.](image)

Sample comments included:

- “Being flexible & able to change course is what teachers must do as the dynamics of a classroom dictate.”

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough, this has the highest correlation at .640, while .290 is the lowest, I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

Question #5 stated, “Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations”. This statement received the following responses: 17 (48.57%) exactly true and 18 (51.43%) moderately true. See Figure 4.35 below:
4.35 Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

Three participants commented:

- “Resourcefulness is great, but so is experience.”
- “But I confide w/others if I can & then work out solutions.”
- “Must think on feet to come up with other options.”

When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions, has the highest correlation with .713. The lowest correlation is, It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals, .461.

Question #6 stated, “I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.” Responses were limited to 22 (62.86%) exactly true and 13 (37.14%) moderately true. See Figure 4.36 below:
Figure 4.36 I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

Comments included:

- “However, there times that I can only do this with the help, guidance and support of others.”
- “Again, I don’t just give in. I try to come up with an alternative plan.”

The highest correlation is .640, I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events, the lowest at .290.

Question #7 stated, “I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.” This statement elicited the following responses: 17 (48.57%) exactly true, 17 (48.57%) moderately true, and 1 (2.86%) hardly true. See Figure 4.37 below:
Figure 4.37  I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Sample comments included:

- “With the help and support of my husband and family members.”
- “The “difficulties” usually stem from how our children & their children think. I often remind them that they need to understand the tremendous gap between our age & theirs. We, generally, let them handle their problems & we just pray for them & support them when we can.”
- “I get frustrated when put down & backed into a corner. Can’t think clearly & calmly.”

Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations, has the highest correlation at .657. The lowest correlation is .363 (significant at the .005 level), If someone opposes me, I can find he means and ways to get what I want.

Question #8 asked respondents’ opinions about the following statement: “when I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.” Answers included: 18 (51.43%) exactly true, 16 (45.71%) moderately true, and 1 (2.86%). See Figure 4.38 below:
Figure 4.38  When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

No comments to this question were offered.

The highest correlation level is .735, If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution. At the lowest level is .433 (significant at the .005 level), I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Question #9 stated, “If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.” It was answered 19 (57.58.00%) exactly true, 13 (39.39%) moderately true, and 1 (3.03%) hardly true. See Figure 4.39 below:

Figure 4.39  If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.
Two respondents skipped this question and several offered a comment:

- “Again, I try to reach out to others with difficult problems because they may know more than I.”
- “Hard to answer. I don’t usually find myself in trouble.”
- “Fight or flight. If panicked I have difficulty thinking on my feet. However, if calm I can usually come up with an idea or two.”
- “But usually there are several solutions I have come up w/ which then causes confusion.”

When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions, this statement has the highest correlation at .735, while, I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort, is the lowest at .385 (significant at the .005 level).

The final question in the survey stated, “I can usually handle whatever comes my way.”

Answers were 18 (51.43%) exactly true and 17 (48.57%) moderately true. See Figure 4.40 below:

![Figure 4.40](image)

Figure 4.40  I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

The respondents offered a variety of comments:
• “Good luck on your dissertation! I know, firsthand, how hard it is to get responses to a survey!”
• “so far!”
• “The word ‘usually’ is profound!”
• “I try to be calm, deep breath, meditate, close eyes However, I can lose sleep over complex problems.”
• “Coming out of my childhood, I feel confident navigating most everything in “normal” life. My-fears and frustrations rest in threats beyond my control—my family’s health, calamity, etc.”

The highest correlation is, I can manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough, at .639. At the lowest is .262, It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Qualitative Results

Interview Participation

When asked to participate in an interview, 23 (65.71%) responded yes, 7 (20%) responded maybe, and 5 (14.29%) responded no. Several of the participants that responded “maybe” also included contact information. These candidates were not selected because of the quantity and quality of participants that responded “yes” to the interview question. The candidates that were selected were done so because of their willingness to participate, availability, and their location across the United States. Focusing on candidates from various regions allowed for the possibility of participants being affected by their culture and location. This practice provided more depth and breadth to the data collection. See Figure 4.41 below:
Interviews with 7 participants were conducted. In the teacher background section of the questionnaire the respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview. Each participant agreed to a phone interview. The interviews ranged in length from 44 minutes to one hour and 43 minutes. Four of the interviews were at least one hour and 30 minutes long. The interviews were taped using an app called TapeACall. Each participant was informed at the beginning of the interview and all consented. Each participant was informed of the list of questions that would be asked, but they were also informed about letting the conversation develop in a natural way and not be concerned with sticking to a strict outline. Each conversation took on a life of its own. All of the participants were easy to talk with and they shared events and feelings effortlessly without reservation.

The interviewees seemed eager to speak about their teaching career and how they had been affected; there was a humbleness about them. One teacher spoke about the moment it was announced that he was the winner. “It was like a beauty pageant, he said.” When they called his name he said “it was as though the other finalists were forgotten.” He talked about them being outstanding teachers. This finalist seemed to struggle with the lack of attention.
bestowed up these other effective teachers--almost like a winner’s remorse. Another teacher spoke about her spouse’s mental health issues and how she kept the unstable home environment she and her children lived in secret for years. It was as though the respondents were in awe of being selected, as though they could not quite figure out why they were the chosen one.

The survey reflected a large percentage of the respondents were spiritual and practiced through religion or were spiritual. Responding at a very low percentage were those who were non-spiritual and non-religious. This teacher spoke of being spiritual and how her life satisfaction had increased with the practice of Buddhism:

> One of the things that happened to my teaching when I started examining this practice (Buddhist) is that I found myself being more attentive, having a different kind of focus in the classroom one on one than I had had before. It wasn’t just a matter of trying to be kind, it was a practice of staying in the moment as much as possible and letting go of what had already happened and focusing on the reality of whatever the moment was bringing up. And I just found even if I only had a 15 second exchange with a student it could be a meaningful exchange and better exchange if I truly paid attention and listened to the student in a slightly different way than I had before. And I almost immediately became more patient.

A male respondent was in the Peace Corps after college and still goes back to India each year to assist in facilitating the growth of internet service to this region of the world.
His family funds this project from their personal finances. “I try to lead a good and caring life, I don’t pray. I don’t go to church. Organized religion has not been important to me.” He also does not define himself as spiritual either. He simply believes in the power of good.

The respondents were decidedly satisfied with their family relationships and support. In the questions asked as part of the survey on Family, 70.97% or greater were satisfied with their family relationships based on the questionnaire. The highest satisfaction rate was with the quality of communications between family members at 90.32%.

Focus; at least where mine has been too, more than anything has been family. That has been really, really important to me. I feel really grateful that my kids like each other and we often spend time together. We still like being with each other. So, that is very gratifying. Being a good husband and good father, more than anything, that has been my calling.

This male elementary teacher has also been a school principal, central office staff member, and yet he retired from education as a teacher. He believed he was “most effective as a classroom teacher and I was the happiest working directly with children.” All the respondents who had children talked about them. At this point in time this respondent’s wife had Alzheimer’s disease, and yet he had a positive outlook about his present situation and his career as a teacher.

We (two other elementary school teachers) were walking (15 miles, 13000 feet above sea level) and talking today about how much we loved it (teaching). So for us, being elementary school teachers, I would say by far, has been the most
gratifying experience besides my wife and son. And the kids come in a close second.

During the one-on-one phone interviews the participants spoke about their experiences and beliefs during their teaching careers. This participant was a supervising teacher for a student teacher that went on to become a National Teacher of the Year winner. Her profession has taken her “around the United States in various teaching positions as well as to Poland” as a teacher. In her teaching career, she did not shy away from the neediest students. She spoke about those students saying,

The last 18 years I taught in a high school where I ending up teaching at risk students, 9th grade, that were reading on a 4th grade level and I did have that very feeling you were describing that if they needed a place to put someone who just did not belong. My class was a kind of catch all. Every student was in there for a different reason, but for some reason each one was at risk of not making it because, oh, 6 of them had parents that had died in the last 6 months. They were needy, they were adolescent and I had no experience working with at risk students. I sort of made it up as I went along, but what I knew was they needed connection with an adult who would not give up on them and who saw them as worthwhile human beings who needed to be seen clearly and heard clearly and supported in any way possible.

Another participant described the influence he had and was unaware of.
It is interesting in terms of kids that came back, especially to the big suburban public school. They would come to see me, the kid would often say you know I’ll never forget when you said such and such and usually it had nothing to do with curriculum or when you did such and such and I usually had no memory of it. And it was so much more I realized children are often the most powerful lesson to them are often we do totally un-intentionally, you may we may not be thinking, it may be an offhand comment, it may be who knows, a pat on the back. It could something that really meant something to a child and we; at least, I had no sense at the time that that was powerful. That’s what they remember often in their high school career. It wasn’t necessarily I can’t, I never forget the course you taught on Hinduism or whatever it was sort of it was more much more on the often on the moral or ethical area.

A National Teacher of the Year finalist spoke of her “dislike of school as a student” and how she thinks that made it easier for her to be an effective teacher as she tried to be sensitive to her students. She was an only child, born to older parents, and the daughter of a teacher. She said,

I think one thing especially is that I thought it was important for children to like school. I think the fact that I didn’t like school was my greatest asset. I would tell children there is no need to misbehave, if you need attention come up and say, hey,
I need a little bit of attention or I need a hug today. I think it was very important for them to feel good about them self. I always tried to find, I always tried to look for some way I could do that. And I guess the fact that I grew up mama teacher and in fact my parents were older and my dad had a country store. I stayed in there a lot and saw a lot of different kinds of people. Probably made a difference too you know, appreciating differences.

This teacher and her husband, a college professor, divorced; her three children are now adults. Her children did not select teaching as their profession, but two of her three children did select law enforcement. After living in an urban area of North Carolina she moved back to her home county in the eastern part of the state and married a gentleman who retired from the military. She spoke about him “bragging to his friends about her being a state teacher of the year.” Obviously, he does not seem to understand that she is a National Teacher of the Year finalist, one of the best in the nation.

*National Teacher of the Year Candidate Portfolio*

Two National Teacher of the Year finalists allowed access to their portfolios that were submitted as part of the interview process for National Teacher of the Year. One of the finalists has a 2” inch notebook full of letters of recommendation for his competition at the state level. The book also includes pictures with students, teachers, and his family. Included in the book is a variety of newsprint articles about his winning at the state level with the culmination of him being names a finalist at the national level. He has a beautifully written
letter to the state committee from his son about the works and kindness this father exhibited every day. An excerpt from the son’s letter of recommendation:

As a professional teacher, Dad is just that! He’s the best kindergarten teacher I’ve come across. The atmosphere he creates in his classroom is his own magic. He can take a child who is crying of a skinned knee and have that very same child laughing about a minute later. It’s called security! Once you are in his classroom, there are not bullies, no monsters, and in some cases no parents—there is just a good friend that is starting your educational experience with a positive attitude.

He’s that one teacher everyone remembers!

This particular portfolio has approximately 15 letters recommending him for state teacher of the year by teachers, teacher assistant, principal, assistant principal, parents, and students telling about the effect he had on them. Several letters are from state level leaders, state superintendent, and governor recommending him for National Teacher of the Year.

A teacher from the Midwest shared a letter of recommendation and her candidate application for the National Teacher of the Year Program. The application included: general information/signatures, education history and professional development activities, professional biography, community involvement, philosophy of teaching, education issues and trends, the teaching profession, National Teacher of the Year, letters of support, and publicity photograph. Education issues and trends required the state winner to respond to the question, “What do you consider to be the major public education issues today?” The directions were to address one in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.
Responses were limited in each section to one or two pages double-spaced. Three letters of support were limited to one page each. The teaching profession section required a two-page response answering, “What do you do to strengthen and improve the teaching profession?” And “What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession?”

Her response:

Exchanging ideas with other teachers, writers, and experts helps strengthen my work and theirs. For four decades I have attended conferences that introduce me to fresh ideas and keep me from burning out. After the Columbine incident I went to the conference where two teachers from that school shared the strategies they used in art and writing to enable young people to heal and recover. We teachers must give each other courage to trust ourselves to teach against the grain if we think it benefits our students.

This National Teacher of the Year finalist had letters from a former student, a college professor, and a counseling coordinator from her school district. In her philosophy of teaching response she said, “Our desks are in a circle so that no one sits in the back row or spends the day looking at the back of another person’s head.” Every student is in the front row.

The researcher was especially curious about the portfolios as the coordinator of the National Teacher of the Year program had spoken about the interview process being confidential. As a researcher it only made the portfolios and interview process more intriguing. One of the portfolios looks like a large bulging scrap book with all the published
articles, pictures, and letters of recommendations from students, teachers, parents, co-workers, educators, and politicians. The other is a simple package that includes an application form, essays and letters of recommendations. Because the two portfolios belong to finalists that were interviewed, it was documentation to support the information that was shared with the researcher.

From the conclusion of the research it is clear that our society has used different measuring instrument to assess the effectiveness of teachers across history. The teachers participating in the interviews never spoke of end of grade test, end of course test, assessments, benchmarks, or SAT results. Conversations with them only revealed “students doing well in class.” Many spoke of having significant relationships with students that facilitated a more academically successful student.

At this point in time, expectations for teachers’ success is very broad, to the point of exhausting. Teachers are expected to have meaningful relationships with caring, content knowledge, empathy, highly qualified licensing, classroom management skills, parent and community relationships, celebrations of academic growth, a twitter account, technology savvy, creative instruction aligned with the standards, planning genius, ability to disaggregate data, etc. The list is exhausting. One participant talked as though they would struggle in today’s school setting because of the lack of teacher autonomy. Many of the teachers interviewed talked about supervisors that allowed them creative independence. Research supports the accepted wisdom that “effective teacher” measures change based on the expectations and definition of those in positions to set guidelines for student achievement.

Chapter Summary
What is known from the data collection and analysis?

1. National Teacher of the Year winners and finalist are assumed to be effective teachers based on the levels of interviews and recommendations they have received centered on their work with students.

2. The survey data collected from participants confirmed a high level of correlation with spirituality, family, and self efficacy.

3. The National Teacher of the Year finalists participating in the interview process believed in something greater than themselves, had family relationships, and believed in their ability to affect academic change.

4. These teachers are deemed effective, their responses to the surveys and interviews confirmed a correlation of spirituality, family, and self efficacy, then there is presumed influence from the data collection and analysis.

The influence of spirituality, family, and self efficacy on teacher effectiveness should be viewed with a margin of consideration because of the low number of participants. This research project has asked questions resulting in valuable data collection that a school system and an interview committee could utilize when selecting teachers for their students. These results offer a basis for higher education to use when planning their education degree programs and selecting successful teacher candidates.

Chapter 5

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Discussion

Introduction

The data collected and analyzed for this study revealed the influence of spirituality, family, and self efficacy on teacher effectiveness by National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. Qualitative and quantitative research undertaken in chapter 4 involved collecting data from surveys and individual interviews. The research questions to be answered were:

1. How have National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists been influenced by a sense of spirituality, their family, and self efficacy?
   
   a. Have these aspects contributed to National Teacher of the Year winner and finalist effectiveness as a teacher?
   
   b. Which one of these aspects has been the largest contributor to National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists’ effectiveness as a teacher?
   
   c. How has spirituality, family, and self efficacy influenced National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists as a person?

Review of Findings

Thirty-five National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists participated in 3 surveys, spirituality, family, and self efficacy, while 7 were selected for phone interviews. The respondents were asked to complete a teacher background questionnaire prior to starting the 3 surveys. Chapter 2 reviewed various research defining an effective teacher. This was an important piece of data as an assumption has been made that National Teacher of the Year
winners and finalist are effective teachers. Knowing this, the researcher was able to formulate the research questions to better understand how these teachers are or are not influenced by spirituality, family, and self efficacy. As Stronge (2007) stated, an important facet of professionalism and of effectiveness in the classroom is a teacher’s dedication to students and to the job of teaching. Parker J. Palmer (1997) wrote about the heart of an effective teacher,

Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. The methods used by these weavers vary widely: lectures, Socratic dialogues, laboratory experiments, collaborative problem solving, creative chaos. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts – meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self.

Parker speaks to the disposition of the teacher. The surveys that have been offered up to data collection in this research project do not blatantly speak of disposition even though it is obvious from the participants’ comments that many possess a disposition for teaching. Spirituality and self efficacy align closely with disposition, yet it should be offered up that this research could be greatly expanded by delving into data from this group of respondents on their possession of a disposition to teach.
The results from the surveys were consistent. Individual stories were different, but generally the responses were similar. Results of the research questions follow:

**Influence of Spirituality, Family, and Self Efficacy**

When responding to the Spiritual Well Being Scale subscale Existential Well-Being, the responses were positive indicators that the respondents:

- know themselves
- believe life is a positive experience
- feel good about the future
- are fulfilled and satisfied with life
- have a sense of well-being about the direction of their life
- enjoy life
- feel good about their future
- don’t believe that life is full of conflicts and unhappiness
- believe life has meaning
- believe there is a real purpose for their life

The highest positive response range was a high of 100% to a low of 82.34%, 7 of the 10 responses were above 96%. Those that responded that had answers that were outliers tended to be participants that were elderly and felt the majority of their life was behind them and they were facing life changing experiences like leaving their present community to live in another setting and location.

The participants did not respond as high to family as they did to spirituality and self efficacy. Participants responded at the highest percentage to their family’s:
• ability to share positive experiences
• to be flexible with ability to cope with stress
• fairness of criticism
• family members concern for each other

These positive responses ranged from 85.29% to 88.57%. Those responses in the 70% range were:

• amount of time spent together as a family
• communication between family members
• closeness between family members
• the way problems were resolved
• the family’s ability to resolve conflict

One participant wrote of a very dysfunctional family setting while others responded about the loving and close family of which they were a member. Several said miles kept them from close family relationships while one spoke about a culture of respectful distance.

Respondents rated themselves high in self efficacy. The lowest percentage of agreement at 88.24% was in response to a question that asked about getting your way if someone opposes you. Some participants were reluctant to respond highly positive because they perceived this question as seeing themselves as a win at all cost person and felt they were more team players, compromising and cooperating. All respondents see themselves as teachers:

• that stick to their aims and accomplish goals
• effectively dealing with unexpected events
• that are resourceful, problem solvers
• able to handle whatever comes my way

Questions responded to at a rate of at least 96% were:

• solve difficult problems
• coping ability
• solution oriented
• when in trouble, solution oriented

The data affirm spirituality, family, and self efficacy contribute to the success of National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists’ teacher effectiveness. As Stronge (2007) concluded,

The effective teacher truly believes that all students can learn—it is not just a slogan. These teachers also believe that they must know their students, their subject, and themselves, while continuing to account for the fact that students learn differently. Through differentiation of instruction, effective teachers reach their students, and together they enjoy their success.

Effective teachers model the importance of education by continuing to invest in their own academic growth through advanced degrees, special certification, and professional development on various aspects of teaching related to their content area and learning needs of their students. Of the 35 participants, 25 acquired a masters’ degree while 7 received a doctorate, 8 special certifications, and 2 Bachelor degrees. This adds up to more than 35 as
participants were allowed to check more than one box. Over 70% have a masters’ degree. One participant wrote about approaching the end of his coursework for a doctorate but abandoned his studies to care for his aging parents. He was not bitter; he cherished the time spent with his parents.

Other responses worth noting to round out the discussion of data collection were:

- 31.43 retired after 35 years of teaching
- 65.71% graduated from a state college
- 65.71% neither parent was a teacher
- 74.29% of mothers did not have a college degree
- 68.57% of fathers did not have a college degree
- 82.86 of siblings were not teachers
- 58.62% were encouraged to be a teacher by a teacher
- 68.575 did not have a minster or missionary in the family
- 85.71% see teaching as a calling
- 97.06% would select a teaching career again

Because of some earlier investigation the researcher believed: many teachers had a parent that was a teacher; both mothers and fathers would have college degrees; teachers would not be first generation college graduates; teachers would attend church related or liberal art colleges more so than state supported institutions; parents would be the most encouraging of
students becoming teachers; more teachers had been influenced by a ministers/missionaries in their family; teaching was a calling; and less teachers would select teaching careers again.

**Implications for Practice**

Under today’s condition of public education, it is of concern that teachers were the greatest encourager of teachers becoming teacher. At the rate teachers are leaving the profession, selecting alternative careers, and lower enrollment in schools of education there will be fewer teacher candidates to encourage our youth to select education as their profession. The teaching profession is in a tenuous situation with federal and state officials bestowing their narrow views and funding onto the education systems of our country. If only they would ask themselves, why should someone select teaching as a 21st century career? Backwards planning may be a key to their (politicians) seeing the possibilities of further developing and funding a school system that engages students for academic success and retains the best and brightest of our teachers. A profession that 96% will say, I would do it again.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were formulated.

1. Utilize the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB), Family Satisfaction Scale, and The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) as an interview tool with students applying to schools of education; student teaching internships; interview process for teacher applicants by school systems; and professional development.

2. Design and implement classes or professional development that explore the influence of spirituality, family, and self efficacy in teaching and personal success at the
undergraduate and graduate level.

3. Develop and implement an effective mentoring program for beginning teachers and school administrators that includes an awareness of the positive influence of spirituality, family, and self efficacy. This program would be wise to solicit the support and participation of retired teachers. The majority of respondents to the interviews were retired teachers and they still had such a passion for the profession. They have great stories about their weaknesses and vulnerability when they started their teaching career. Many of them spoke of the master teacher down the hall that supported them in their endeavor to be an effective teacher. Nothing makes a newbie feel better than to know experienced teachers have fallen, crashed, and tripped on their way to success. No one wants to believe they are the only one. Retired teachers as mentors is a way to share the wealth.

4. Develop and implement a course at the undergraduate level that focuses on the impact of self efficacy and how it can be fully developed to impact student learning.

5. Schools of higher education be brave, develop a course on spirituality’s influence in high quality instruction, connecting with the students, and as a means to higher teacher satisfaction.

6. Teachers Reflect on Their Practice is Standard 5 of the NC Educator
Effectiveness System, the statewide evaluation system. A course should be developed or a portion of each course in teacher preparation programs should include reflection. The premise of the course would address the definition of reflection, steps in the process, and what would an outcome look like. The NC evaluation system includes; teachers analyze student learning; teachers link professional growth to their professional goals; and, teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment. These are the elements under Standard 5. Teachers need more support earlier in their career because of the increased expectations of new teachers can be crushing.

Implications for Future Research

This research yielded 35 responses from a pool of approximately 200 possible participants. The first National Teacher of the Year was selected in 1952, this winner died in January of 2016. Research revealed many had died, one is known to have gone to prison for molesting a child, and a multitude did not respond to mail or email request for participation. Yet, those who did participate were highly engaged. Several called and emailed the researcher to make sure they were going to receive a survey to complete while 65.71% responded yes to an interview and 20% said maybe. It was obvious there was information to be shared.

The possibility of the rich research data that could be collected if a researcher spent a year expanding the net to locate more winners and finalists could have a substantial impact on teacher education. Imagine a videographer and researcher traveling the United States
interviewing National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists. It has the possibility of a PBS special, Ted Talk, and an influencer of US Department of Education policy.

The data on the success of first generation college students is concerning, yet this data reflects not only have these first generation college students completed undergraduate work, but they have continued to graduate with Masters and Doctorate degrees at a substantial percentile. There is much data that could be learned from this group of teachers about helping First Generation College students succeed.

Rich data has been collected via the three surveys and the teacher background information. It would seem most appropriate to incorporate disposition as an area to collect data if this study were to expand or if a separate study was to be undertaken. Parker J. Palmer has contributed important research to the importance of a disposition to teach. It is more than book learning, “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (1997).

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was the small sample size. The 35 National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists represented every sector of the United States, but the majority were from the Mid-west. They represent small, medium, large, rural, suburban, and urban school districts. As all humans are different and influenced by the world they live in, they answer questions from the background and surveys with a lens specific to their experiences.

There is concern that the majority of participants were selected as National Teacher of the Year winners or finalists prior to 1980. That is 36 years ago. Education expectations have evolved with high stakes testing assessing the effectiveness of teachers based on student
achievement. Many of the questionnaire participants were not winners or finalists after No Child Left Behind. Several participants who were interviewed spoke about teaching during a time that allowed greater teacher autonomy. One teacher spoke of her undergraduate work focusing on content area for 3.5 years while her last semester included instruction in student teaching, test and measurements, and observations. She said she never had a class on classroom management. A male teacher spoke about having very few skills to manage a class of elementary students at the beginning of his career. He attributes his success to several master teachers in his building assisting him in acquiring the appropriate skills to manage a class of youngsters.

The participants were asked to complete the survey about their family, they were instructed to base their answers on the family they grew up with, not their spouse and child(ren). It would seem by some of the comments that some may have answered based on the family they had created with their spouse. As a result, the survey data must be interpreted with caution.

Chapter Summary

The researcher was asked a question at the beginning of this data collection process. “If spirituality is confirmed to be a positive influence in the lives of National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists, how will it be used at the college level?” State institutions are concerned with the separation of church and state. This is based on religion. Spirituality does not have to be a religious entity. It is simply a belief in something or someone greater than oneself. As the research has shown, spirituality can be a way of life that is inclusive of religious practice or simply a way of living. Spirituality is becoming a part of our world of work because employees bring it with them each day. Research is expanding its depth and
breadth of spirituality as it does not have the same parameters that religion has which makes religion controversial because it has rules and guidelines that dictate the right and wrong of beliefs and behavior. Spirituality is not about rules and right or wrong.

Self efficacy had the highest positive ratings in comparison to spirituality and family. They were all close, but self efficacy had the greatest consensus of beliefs/practices. A belief in oneself to affect change and the can do spirit that does not allow one to give up when the desired outcome is not attained immediately. National Teacher of the Year winners and finalists have consistently showed a high level of self efficacy. Bandura (1993), perceived self-efficacy contributes to cognitive development and functioning. Perceived self-efficacy exerts its influence through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. There are three different levels at which perceived self-efficacy operates as an important contributor to academic development. Students' beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishments. Teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve. Faculties' beliefs in their collective instructional efficacy contribute significantly to their schools' level of academic achievement. Student body characteristics influence school-level
achievement more strongly by altering faculties' beliefs in their collective efficacy than through direct effects on school achievement.

Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations. All of the respondents believed this to be true as all 35 participants answered this question. With high levels of self efficacy there is still humbleness about the respondents. One respondent best sums up this group of educators, “however, there are times that I can only do this with the help, guidance and support of others.”
References


Bulsara, C. (2014). *Using a mixed methods approach to enhance and validate your research.* Retrieved from nd.edu.au


http://www.statisticssolutions.com/teacher-efficacy-scale-test


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Table 1.1 Teacher Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many years have you taught?</th>
<th>Retired in K-12 Setting/More than 34 Years</th>
<th>31.43%/31.43%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am from the_____?</td>
<td>Mid-West</td>
<td>38.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I graduated a ______college?</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>65.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Level of Education?</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother and father were</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother has a college degree.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>74.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father has a college degree.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a sibling that is a teacher.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>82.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____encouraged me to be a</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>58.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider myself…</td>
<td>Spiritual and practice this through religion</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see teaching as a calling for you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking back, would you select teaching as your career again?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Spirituality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I don’t know who I am, where I came from or where I’m going.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>82.86%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that life is a positive experience.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>75.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unsettled about my future.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>61.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>67.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t enjoy much about life.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>82.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about my future.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>67.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life doesn’t have much meaning.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>94.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe there is some real purpose for my life.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>93.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.3 Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family characteristic</th>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The degree of closeness between family members.</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family’s ability to cope with stress.</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>45.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family’s ability to be flexible.</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>45.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family’s ability to share positive experience.</td>
<td>Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of communications between family members.</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family’s ability to resolve conflicts.</td>
<td>Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of time you spend together as a family.</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way problems are discussed.</td>
<td>Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fairness of criticism in our family.</td>
<td>Generally/Very Satisfied</td>
<td>35.29/35.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members concern for each other.</td>
<td>Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.4 Self Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Efficacy Description</th>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>58.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.</td>
<td>Moderately True</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>65.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
<td>Moderately True</td>
<td>51.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>62.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
<td>Moderately/Exactly True</td>
<td>48.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>51.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
<td>Exactly True</td>
<td>57.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
<td>Exactly True, Moderately True</td>
<td>51.43% 48.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.5 Correlations

| Is anyone in your family a minister or missionary? | I consider myself… | Teacher Background | -.048 |
| Teaching as a calling. | Select teaching again. | Teacher Background | .541 |
| I feel that life is a positive experience. | Life doesn’t have much meaning. | Spirituality | -.127 |
| I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in. | I feel good about my future. | Spirituality | .640 |
| Your family’s ability to cope with stress. | The amount of time you spend together as a family. | Family | .361 |
| The way problems are discussed. | The quality of communications between family members. | Family | .790 |
| It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals. | I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough. | Self Efficacy | .213 |
| If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution. | When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions. | Self Efficacy | .734 |
Appendix
Appendix

Appendix - Survey Results

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Appendix  – Survey Results

Q1 By completing these surveys I am acknowledging my willingness to participate in this valuable research about effective teachers.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I consent to participate by completing these surveys. (1)</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not consent to participate in this research project. (2)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2 National Teacher of the Year Winner or Finalist?

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 How many years have you taught?
Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

Answer Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 35 years (8)</td>
<td>31.43% 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I retired from teaching in a K-12 setting (9)</td>
<td>31.43% 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years (7)</td>
<td>28.57% 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years (6)</td>
<td>14.29% 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I left teaching to pursue other options outside education (11)</td>
<td>14.29% 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years (4)</td>
<td>11.43% 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years (5)</td>
<td>11.43% 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I left teaching to pursue other options in education (10)</td>
<td>8.57% 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years (1)</td>
<td>2.86% 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years (2)</td>
<td>2.86% 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years (3)</td>
<td>2.86% 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 35

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 I am from the ________.  
Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast (1)</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast (2)</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-West (3)</td>
<td>38.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest (4)</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest (5)</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5 I graduated from a ________ college.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 9
for completing the survey. Please contact me for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

Private (1)
Liberal Arts (2)
State (3)
Church Affiliated (4)
Online (5)
Other (please specify) (6)

Total Respondents: 35

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Highest Level of Education</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Certification</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 35

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q7 My mother and father were teachers.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

4 / 31
for anything to participate in this survey. Please contact volunteering for an
interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, both my parents were teachers</td>
<td>11.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, neither of my parents were teachers</td>
<td>65.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, my mother was a teacher.</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, my father was a teacher.</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8 My mother has a college degree.

Answered: 35 Skipped: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>25.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (2)</td>
<td>74.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 / 31
Q9 My father has a college degree.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

Answer Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (2)</td>
<td>68.57%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 35

Q10 I have a sibling(s) that is a teacher.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

Answer Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 / 31
Q11 At least one of my grandparents is/was a teacher.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

```
0%  20%  40%  60%  80%  100%
```

---

Q12 ________ encouraged me to be a teacher.

Answered: 29  Skipped: 6
for completing the survey. Please contact me for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother (1)</td>
<td>37.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father (2)</td>
<td>37.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent (3)</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Member (4)</td>
<td>24.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (5)</td>
<td>58.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend (6)</td>
<td>24.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 29

Basic Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q13 I consider myself...

Answered: 33  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spiritual. (1)</td>
<td>15.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 / 31
for something to participate in this survey. Please consider volunteering for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

精神和实践通过宗教，(2) 
宗教的，(3) 
非精神的，(4) 
非宗教的，(6) 

总受访者: 33

基本统计

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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Q14 是否你的家庭中有一位牧师或宣教士？

回答数: 35 跳过数: 0

答案选择 | 回应数
---|---
是 (1) | 31.43% | 11
否 (2) | 68.57% | 24
总和 | 35

基本统计

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Q15 你认为教学是一种使命感吗？就像一位牧师被召唤到他们的职业。

回答数: 35 跳过数: 0

9 / 31
Q16 Looking back, would you select teaching as your career again?

Answer Choices | Responses
---|---
Yes (1) | 97.06% (33)
No (2) | 2.94% (1)
Total | 34

Basic Statistics

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Q17 Would you like to share anything about your teaching career, spirituality, your family, and your self efficacy?

Answer Choices

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<th>Yes, I will respond in the comment box.</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<td>74.29%</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>No, thank you.</td>
<td>25.71%</td>
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Total 35

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Q18 I am willing to participate in an interview.

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0
Yes (1) 65.71%  
Maybe (2) 29.00%  
No (3) 14.23%  
Total Respondents: 35

Q19 I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I'm going.

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

Q20 I feel that life is a positive experience.

Answered: 33 Skipped: 2
Q21 I feel unsettled about my future.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

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Weighted Average

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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>8.83%</td>
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<td>61.76%</td>
<td>54</td>
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In considering to participate in this survey, please consider volunteering for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

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**Q22** I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

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**Q23** I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
Q24 I don't enjoy much about life.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
Q25 I feel good about my future.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

Q26 I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
for convenience to participants in this survey. Please contact volunteering for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

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Q27 Life doesn't have much meaning.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 8
Q28 I believe there is some real purpose for my life.

Answered: 33  Skipped: 2

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Q29 The degree of closeness between family members.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
For consenting to participate in this survey, I base consent on answering for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

Q30 Your family’s ability to cope with stress.
Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

Basic Statistics
Minimum: 1.80
Maximum: 4.00
Median: 3.49
Mean: 3.49
Standard Deviation: 1.20

180
Q31 Your family’s ability to be flexible.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

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Q32 Your family’s ability to share positive experience.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
Q33 The quality of communications between family members.

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

Basic Statistics
Minimum: 2.00  Maximum: 5.00  Median: 4.00  Mean: 4.83  Standard Deviation: 1.03

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for completing the survey. Please contact recruiting for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.
Q34 Your family’s ability to resolve conflicts.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

Q35 The amount of time you spend together as a family.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1
Q36 The way problems are discussed.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1
Q37 The fairness of criticism in our family.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

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Q38 Family members concern for each other.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 9
Q39 I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

Basic Statistics

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for consent to participate in this survey. Please contact volunteering for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

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<td>4.00</td>
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**Q42 I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.**

Answered: 35  Skipped: 8

**Basic Statistics**

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<td>4.00</td>
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**Q43 Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.**

Answered: 35  Skipped: 9
Q40 If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

Answered: 34  Skipped: 1

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Q41 It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

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Q44 I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

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</table>

28 / 31
Q45 I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

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Basic Statistics

- Minimum: 2.00
- Maximum: 4.00
- Median: 3.00
- Mean: 3.48
- Standard Deviation: 0.55

Q46 When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
Please consent to participate in this survey. I will conduct telephone for an interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

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**Q47 If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.**

Answered: 33  Skipped: 2

![Graph showing the distribution of responses to Q47](image)

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**Q48 I can usually handle whatever comes my way.**

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0
for contacting to participate in this survey. Please contact reflecting all on interview. Directions on each page. Contact information is located on last page.

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