BEGINNING TEACHERS, RESILIENCE AND RETENTION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University-San Marcos
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of PHILOSOPHY

by

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San Marcos, Texas
August 2007

BEGINNING TEACHERS, RESILIENCE AND RETENTION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have seen that in any great undertaking it is not enough for a man to depend simply upon himself.

Isna-la-wica (Lone Man) Teton Sioux

Many teachers have crossed my path on this education journey. Some have been those who have instructed through the courageous lives they have lived. I thank the noble and courageous participants of this study for allowing me to be a small part of their lives. Some other educators on this road have been my own adult children. It has been interesting to hear the very words that I spoke to them in their youth coming back at me when I least expected it. The encouragement to persist through childhood difficulties now has been sent back to me with love, laugher and joy. Thank you my darling children for your gift of love and faith. It truly is one of God's greatest gifts when your children grow up and become your friends.

To my deceased parents, my first teachers, "Wa do" (Cherokee – Thank you) for the gift of "loving" to learn. You encouraged my questions and my sense of wonder. You directed my feet on the right path and gave me the understanding that with God's help anything is possible.

Other teachers on this journey have been inspirational instructors that have sent me out seeking more information. My committee has been a part of this last set of

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The exit of beginning teachers from the teaching profession is a costly phenomenon not only for taxpayers but also for students. The focus of this study was to examine how beginning teachers with one, three or five years of practice developed resilience and if their ability to be resilient impacted their retention in the education profession. Six research questions guided this study. Fourteen beginning teachers who were nominated by their peers as to having the characteristics of resilience as defined by the literature participated in the study.

The use of qualitative methods facilitated the exploration of teacher beliefs about their resilience and its process. The study was grounded on the notion that teachers possess valuable insight about the process of resilience development. These 14 teachers

were very clear in the message that they sent about what they needed to stay focused on their jobs. The information was overwhelming that they needed a positive environment with good relationships in their educational communities. The building of positive relationships was a major factor in their being resilient.

These teachers' ability to stick around was built through the development of internal resources that the literature states are inherent in all of us. It was the feeling of these teachers that they were in the education profession for a reason. The driving force for these participants seemed to be having a purpose in life. To know one's self and one's passion or purpose enabled these teachers to stay focused on their professional goals as well as the goals for their students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Life is an error making and an error-correcting process, and nature in marking man's papers will grade him for wisdom as measured both by survival and by the quality of life of those who survive.

Jonas Salk

Survival is the strongest instinct of a species. A part of that instinct is the ability to change. Change is a process. Darwin states in *Origins of a Species (1958),* that when a plant or animal is located in a new environment in the midst of new competitors, the circumstances of its life, in general, will be changed in a fundamental way.

The rudd, a member of the carp family, is an invasive fish from Europe, Russia and central Asia (New Zealand Department of Conservation, 2002). This coldwater fish survives from the cool waters of Maine to the warm waters of Oklahoma and Texas. It has survived in large, slow rivers, lowland lakes and drainage ditches. To insure its continued existence, the rudd interbreeds with other species of the carp family (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 2000). The rudd adapts and thrives in areas that are difficult for survival because it takes advantage of its strengths and changes. The rudd is resilient.

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For one to be resilient means having the ability to withstand an interruption or difficulty in one's life without permanent damage to the biological system or entity. It is not only the capacity to rebound, but also being able to understand the necessity for change and adaptation. Dr. Al Siebert (1996) in his book *The Survivor Personality,* states, "Survivors do whatever they must to stay alive" (p.219). He recounts tales of how people from the Bataan death march, the Nazi holocaust and the Vietnam POWs used their resilient ability to stay alive. Siebert states that quick adaptability, curiosity, humor, and playfulness enhance one's innate survival abilities (Siebert, 1996). These are characteristics of resilient people who have adapted to the change in their environment, just like the rudd.

<div align="center">Statement of Problem</div>

Educators need to become adaptable like the rudd in order to survive the chaotic atmosphere of the information world. Due to the rapid flow of information and the complex nature of the world today, teaching has changed in numerous ways. As the pressures of the information era are felt, the teacher's role has expanded to take on new problems and edicts even though few of the old requirements have been discarded to make room for these changes. As change accelerates, educational innovations multiply, creating a sense of overload among teachers responsible for implementing them (Hargraves, 1994).

Many seasoned educational professionals are stunned at the swiftness of these changes because change is occurring faster now than at any other period in the history of education. It is not just the rate of innovation, but the course and nature of these changes, that are critical and perturbing to teachers (Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid & Shacklock,

2000). Educators are going to have to take advantage of their strengths and adapt in order to survive the stress resulting from changes in the twenty-first century.

Teaching school has become an exceedingly stressful profession because of the multiple types of changes facing the occupation at this time. Schools are being required to be accountable for resources and to compete for these resources as well as students, circumstances comparable to the competitive atmosphere of businesses. It is the dramatic reduction of government responsibility for social needs along with the increase in accountability, performance expectations, standards, national testing, and national curriculum requirements in schools that has created high stress in the educational systems and thus impacted teachers' work (Smyth et al., 2000).

Just as the rudd has become acclimatized to different, difficult surroundings and systems, so are educators going to have to adapt to the multifaceted nature of today's world to not only survive but to thrive. The rate of change taking place throughout the education world has become so accelerated that educators are more at risk than ever before and they must take the responsibility for enduring the course of change. To counter the harmful effects of stress in a chaotic environment, teachers need to become resilient.

Global Dilemma

Teacher stress is an increasingly global problem. The global quandary is evidenced by various studies undertaken in numerous countries including the United States (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990), the United Kingdom (Trendall, 1989), Australia (Solman & Feld, 1989), Canada (Hembling & Gilliland, 1981) Finland (Makinen & Kinnunen, 1986), Israel (Smilansky, 1984), New Zealand (Dewe, 1986),

Sweden (Tellenback, Brenner, & Lofgren, 1983), and the West Indies (Payne &

Furnham, 1987). Over one third of teachers in these studies considered teaching as

extremely stressful.

In Hong Kong, the occurrence of multiple cases of teacher suicide has highlighted

the pressure and turmoil of teaching in China (Chan, 1998). In less extreme

manifestations, this stress phenomenon is causing teachers to retire or leave education for

other occupations, creating a shortage of teachers in classrooms across the world.

United States

The teacher shortage is a phenomenon being felt in the United States also.

Richard Ingersoll (2001), associate professor of education at Philadelphia University

when comparing statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S

Department of Education, the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Followup

Survey of 1999-2000 found that in the United States there was a higher turnover rate

during the first year for the teaching profession (14%) than for other professions (11%).

Teaching has a "higher rate of turnover than the same higher-status professions

(professors at 9.3%; technology & scientific professionals from 3.6% to 9.2%) about the

same as other female semi-professions (nurses at 18%) and less turnover than some

lower-status, lower-skill occupations (federal clerical workers at 30%)" (Ingersoll,

2003,p.11). He stated that departures across other occupations had been quite stable over

the past decade.

Ingersoll (2003) also stated that fourteen percent of public school teachers leave

after their first year in the classroom. Thirty-three percent of teachers leave after their

third year of teaching. Almost fifty percent of new teachers drop out of the profession by

the fifth year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003). The Michigan Education Association (2000) describes the retention benchmark of the first five years for new teacher retention as shortening to the first three years. The association predicts that one in five new teachers will leave the profession within three years of entry (Michigan Education Association, 2000).

The teacher shortage crisis affects the nation at a time when the United States is seeing increased immigration and the anticipated retirement of one-half of the teaching force (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000). In addition, fewer college students have been entering the teaching profession (Pan & Mutchler, 2000). It is estimated that by 2008, the United States will need 2 million more new teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Texas

In 2003, school districts in Texas faced a major exit of teachers due to a new federal law concerning social security benefits. The Windfall Elimination Provision stated employees of federal, state, and local governments, who are eligible for pensions not covered by social security, would have a reduction in social security benefits. Because of this change in social security, some of the teachers chose to retire and use the Texas teacher rehire policy to be rehired back in the field. Many others elected to leave the profession at that time (Trinh, 2004). It is estimated that an average of 9,000 teachers in Texas will retire each year during the next decade. By 2010, it is estimated that one-third of the present teaching force probably will have retired (Hetzler, 2002). Data makes it increasingly clear that recruiting and retaining teachers are of the utmost importance.

The U. S. government has increased the pressure on school districts to retain qualified teachers with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This legislation not only requires students to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state standards, but also mandates a "highly qualified" teacher for those students in core academic subjects by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (NCLB, 2001). With the demands of NCLB and the estimates of the U.S. Department of Education, the prospect of a lack of qualified teachers for urban inner city schools will detrimentally effect a student population that can least afford it (Lucksinger, 2000).

New projects have been started in major universities such as Harvard University to explore why new teachers leave and how new teachers can be supported so as to retain them (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). Texas has also mandated a novice teacher support program but state funds have not been allocated for the program. The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) compiled a report on novice teacher induction in 1998 because Texas loses more than 30 percent of its beginning teachers within the first two years of service. In 1995, the Texas Education Agency reported that 19% of novice teachers leave after the first year of teaching, 12% after the second year of teaching and 50% after the fifth year of teaching (SBEC, 1998) creating a shortage of an estimated 44,000 teaching positions (Lucksinger, 2000).

Recruitment or Retention

Certo and Fox (2002) state the teacher shortage problem is being misdiagnosed as a 'recruitment' problem when it is really a 'retention' crisis. Most of the studies on teacher attrition and retention focus largely on teachers' personal characteristics.

Ingersoll (2001), however, found school characteristics and organizational conditions, including lack of administrative support, salary, student discipline and motivation, class size, inadequate planning time, and lack of opportunity for advancement, have significant effects on teacher turnover, even after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools. All of these characteristics result in high teacher stress.

The organizational environments of teachers can be problematic and stressful. The teacher's workday hours may appear attractive, but over 90 percent of teachers work more than forty hours per week (Chan, 1998). Lack of time, classroom management problems (Abel & Sewell, 1999), social problems, lack of community support (Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996) and absence of professional empowerment (Pithers, 1995) are major factors creating stress in teachers (Certo & Fox, 2002).

Researchers (Certo & Fox, 2002; Smyth et al., 2000; Ingersoll, 2001; & Pithers, 1995) have connected a number of job satisfaction factors to teacher retention. These researchers generally agreed that all of these aspects are a part of the teacher retention puzzle. Multiple job-related factors cause some teachers to experience high levels of stress. When stress increases, many people display strain-related performance and health symptoms. They worry more, feel discouraged, experience aches and pains, let problems obsess them, act like a victim, feel angry and bitter about the world, sleep poorly, and finish tasks improperly or not on schedule (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). Stress-reduction activities can help teachers cope, avoid burnout and lessen the rate of attrition (Howard & Johnson, 2002).

Cost of Teacher Attrition

The exit of beginning teachers from the profession is a costly phenomenon, not only for the schools and districts, but also more importantly for the students. Consensus among researchers and educators is that the single most important component in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). According to Texas State Comptroller, Susan Combs, " A direct correlation can be made between student test scores and the presence of a stable and qualified (meaning teachers who are teaching in their field of certification) teaching staff" (p. 3). In Texas, experience counts and students that are taught by teachers with more than five years of experience consistently score better on the TAKS test (Combs, 2006).

In an *Issue Brief,* The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) gave a conservative estimate for the national cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession at $5.8 billion a year (Graziano, 2005). Not readily apparent in a school district's annual budget, these costs are embedded in expenditures in many areas, including termination, teacher recruitment, separation-processing, learning curves, training, and orientation/training requirements for new teachers. This does not include the cost of teachers who transfer to other schools or districts (Shockley, Guglielmino & Watlington, 2006). Many analysts think that the expenditure may be even higher (Portner, 2005). Nationally, it costs a district $11,000 for each teacher who leaves. Therefore, if beginning teachers leave later after the first year and during the first five critical years of teaching then the exit costs mount for the district when considering the training costs for these teachers. This does not include indirect costs to schools' lost

investment in professional development, curriculum, and school-specific knowledge (Graziano, 2005).

The cost of teacher turnover in the state of Texas is estimated at $13,329 per teacher (Combs, 2006). In Texas, it has recently been calculated that the state annual cost for teacher attrition is $502.5 million based on the average teacher turnover rate of 15.5 percent of the population (Portner, 2005). The cost of extreme teacher attrition to public education beyond the expense of normal operating costs in districts is a waste of tax-payers' money and it does not contribute to the education of Texas children (Shockley, et al., 2006). To benefit the students of Texas and reduce the cost of teacher attrition, resilience development needs to be investigated so as to reduce the exodus of beginning teachers.

Education's Resilience Challenge

The potential for resilience resides in all of us. Mankind could not have survived as a species without resilience. As individuals and as a species, resilience in the face of difficult circumstances serves to prepare us for future challenges (Myers & Nance, 1999). Life's adversities provide learning that builds the capacity to resist or to cope with similar events in the future. People develop persistence and competency dealing with these difficulties situations, which are valuable tools for rising to challenges (Benard, 2004).

Human beings are experimenters, explorers, and discoverers. The species is an organism, which seeks challenges, tests limits, and learns through experience. Humans use and retain what works to meet their needs (Myers & Nance, 1999). Because the human organism is wired to maintain and preserve humankind, because it is a social

being, it can learn through observation and is always looking for ways to overcome

challenges (Benard, 2004).

The challenge for education is to learn about the resilient aspect of the human

organism and to build supportive educational settings, which will foster the resilient

capabilities of teachers and their students.

<center>Purpose of Study</center>

Dr. Sonia Nieto, states that hope is the essence of teaching and must be

established in ways that will improve the retention of teachers so that the potential of

public education can be achieved (Nieto, 2003). Bernshausen and Cunningham (2001)

suggest that part of this hope/aspiration is developing resilience in teachers. These

researchers insist that new teachers who are not resilient cannot preserve their enthusiasm

and commitment over time.   Increasing teacher resilience can enhance teaching

effectiveness, heighten career satisfaction, and better prepare teachers to adjust to

education's ever changing conditions (Bobek, 2002).

To effectively survive the tumultuous conditions of its environment, the rudd

adapts. How can the beginning teacher emulate the rudd's resilience? This study looked

at specific questions about beginning teachers, their resilience development and the use

of agency in the process of that development.   The research questions were:

1. How do beginning teachers develop resilience?

    a. What are the personal attributes of beginning teachers that constitute

       their resilience?

    b. What is the role of agency in the development of resilience in

       beginning teachers?

    c. How do environmental factors impact the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

    d. What types of experiences contribute to the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

2. How does resilience contribute to beginning teachers' retention?

The purpose of this study was to explore these questions concerning resilience and its impact on beginning teachers and their retention.

Significance of the Study

The goal of this research was to increase understanding of how beginning teachers develop resilience and the impact of choice on that resilient growth process. The study was unique in that it applied resilience and agency constructs to beginning teachers and captured their voices as they related how resilience influenced their retention in the education field. By doing so, the study afforded the potential to fill some gaps in existing knowledge about resilience. It is hoped that this examination of beginning teachers' resilience and its impact on retention, will help teacher preparation programs and public school districts to develop programs that foster resilience and thus possibly retain a highly trained teaching force.

Delimitations

Broad generalization was not an aim of this qualitative design. The participants had been purposefully selected, as had the five sites and the time period. This research study was confined to the first three significant time periods in a teachers' career as purposed by the literature. The literature stated that the first, third and fifth year of a teacher's career are significant because those are the years that beginning teachers leave

the profession. Beginning teachers from each of the significant experience time periods

were chosen for the study through a nomination process involving ratings by peers,

administrators, and counselors. It is recognized that the defining criteria provided to the

nominators may have influenced their identification of resilient teachers. This research

on beginning teachers was limited to five different school districts but also cut across all

grade levels. The context described by the teachers may aid the readers in making

judgments of transferability of the findings to their own environments. Finally, the

decision to restrict data collection of this multiple case study to one spring semester may

also have influenced findings. The spring semester was selected because it was presumed

to provide the best opportunity for observation of resilient teacher behavior during times

of high stress.

Limitations

Since the data for the study were collected primarily by way of in-depth

interviews and observation, the limitation of the human as research instrument applied.

The study was dependent on the willingness of teachers to be open and candid in their

responses. Political or personal concerns may have limited the complete accuracy of

responses. Providing a snapshot view by virtue of the limitation of time restricted the

study. It is important to acknowledge that factors within a school are not consistent over

time. Consequently, it was necessary to have participants describe the temporary context

in which the study took place. Due to the fact that the study was conducted in several

urban school districts and targeted a small number of selected respondents in the

beginning of their careers, conclusions may not be generalizable in the traditional sense.

Assumptions

It was assumed that aspects of a teacher's personal and professional life do in fact influence their sense of agency. While supporting evidence located in the literature thus far was limited, it is assumed that a teacher's sense of agency (of having a choice) and faith in their choices impacted the outcomes of their students and the teachers' professional careers. The selected conceptual framework of resilience that guided the study was useful in understanding resilient teachers and their choices. Resilient teachers have certain processes they use to buffer chaotic atmospheres.

Definitions

Resilience/Resiliency

In the literature resilience and resiliency have often in the past been used as interchangeable. But Masten (1994) states that the term "resiliency" carries the inference of a personality trait. He recommends the term resilience be used solely because it refers to the process of positive modification in one's life during challenging life conditions. For the purpose of this paper, resilience will be used unless the term resiliency is necessary to keep the author's words and meaning authentic.

Resilience

Resilience is the process in which people develop the ability to adapt to changes, demands and disappointments successfully despite the risks during the course of life (Masten, 1994).

Beginning Teacher

In the educational literature, a novice teacher is usually defined as one who is in his/her first year of teaching and a new teacher is used for those within the first five years range

of experience. For lack of a better word, to define those teachers who are in the

significant time periods for leaving the education profession as stated by the literature, I

will use "beginning teacher" to describe those teachers who have one, three, or five years

of experience.

Agency

Agency is a continuous flow of conduct by an individual. It means that one always has

the ability to act in one way as opposed to another. It is the presence of choice in the

action (Giddens, 1979). Agency concerns the ways that people exercise some level of

control over their own lives (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is one's belief concerning his or her capabilities to produce or perform. It is

the ability to implement or influence events that affect one's life. Self-efficacy shapes

how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave (Bandura, 1994).

At risk students

At risk students are those who are identified by risk factors and expectations of poor or

negative outcomes (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). Risk factors include chaotic and

disruptive living environments, poverty and maltreatment (Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe,

1993). The term high-risk is applied to children from particularly stressful environments,

such as children from dysfunctional families (Glantz & Johnson, 1999).

Summary

The issue of teacher stress and a looming teacher shortage is complex and widespread. Yet, according to a report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1998), the number of teachers prepared each year is more than enough to satisfy the demand. However, only 60 percent of newly prepared teachers actually enter the field as full-time teachers (Howard, 2003).

Keeping teachers seems to be a far greater problem than preparing new ones. Retaining teachers is one of the top educational challenges in the United States today. Retention may be the fundamental solution to the teacher shortage problem (Barnett, 2004). The high teacher dropout rate is not new, but seeking information for the retention of excited excellent teachers, both beginning and experienced, is paramount for the increased accountability requirements and cost effectiveness requirements in today's education world.

Without question, teachers have many demands on their time and abilities, which creates varying levels of stress. Increased class sizes, fewer teachers in specialized areas, and community discontent are only a few of the probable causes, but all of these factors increase teacher stress. Teachers show marked individual differences in their reactions to educational stressors (Milstein & Farkas, 1988).   Their choice of coping strategies could affect their health and psychological well being, which in turns influences their decision of whether to continue in education or not (Chan, 1998).

In education, the construct of resilience has gained recognition as a framework for developing student success (Waxman, Gray & Padron, 2002). The premise behind this concept is the social construct that young people are at risk and if the risky environment

can be identified then the students may be assisted to reduce their risk and prevent failure

(Brown, 2004). Critics of the "at risk" paradigm believe that the term "at risk" presents a

risk factor itself. Instead, it is felt that research and practice should shift from the deficit

model to a wellness model (Henry & Milstein, 2004). The focus should be on the

strengths and potential that students bring to the educational process (Wolin, 2004).

Before education systems can develop programs promoting resilience for

students, they must have teachers who can model resilient behavior. The psychological

construct of resilience may provide a means of identifying why some teachers not only

survive, but also succeed under stressful situations. Gray (2001) states that fostering

educator resilience should be a priority if teachers are expected to have a positive

influence on their students and their communities.

Before one can foster resilience in teachers, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon

(2004) explain it is important to look at how adults link learning to their experiences and

to allow them time to integrate the information and adapt. Glickman et al. (2004) further

clarify how adults learn by using Wilson's (1993) theory that adults learn as they

experience and act in situations or as they are acted upon by situations. The aim of this

research study was to identify the learning conditions that build resilience in beginning

teachers during the action of an experience and its impact on their retention in the field.

For the concept of teacher resilience raises hope for tomorrow's educators (Nieto, 2003).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Small change, small wonders--these are the currency of my endurance and ultimately of my life.

Barbara Kingsolver

Since the number of novice teachers being prepared is more than enough to satisfy the demand, it is important for educational leaders to critically examine the reasons for high teacher turnover rates. In Australia, Smyth and colleagues (2000) explain that the consequences of psychological pressure, which creates teacher stress, are leaving teachers feeling demoralized, anxious, disillusioned, powerless, and with a negative self image. The continuous work overload requires survival reactions to counter the physical and emotional distress that results in burnout.

Characteristics of Burnout

Stress and burnout are occupational hazards, to which all members of the helping professions are exposed, including teachers. The term "burnout" was originally coined by Freudenberger (1983) to describe health-care workers who were physically and psychologically depleted. Burnout represents a reaction to the constant emotional strain of dealing exclusively with others in need (Maslach, 1982). Carlson and Thompson

(1995) defined teacher burnout as the emotional, physical and sensory exhaustion that destroys the joy of teaching. Although the symptoms of burnout may be very personal, they are generally described as a list consisting of the lack of symptoms. This list includes the lack of: energy, joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, motivation, interest, zest, dreams for life, ideas, concentration, permission to play, self-confidence, and humor (Farber, 1991).

Teachers display signs of emotional exhaustion when they are no longer able to give of themselves to students as they did in the beginning of their careers. They experience depersonalization when they develop negative, cynical, and sometimes callous attitudes toward students, parents, and/or colleagues (Burke, Greenglass & Schwarzer, 1996). Teachers also have feelings of diminished personal accomplishment when they perceive themselves as ineffective in helping students to learn and in fulfilling other school responsibilities. Educators who fall victim to burnout are likely to be less sympathetic toward students, have a lower tolerance for classroom disruption, be less apt to prepare adequately for class, and feel less committed and dedicated to their work (Farber & Miller, 1981). Glickman et al., (2004) explains how this disillusionment with teaching often leads to boredom followed by resignation. Saffici (1996) found that prospective teachers' success was directly related to work motivation, hardiness (resilience), and personal and teacher efficacy. He also clarified how locus of control was positively linked to work motivation.

Fiske and Chiriboga (1990) found that the resources a person brings to the problem and how the problem is viewed within the social context are more important than the stressors creating the adverse situation (Fiske & Chiriboga in Glickman et al.,

2004). Teachers feeling disillusionment, facing burnout, and loss of their motivation for the work need some type of intervention to cope with the pressures assailing them daily. These teachers need to learn strategies that will help them to become more adaptable/resilient.

<div align="center">Resilience Theory</div>

Research on resilience is characterized by three phases of investigation. The first phase was focused on phenomenological classification of development assets and protective factors. Survivors of high-risk situations and researchers who wanted to know how they survived instigated research on resilience. This phase was the quest to identify the phenomenological characteristics of young (mostly children) survivors. Most of the resilience literature of this period was to illuminate those qualities that assist people in bouncing back from adversity. The resilient qualities of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and support systems represented the outcome of the first wave of resilient inquiry (Richardson, 2002).

The second phase depicted resilience as a "disruptive and reintegrative process for accessing resilience qualities" (Richardson, 2002 p.307). This phase was an expedition to discover the process of developing the identified resilient qualities. Through this era of research, resilience became defined as a coping or adaptation process (Richardson, 2002).

The third and current phase typifies the multidisciplinary perspective of resilience, which is the drive that compels a person to develop through hardships. It became obvious that some type of motivational strength was necessary to initiate the resilience process. Resilience theory was explained as an inspirational energy within

everyone, which impels them to "pursue wisdom, self-actualization, and altruism and to be in harmony with a spiritual source of strength" (Richardson, 2002 p.309). This recent cycle of research on resilience has focused on identifying the processes associated with positive developmental outcomes (Werner, 1990).

Resilience Defined

Resilience is an individuals' ability to adjust and adapt to changes, demands, and disappointments that come up in the course of life (Morris, 2002). Thus, an individual who successfully adapts despite risk and adversity is resilient (Masten, 1994). Resilience refers to a powerful process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. The phenomenon of resilience is a response to some extent to the vulnerability and protection processes by which a person's reacts to the risk situation. The successful encountering of life's challenges and the overcoming of adversities to move on in one's life involves the ability to sustain psychological stability in the face of stress (Flach, 1997). People exhibit an adaptation development process that allows procedures operating in their lives to redirect actions into an alternative path. It is the individual's varying responses to risk and the resulting development of successful problem solving that creates resilience (Rutter, 1990).

There is no universally accepted definition of 'resiliency'. Richardson and colleagues (1990) describe it as "the process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills prior to the disruption that results from the event" (Richardson, Nieiger, Jenson, & Kumpfer, 1990, p. 34). Several researchers describe resilience as being the "process of self-rightening and growth" (Higgins, 1994, p. 1; & Werner & Smith, 1992).

Wolin and Wolin (1993) define resilience as the "capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself"(p. 5).

Rirkin and Hoopman (1991) define resilience as the capacity to spring back, rebound, and successfully adapt in the face of adversity. They further believe that one can develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply to the stress that is inherent in today's world. Resilience is not innate; rather, it derives from the interaction between the individual and the environment. Resilience factors enable an individual to successfully cope with negative life events (Robinson, 2000). Linfton (1994) has identified resilience as the human ability of all individuals to modify and change no matter the risks. Thus, resilience is a strategy developed during one's journey through life, which allows a person to bounce back from adversity.

Resilience as a Process

During the last two decades, the focus of empirical work has shifted away from identifying protective factors to understanding underlying protective processes. Rather than simply studying which child, family, and environmental factors are involved in resilience, researchers (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Reynolds, 199; Tarter & Vanyukov, 1999) are increasingly striving to understand how such factors may contribute to positive outcomes. It became clear that positive adaptation despite exposure to adversity involves a developmental progression, such that new vulnerabilities and/or strengths often emerge with changing life circumstances (Cowen, Work, & Wyman, 1997).

Richardson, Neiger, Jensen and Kumpfer (1990) describe the resilient process as a function of conscious or unconscious choice. They explain the process as an interaction with the environment and making a choice to reintegrate with resilience back to a state of stability or to continue in a state of uncertainty. This means that people have a choice (consciously or unconsciously) of how their reactions to the disruptions of life will shape their future. The coping process or "resilience" could result in growth, knowledge, self-understanding, and increased strength of resilient qualities or it could not.

Masten (1994) warns that the term "resiliency" carries the implication of a personality trait. He recommends the term "resilience" be used solely when referring to the perpetuation of positive modification under challenging life conditions. Masten believes that any scientific depiction of resilience as a personal quality can unintentionally pave the way for perceptions that some individuals are lacking in "what it takes" to overcome adversity (Masten, 1994). Such perspectives do little to clarify the processes underlying resilience or to point in the right direction for the design of appropriate interventions (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990).

The emerging conceptions of resilience as a process are coming from the fields of psychiatry, psychology and sociology. The idea of resilience as a process, that people can learn to bounce back from negative life experiences, is a fairly new construct. It challenges people and educators in particular to focus on strengths instead of deficits. This philosophical revolution away from a negative-based insufficient model of human development to a proactive wellness-based model demands a new lens for analyzing individual behaviors. Research on resilience proposes that with an adequate resilience-supporting environment, strength can emerge from adversity (Higgins, 1994; Richardson,

Neiger, Jensen & Kumpfer, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992; and Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Everyone has a capacity for resilience (Benard, 1991).

Resilience Building Process

It seems that when an individual of any age encounters adversity, he or she

experiences individual and environmental protective aspects that buffer against adversity.

These buffering strategies protect the individual against the same harmful environment

that traumatizes others. With enough "protection", the individual adapts to that adversity

without experiencing a significant disruption in his or her life (Silliman, 1998).

The individual stays within a comfort zone or moves to a level of increased

resilience because of the emotional strength and healthy coping mechanisms developed in

the process of overcoming the adversity. Without the necessary protection, an individual

goes through a process of psychological disruption. Stress evokes tension; the

psychological changes that accompany stress reactions lead to a disruption in life (Flach,

1997). Over time the individual incorporates the processes from that disruption. Again,

the availability of personal and environmental protective factors will govern the type of

behaviors incorporated. If this assimilation is dysfunctional, then such behaviors as

alcoholism or drug abuse is incorporated, which are characteristics of unhealthy

modification. Richardson and his colleagues believe that positive or negative behavior

assimilation is just the process of life (Richardson et al., 1990).

The resilient individual, throughout the stages of life, has developed problem-

solving and information skills. Resilient people know how to find and use information to

solve problems. When faced with difficulties, resilient people will employ a problem-

solving model to determine alternatives for dealing with their dilemma (Jones, 2003).

When a person has competence in one period of life, it is thought that the positive results of that situation makes the individual highly adaptable to the environment and more prepared for competence in the next disturbing period of life (Sroufe & Rutter, 1984). Resilient individuals develop many processes for dealing with life's problems.

Resilience Characteristics

Resilient individuals demonstrate various characteristics commonly associated with survival. Wolin and Wolin (1993) have proposed seven internal characteristics, termed "resiliencies", as typical in both resilient children and adults based on their studies of children and youth from alcoholic and other stressful environments. Individual characteristics reported from the Wolin and Wolin study, which develop internal resiliencies are: initiative, independence, insight, relationship, humor, creativity, and morality. The observations by the Wolins are consistent with other empirical studies of resilient children (Balwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Bernard, 1991; Garbaino, 1992; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992) and of resilient adults (Klohnen, Vandewater & Young, 1996). Werner and Smith's 30-year longitudinal study of a community's children designated to be at high risk found that a third of the children were thriving because of good self-esteem, adaptability and achievement goals. These internal characteristics or "resiliencies" are individual buffering abilities.

Initiative is the individual's ability to take action (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Both externally and internally resilient individuals are usually able to assess needs and how to deal with them (Siebert, 1996). This ability to assess needs is reality testing, which is helped by good cognitive abilities, and reveals the part of reality that matters for survival. Things are seen as they are and are not easily dismissed. There is a clear distinction

between fantasy and reality. This enables resilient individuals to act effectively in difficult situations where others might be paralyzed (Vanderpol, 2002). In childhood, initiative starts with exploring, and in adolescence these behaviors sharpen and become deliberate work skills. These skills broaden and deepen in adults becoming an enduring part of the self (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Independence is the individual's ability to act with autonomy, to be able to separate oneself from external situations. The same type of growth can be seen as children. Children start straying from problematic situations, and then as adolescents they disengage, and finally as adults separate themselves from their problems (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). These adults can make their own decisions and take action without asking for approval from other people (Siebert, 1996).

Insight is the individual's perception of what is wrong and why it is wrong (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). A strong capacity for self-reflection and self-awareness of problems is a protective factor. Self-awareness of one's own and others' mental state is critical for autonomy and one's sense of identity. Thus the use of empathy is important.

Empathy is the ability to understand accurately what another human thinks and/or feels (Siebert, 1996). The capacity for empathy enables the individual to tolerate difficult and abusive situations by focusing on making connections with others in the same situation. It allows resilient individuals to take responsibility for what has to be done and take charge in difficult situations without feeling victimized. Many resilient individuals have a need to prove that adversity can be overcome (Vanderpol, 2002).

Relationship is the individual's set of complex abilities that allows him/her to form relationships with others (Vanderpol, 2002). Resilient people engage others rather

than alienate them. They believe that problems are opportunities to strengthen relationships (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). Resilient individuals often possess the ability to find safe haven with persons whom they trust, such as a favorite schoolteacher. It is this ability to recruit people into their lives who can dispense help without pity that helps with their survival (Vanderpol, 2002).

Humor is the individual's ability to find the comic in the tragic (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). People are less able to solve problems and make good decisions when strongly upset. Laughing reduces tension and competence improves. It gives a person a different, less frightening perspective of the problem (Siebert, 1996). Viktor Frankl (1962) in *Man's Search for Meaning* stated "Humor was another of the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation" (p.115). A sense of humor requires adding some distance and provides some helpful levity (Vanderpol, 2002).

Creativity is the individual's ability to use the imagination (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Creative people turn problems into advantages (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). Creativity allows people to improvise solutions to problems without proper or obvious tools or materials. It is the ability to put objects to unfamiliar uses (Coutu, 2002). Creativity and humor are related resiliencies and safe harbors of the imagination (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Morality is the individual's ability to act with integrity (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Clear ego boundaries protect people from becoming embroiled in other people's pathology while maintaining an empathic attitude (Vanderpol, 2002). The Wolins (1993) further state that just one of these characteristics in a child or an adult can be enough to propel that person to overcome the challenges of dysfunctional and stressful

environments (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). It is the successful completion of meeting these

challenges that create additional resiliencies. From that first successful struggle against

adversity, one learns to develop other strengths when difficulties again appear.

Resilience can be learned (Higgins, 1994).

Resilient Person Profile

Henderson and Milstein (2003) indicate there are also individual internal

protective practices that promote resiliency-facilitating behaviors. These behaviors are:

- Gives of self in service to others and /or a cause
- Uses life skills, including good decision making, assertiveness, impulse control, and problem solving
- Has ability to be a friend, ability to form positive relationships
- Has sense of humor
- Has self discipline
- Has independence
- Has positive view of personal future
- Has flexibility
- Has capacity for and connection to learning
- Has self-motivation
- Has personal competence, is "good at something"
- Has feelings of self-worth and self-confidence

Historically, psychological research in resilience has focused on the risk and

protective factors of those children who had showed resilient characteristics. These

children thrived better than would have been anticipated. In other words, they had

"overcome the odds." Werner and Smith (1992) conducted one of the earliest studies that

helped to establish the field of resilience in 1955 on the island of Kauai. They followed

and assessed children from the age of two to over thirty years. These children were

found to have risk factors of poverty, prenatal stress, family discord, and low educational

level of the parents. The significant findings from these early studies suggested that

those individuals who exhibited higher levels of competence than their counterparts had a

number of identifiable early advantages. Good relationships with caregivers, more attention from caregivers, less separation from caregivers, less family conflict, less exposure to less stressors, and better physical health were identified factors that contributed to the success of these children (Werner, 1989).

During the 1980s a number of studies were conducted to investigate children who were "at risk" due to the mental illness or disabling condition of a parent (Anthony, 1987; Garmezy, 1985; Goldstein & Tuma, 1987; Masten, 1989; & Watt, 1984). Richardson (2002) summed up the findings when he explained that resilience is a complex interaction between elements of external and internal worlds.

Adults and Resilience

Almost all of the research on resilience to date has focused on children and adolescents. An understanding of how adults exposed to both personal and work-related stress bounce back is just now emerging. The work of researchers expanding their studies to include adults appears to show that the process of resilience building is similar to the one for children (Richardson et al., 1990). Resilient children and resilient adults look remarkably similar (Higgins, 1994). Benard (1991) characterizes resilient children as socially competent, with life skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and the ability to take initiative. Resilient children have a sense of purpose and foresee a positive future for themselves. They have special interests, goal directedness and motivation to achieve in school and in life (Benard, 1991).

Higgins (1994) characterizes resilient adults similarly, noting that they have positive relationships, adept problem solving skills, and the motivation for self-improvement.   Resilient adults are often purposefully involved in social change and

activism. They often have a sense of educational motivation, which is evidenced by their educational attainment. Higgins (1994) also found that these adults typically have a sense of faith and consider themselves either spiritual or religious. Most of these individuals show the ability to construe some meaning and usefulness from the stress, trauma, and tragedy they have experienced. Higgins points out, however, that many adults who consider themselves resilient state that when they were children, the beginnings of their resilience were not always obvious to themselves or to others (Higgins, 1994).

Maddi and Khoshaba (2005) discovered in their twelve-year, longitudinal study of employees at Illinois Bell Telephone (IBT) that resilience could be learned in adulthood. They believe that resilience is not just an ability one is born with, but something anyone can learn and improve. Wolin and Wolin's (1993) review of research and clinical experience emphasizes that resilient people tend to seek healing from pain versus holding on to bitterness. They also draw on lessons from experience rather then repeating mistakes, and maintain openness and spontaneity in day-to-day relationships versus becoming hardened or rigid in interaction. Resilience in adult individuals is strongly correlated with humor and creativity, and mental and physical health.

Wolin and Wolin (1993) identify seven traits of adults who survived a troubled childhood: insight (awareness of dysfunction), independence (distancing self from troubles), relationships (supportive connections with others), initiative (self/other-help actions), creativity (self-expression, transformation), humor (re-framing in a less threatening way), and morality (justice and compassion rather than revenge). Rutter (1987) argues that resilience should be understood in terms of processes rather than just

identifying static factors or traits. Wolin and Wolin(1993) use the word traits and processes interchangeably. Traits are discussed as dynamic processes by which resilient persons adapt to and grow through challenge, rather than static properties, which somehow insulate the invulnerable (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). These observations are consistent with empirical studies of resilient children (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Bernard, 1991; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992) and adults (Klohnen, Vandewater, & Young, 1996). Resilience can be developed at any point in the life cycle (Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994).

Resilience Strategies

There are six consistent strategy themes (bonding, boundaries, life skills, support, high expectations, and meaningful opportunities) that have emerged from research showing how schools as well as families and communities can provide both the environmental protective factors and the conditions that foster individual protective factors. The first three strategy themes come from the research of Hawkins, Catalano and Miller (1992). First, increase bonding by increasing the connections between individuals and any prosocial person or activity that builds strong bonds. Second, set clear and consistent boundaries. The development and consistent implementation of policies and procedures speaks to the importance of clarifying expectations of behavior. Third, teach life skills, including cooperation, healthy conflict resolution, resistance and assertiveness skills, communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and healthy stress management (Hawkins et al., 1992).

The last three strategy themes provide a bridge for building resilience and are based on Benard's (1991) research. Fourth, provide caring support through

unconditional positive regard and encouragement is one of the most critical elements that promotes resiliency. Fifth, set and communicate high expectations. It is important that expectations be both high and realistic in order to be an effective motivator. Sixth, provide opportunities for meaningful participation. This means giving one responsibility and opportunities for problem solving, decision making, planning, goal setting and helping others (Benard, 1991). Educational systems must have practices that operate to build resilience by enhancing a sense of inner self, which in turn allows the individual to build the skills needed for engagement with the outer world (Robinson, 2000).

Henderson and Milstein (2003) identify the environmental protective characteristics of families, schools, communities and peer groups that foster resilience. These environmental factors are:

- Promotes close bonds
- Values and encourages education
- Uses high-warmth, low-criticism style of interaction
- Sets and enforces clear boundaries (rules, norms, and laws)
- Encourages supportive relationships with many caring others
- Promotes sharing of responsibilities, service to others, "required helpfulness"
- Provides access to resources for meeting basic needs of housing, employment, health care, and recreation
- Expresses high and realistic expectations for success
- Encourages goal setting and mastery
- Encourages prosocial development of values (such as altruism) and life skills (such as cooperation)
- Provides leadership, decision making, and other opportunities for meaningful participation
- Appreciates the unique talents of each individual

Resilience and Agency

Research on resilience has defined six major constructs that are specific to the development of resiliency. These include four spheres of influence and two transactional

points between two domains. The four spheres of influence are: the challenge (acute stressors), the environmental context, the individual characteristics, and the outcome. The two transactional processes are (1) the intersection between the environment and between the individual and (2) the individual and the choice of outcome (Glantz & Johnson, 1999). It is the individual's choices and the belief about the ability to make a difference with the choice that leads to resilience.

Choice. Gordon and Song (1994) found that one's belief in oneself helps to develop resilience and motivate one towards positive achievement or positive outcome choice. The perception of being able to influence one's current environment and future destiny impacts resilience development (Rotter, 1954). Positive life experiences and adaptation are dependent on congruence between life circumstances and control beliefs (Christensen, Turner, Smith, Holman, & Gregory, 1991). "One of the most powerful predictors of positive life adaptation against environmental odds is a sense of powerfulness and an ability to modify one's negative life circumstances through direct actions or soliciting help from others" (Glantz & Johnson, 1999 p.200). Werner and Smith (1992) found resilient people were more hopeful about their ability to create positive outcomes for themselves and others. Resilient people believe in their personal capabilities (efficacy judgments) when making decisions. They have faith that their choices are capable of impacting the outcome of a situation.

Efficacy. Bandura (1997) explains that efficacy judgments are beliefs about individual capabilities, not necessarily accurate assessments of those capabilities. This is important because people regularly over or under estimate their actual abilities. These estimations may have consequences for the courses of action they choose to pursue and

the effort they exert in those pursuits. Over or under estimating capabilities also may

influence how well they use the skills they possess (Bandura, 1989). In most cases,

slightly over estimating one's actual capability has the most positive effect on

performance. He also states that people are more likely to purposefully pursue goals that

seem challenging, rewarding and achievable. Bandura states that an individual who has a

high sense of agency is more likely to persistently overcome obstacles and persevere in

the face of failure (Bandura, 1997). Agency concerns the ways that people exercise some

level of control over their own lives. Resilient people believe in their ability to influence

the environment through their decision making process.

Agency. The exercise of agency depends upon how individuals interpret efficacy

beliefs which, shapes information about experiences. Raudenbush, Rowan, and Cheong

(1992) interpret Bandura's (1986) work by characterizing perceived self-efficacy as "a

cognition that mediates between knowledge and action" (p.150). Efficacy beliefs are

created when individuals weigh and interpret their performance relative to other

information (Bandura,1997). Resilience is the outcome of this process " of negotiating

risk situations" (Rutter, 1990, p. 182) within the environment.

Giddens (1979) supported the concept of agency as being more than distinct

actions but as behavior demonstrated by a constant stream of conduct. He explained that

an acting subject is a decision maker. The acting person can make a decision at any point

in time to choose between existing courses of action. Oppenheim (1953) called this

"potential action (p.341)."   He stated that one had possibility of action and the power or

choice to pursue the action or to refrain. Kane (1985) defines choice as the creation of

intention or purpose. Acting agents have both control of their actions and choices of alternative courses of action (O'Conner, 1993).

Giddens (1979) termed the intentional behavior of one's conduct foundational agency. He believed that it was an intentional aspect of human behavior to have conscious definite goals in mind during the course of an action. Oppenheim (1953) stated that one's potential goal was the person's intent of action. Then any part of someone's goal is his/her intent, which he/she actually chooses.

Further explanations are provided by Giddens (1979) that decisive monitoring of action follows the action. He labeled this action as reflexive monitoring. He argued that reflexive monitoring was possible because people could explain the reasons for their actions. Oppenheim (1953) explains that choosing involves not only predicting but also evaluating. If one is faced with the decision whether to pursue a given goal, the choice will usually be determined by an evaluation. Giddens (1984) argues that human beings are knowledgeable agents, which means that they know about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their daily lives. He further states that people are able to describe what they do and why they do it. In agency terms, resilience is the ability to make conscious choices of action with specific goals in mind while navigating difficult situations in life.

As demonstrated by Silva and Radigan (2004) using an agency perspective while studying at risk immigrant students within a Texas school system, resilience is a choice. The focus of their analysis of success was on the concept of agency and how the students expressed it during their daily interactions.   Silva and Radigan used a three-phase model developed by Giddens (1979), which moved from a rudimentary procedure to a complete

agency process. This model presents the intervention of an acting subject who at any time could have acted differently in a possible flexible context.

This model demonstrates how development and knowledge of conscious choice in resilience works. In the first phase of the model, the human being's action operates at the most elemental level. It is a circular causal relationship called Homeostasis. Homeostasis is when a change in one item leads to a series of changes that eventually returns the original organism (actor) back to the initial condition. It resembles an automatic conception of events where the person and environment operate almost "blindly"(Giddens, 1979, p.78). In this stage, a filter does not influence the actions of the individual. The personal action of the individual is more like "a mechanical reaction (not fully agentic) to the operation of the system… nothing is being considered outside the causal loop" (Silva & Radigan, 2004, p.120).

In phase two, there is a control/filter, which is an intervention process. In this stage, for teachers, an administrator, colleague or a mentor would act as the crucial filter. The individual changes during the process of feedback from the system (administrator, colleague or mentor). The question is, does this represent resilient behavior of teachers according to the literature? Would the individual continue to develop (change/grow) if the intervention was removed or would the teacher return to the original behavior? Was it the situation that forced the change on the teacher or did that teacher make the voluntary choice to adapt (Silva & Radigan, 2004)? Is the beginning teacher's behavior change brought about by feedback from the system or is the teacher acted upon rather than acting voluntarily? The question is whether the teacher can learn from the

experience and use the process in the future to continue to use and develop the support systems and protective factors that enable the growth of resilience.

In the third phase, the Agentic Model hypothesizes that the significant issue in developing resilience is how the individual uses the protective factors (support systems) in the process of negotiating risk situations. The distinctive element in this phase is that the action taken belongs to a higher consciousness involving self-regulation by the individual. The circumstances are scrutinized through an examination of the deliberate conduct of the person. The individual has to make a choice. "The choice made is based not merely on the presence of system intervention (existence of protective factors), but also on his/her knowledge of the social situation, and monitoring of the setting and of the interaction" (Silva & Radigan, 2004, p.122).

The question is whether the beginning teacher who faces situational hazards is making choices that create a directional change that results in the building of resilience. Richardson, Nieiger, Jenson, and Kumpfer (1990) state that accessing resilient qualities is a function of conscious or unconscious choices. The individual's resilient or non-resilient behavior is the result of making a definite choice. The ability to make a difference with one's choice is a major component of a resilient mindset (Brooks & Goldstein, 2004). It is the belief of one's choices creating a positive difference that allows a person to persist through adversity.

Resilience and Persistence

Persistence in goal attainment is a basic human activity (Fox & Hoffman, 2002). It is this persistence in the midst of difficult situations that most teachers experience, which needs to be understood. Beliefs teachers have about their abilities to affect

students in desired ways (self-efficacy beliefs) influence teachers persistence when things do not go smoothly. When teachers believe in themselves and their ability to influence their students, they persist longer through difficult situations (Milner, 2002).

In a study of 16 to 19 year old high school students, Hamil (2003) found factors that promoted competence and persistence despite adversity. They are: (a) relationships with caring prosocial adults, (b) good problem solving skills, (c) self-efficacy, and (d) good intellectual functioning. Ziegler, Bain, Bell, McCallum and Briam (2002) confirmed in their study of adult learners that "positive self" beliefs influence persistence. Lufi, Parish-Plass, and Cohen (2003) also found that adult learners' positive interaction with faculty members had a direct bearing on whether students persisted and had academic success.

It is the positive feedback and relationships that teachers receive and build with students, parents, and fellow colleagues that enable teachers to persevere. The relationship support that teachers receive helps to build sources of confidence, motivation, and self-efficacy. The building of resilience through positive relationships becomes the foundation of perseverance (Milner, 2002).

Henderson and Milstein (2003) believe it is important that the development of resilience be consciously promoted among educators so as to help them persevere. The conditions under which teachers work are difficult and the environment impinge on the building of educator resilience. Educators' sense of well-being and effectiveness are being challenged by environmental factors. First, expectations are changing about what schools should do as well as how they should do it. Shifts toward a global economy and rapidly increasing uses of technology have placed increased demands on schools to be

more creative, innovative, and responsive. In most instances, these expectations have not been accompanied by instructional and curricular suggestions, training or resources to meet them. Second, the composition of the student population is changing. The public school system was initially created to educate the country's youth through an elementary education level. That mandate has since been expanded to encompass secondary education and high expectations for an increasing diverse student body to achieve a high level of academic achievement. Third, in the past most communities were highly supportive of their schools. Currently, negative community criticism has been aimed at schools (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). These environmental factors are creating such rapid change in the educational workplace that career resilience is a must for teachers.

Resilience and Career Survival

Brown (1996) defines career resilience as an ability to be self-reliant. Collard, Epperheimer and Saign (1996) present several definitions of career resilience. One of these is "the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive" (Collard et al., 1996, p. 33). Another definition of career resilience is "the result or outcome of being career self-reliant" (Collard et al., 1996, p. 34). Career self-reliance refers to individual career self-management and taking responsibility for one's own career and growth, while maintaining commitment to the organization's success. Collard (1996) states that career resilience refers to individual career development, which cultivates the knowledge and skills required making a visible and personally motivated contribution to the organization and its customer.

Waterman, Waterman and Collard (1994) believes that a career resilient work force as "a group of employees who not only are dedicated to the idea of continuous

learning but also stand ready to reinvent themselves to keep pace with change, who take responsibility for their own career management, and last but not least, who are committed to the company's success" (Waterman et al. 1994, p.88).

Brown (1996) identified four elements of career resilience. They are self-confidence, the need for achievement, the willingness to take risks, and the ability to act independently and cooperatively, depending on the situation. Behaviors that demonstrate these factors include: easily adjusting to changes; taking initiative to do what is needed to achieve career goals; articulating one's ideas even when unpopular; seeking projects that would require learning new skills; and being innovative. He also believes that organizations have a significant role and responsibility in providing an environment that helps build career resilience in its workers. Brown (1996) states that the concept of career resilience is applicable to all workers at all levels and to organizations of varying sizes in all industries including education.

<center>Summary</center>

Today, the feeling of being an effective educator is being challenged by multiple environmental factors. From accountability systems to social service work with families, teachers are being asked to extend themselves more and more. To change the way educators do their work would take an act of congress, but to enable educators to take back their feelings of self-worth is an independent, individual endeavor.

According to the literature, the journey to resilience, or the ability to bounce back from negative life events, can be learned (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). Since resilience is no longer considered an innate trait, but a process that happens through an interaction between the individual and the environment, it would behoove educators to follow this

course of action. Encouraging teachers to take ownership of their behavior and to become more resilient requires that they recognize that there is a choice in their professional lives.

The explosion of information and the chaotic nature of life are going to continue. Individuals need the ability to construe some meaning and usefulness from stress, trauma and the tragedy they experience. So it becomes important that educators successfully cope with life's adversity and also that they develop resilient attributes so they can be good role models, both physically and mentally, for the students they teach. Teachers need to develop strategies for resilience to enable them to thrive in difficult environments like the rudd.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

"A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor a person perfected without trials"

Chinese proverb

Orienting Framework

Qualitative methods are used to find out what people do, think, know, and feel by observing, interviewing and analyzing documents (Patton, 2002). To provide understanding and information in this particular problem setting, qualitative research was used because one must know the stories of how teachers' sense of agency influence teacher resilience and effectiveness before suggestions can be provided for retention improvement.

Historically ancient cultures have passed on meaning through the stories of people or societies. The ancient cultures taught their children through myths and tales of accomplishments. To find out how a particular culture works or how a particular part of a culture works, one must look below the surface of the stories that are created by that culture.   This research looked at the stories of teachers and how they utilized resilience to survive adversity.

Researcher's Background

The researcher is a female veteran of the K-12 educational system with a passion for teachers and their work. My career includes experiences as a grade level coordinator, mentor to beginning teachers, participating teacher, member of a site-based decision team and an adjunct in a university's teacher preparation program. During my tenure in the field, I have observed young teachers come into the profession with idealism and then leave disillusioned. Also having watched young teachers stay and improve with great fervor and determination, I have seen them make a difference one child at a time. During the course of this study, I found it a challenge to ignore my own classroom background and past experience as a teacher trainer. I had to curb the urge to help and remain just an observer of the phenomenon. As Patton (2002) states, one has to maintain a researcher's "empathic neutrality" (p. 50), and thus, I consciously attempted to maintain impartiality.

Purpose of Study

With many teachers globally feeling high stress in their profession (Dworkin, et al.,1990), one of the areas needing further study was to understand how beginning teachers develop resilience. The profession of teaching is the art and skill of facilitating student growth through insight and knowledge. According to the literature, the promotion of insight and knowledge of self helps to develop a strong decision making process which assists in the creation of resilience (Richardson, Nieiger, Jenson, & Kumpfer, 1990). Since resilience is the development of a process (a method) of handling adversity, it required investigation and observation to understand what actually took place. The purpose of this study was to describe how beginning teachers develop and

demonstrate resilience during their first five years of practice and examine how this might be associated with their persistence in the profession.

Research Questions

1. How do beginning teachers develop resilience?

   a. What are the personal attributes of beginning teachers that constitute their resilience?

   b. What is the role of agency in the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

   c. How do environmental factors impact the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

   d. What types of experiences contribute to the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

2. How does resilience contribute to beginning teachers' retention?

Research Design

Fundamentally, research is a decision-making process using insight and knowledge. It is a process focused on the different perceptions of the nature of the social phenomena in question and the ways in which to understand them (Merriam and Simpson, 2000). To understand the phenomenon of resilience in beginning teachers, the naturalistic qualitative paradigm was used. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state that qualitative research involves direct investigation and description of the phenomenon as experienced without preconceptions. Patton (2002) further explains that qualitative research designs "are naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest"

(p.39). Merriam and Simpson (2000) further explain, "learning is situated in the everyday world of human activity and cannot be adequately understood apart from the world in which it takes place" (p. 24).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative research refers to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings. A valid reason for choosing qualitative methods is the nature of the problem being studied. It is this type of research that calls for getting into the field and trying to find out what people are thinking and doing, to attempt to understand the meaning or nature of their experience. It allows the researcher to obtain intricate details about the phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) write that qualitative research allows one to capture a "slice-of-life" (p.21).

This study employed a qualitative approach in the phenomenological tradition allowing the researcher to focus on educators' emotional and intellectual perceptions while exploring the resilience construct. A qualitative study does not require large numbers across diverse contexts. The focus is on the meanings of behaviors, including cultural and individual differences, and recognizes the importance of context in natural educational settings (Patton, 2002). As a retired educator of 31 years, this researcher has personal experience and knowledge of chaotic teacher experiences and the trials of beginning teachers in developing their practice. This prior knowledge has allowed the researcher to be connected with the phenomena studied and helped determine the method for the study.

One of the common forms of qualitative research is the case study. This form of inquiry provides special opportunities to understand an individual's reality. "Instead of

explanations based upon statistical associations between operationally defined constructs, interpretations are drawn directly from actual circumstances, events, behaviors, and expressed sentiments as played out daily by people in the context of their work" (Sirotnik, 1989, p. 95). Case studies focus on a particular situation, social unit or entity, event, program, or phenomenon (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). A case study tends to be concerned with the investigation of a bounded, integrated system. Merriam and Simpson (2000) explain that the goal of a case study is to provide a holistic description and interpretation. This study used multiple cases to investigate the phenomenon of resilience in beginning teachers.

Naturalistic research is based on the view that "the real world that we encounter 'out there' is such a dynamic system and all of the 'parts' are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other parts" (Owens, 1982, p.6); and that "there are multiple realities-the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception" (Merriam, 1991, p.17). Filstead (1979) (in Guba & Lincoln, 1982) explained, "There are multiple realities…Individuals are conceptualized as active agents in constructing and making sense of the realities they encounter" (p. 239). From this perspective, the real world is regarded to be highly subjective and therefore requires interpreting rather than measuring (Merriam, 1991). The goal of a case study is to provide holistic description and interpretation (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

Having selected a naturalistic research orientation, I pursued a case study design. Merriam (1991) states, "the nature of the research questions, the amount of control, and the desired end product were issues considered when deciding whether case study was the most appropriate design…"(p.9). As Yin (1989) and Merriam (1991) suggest, the

case study approach is appropriate for research that asks "how" questions and is used in situations where there is minimal control, where the end product sought is a holistic, intensive description and interpretation of a contemporary phenomenon, and where a bounded system is identifiable. This study seemed to fit these characteristics.

According to Stake (1995), a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case that holds special interest for the researcher. As Stake (1978) explains, with a case study the researcher and readers should be left with more questions to ponder. The case study provides theory to build upon, causing more exploration of the phenomenon instead of a single answer to the question of "why." This research used a case study approach to allow the emergence of descriptions and interpretations that captured and conceptualized the phenomenon of teacher resilience.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) maintain that a case study is to mainly provide understanding into an issue can be considered an instrument. The case then plays a secondary role and facilitates comprehension of something else. The case still is examined in depth and its contexts investigated. They also state that a number of cases may be scrutinized jointly in order to explore a phenomenon. This study used multiple case studies as the instrument to look at the phenomenon of beginning teachers' resilience.

Kenny and Grotelueschen (in Merriam, 1991), argue that a case study is also appropriate in those instances when information shared by participants is scrutinized on grounds of credibility rather than on its truth or falsity. In large measure, this study focused on teachers' beliefs and perceptions, which cannot be assessed with respect to whether they are right or wrong.

As Merriam (1991) states, case studies can be differentiated in terms of their intended final product: description, evaluation or interpretation. An interpretive design best served the purpose of this project. Such an approach contained rich descriptive data, but was more analytic in its nature. It also allowed for the development of conceptual categories, or the opportunity to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering (Merriam, 1991). Therefore, the choice of this design afforded the opportunity to seek insight, discovery, and interpretation on the characteristics of resilience found in beginning teachers.

The study employed an interpretive case study approach to investigate how selected teachers with one to five years of teaching experience, identified by their peers, school counselors and administrators as being resilient, embodied the processes of resilience. This study was concerned with beginning teachers' perceptions of their resilience during particular critical incidents occurring in their first five years of teaching. Garmezy (1990) states it is important to recognize that resilience is not a fixed trait and a case can be made for the conduct of short-term studies that record changes in a life span. Specifically, he explains the significance of a distressing major life incident on positive or negative adaptation can be examined.

Patton (2002) states that extended fieldwork can and typically does involve many mini- or micro-case studies of various units of analysis. In this study, themes or patterns were sought that were consistent across cases. Yin (1989) supports this method in saying "individual cases and multiple-case results can and should be the focus of a summary report" (p.57).

Setting

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state the qualitative researcher needs to select a site according to some underlying principle such as access and the characteristics of possible participants. The selection of "resilient" teachers was from multiple school districts in the San Antonio area because the researcher had access to schools in that area. The school districts were selected based on the number of teachers reported to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) with the designated years of experience. The AEIS report gave the district's accountability rating, the socio-economic status of students, and the ethnographic description of teachers plus their number of years experience. The report described the teachers and their level of education.

The purpose of this study was to increase the understanding of how beginning teachers develop resilience and the impact of choice on the resilient growth process. Not only was it a study in beginning teachers' resiliency but also one in how a beginning researcher has to have persistence in order to obtain her goal. The researcher deliberately chose the spring semester for the research project because it has been stated as being the most stressful time due to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing. Many administrators refer to the spring semester as the "TAKS season".

The challenging beginning of this research project also reaffirmed the fact the spring semester in the state of Texas is the most nerve-racking time of the year for teachers. Three elementary teachers from three different experience level categories were half way in completing their interviews for this study when they opted out of the research project because of the stress they were feeling from the approaching TAKS test.

The spring semester is not lonely difficult for teachers, but it also affects principals. One of the original participating schools' principals decided that she did not want the researcher on her campus until after the TAKS testing was completed at the end of April. This was defeating to the project so with the consent of the researcher's committee, the researcher notified everyone that she knew in the education community about the project and asked for recommendations using the criteria selected for participants so as to identify potential participants. It is through the generosity of so many dedicated teachers and administrators from five different school districts that this study became a reality.

The primary school district selected for the study, a suburban district, contributed seven resilient teachers for the study. The other districts consisted of: a large inner city district, a very small public district housed on a military post, a medium sized district outside of another major metropolitan area to a small private school. This increased the number of participants from nine to fourteen. It increased the variety of the contexts and perhaps made the findings more robust.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

Qualitative samples tend to be purposively selected because the process of sampling is crucial for later analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Cases for study "are selected with the cooperation of key informants, such as program staff or knowledgeable participants, who can help identify who and what are typical" (Patton, 2002, p. 236). "Criterion-based sampling requires that one establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; one then finds a sample that

matches these criteria" (Merriam, 1991, p. 48). The researcher used a strategy that combined typical-case selection and criterion-case selection.

The professional staff, principals, and counselors of each school were surveyed to identify those teachers who matched the resilience attributes as defined by the literature and who, in their opinion, consistently demonstrated high levels of resilience (see Appendix A). Participants selected were those teachers who were perceived by survey respondents to demonstrate the most personal characteristics that embodied resilience. Care was taken to select participants so as to include both genders and multiple ethnic groups. After careful review of all survey responses, 14 teachers were asked to participate and they agreed to be involved in the study. All of the participants chose their own anonymous names. These names were chosen to protect all of the participants including schools and districts. The participants, their school levels, and their experience levels are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants, Experience Levels and Contexts

Years of Service	First	Third	Fifth
Elementary	Amelia	Simone	Holly
			Gonzo
Middle School	Rebecca	Matthew	Harpo
	Jeanette		
High School	Svetlana	Amber	Jean
		Sara	Dan
		Jane	

The participants will be discussed in the order of service years: first, third, and then fifth year.

Table 2. Profile of Teacher Participants

Name	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Degrees	Certifications	Marital Status	Teaching Assignment
Amelia(1)	20s	F	Hispanic	Bachelors Masters in Process	University Certification	Single	Fourth grade
Rebecca(1)	20s	F	Hispanic	Bachelors	University Certification	Single	Eight grade Math
Jeanette(1)	30s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters in Process	Alternative Certification	Divorced	$6^{th}, 7^{th}$, & 8th grade Science
Svetlana(1)	20s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters	University Certification	Single	Ninth grade English
Simone(3)	30s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters	University Certification	Married	Third grade
Matthew(3)	40s	M	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters in Process	Alternative Certification	Married	Seventh grade Math
Amber(3)	20s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters in Process	University Certification	Single	Art
Sara(3)	20s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters	University Certification	Single	Biology
Jane(3)	20s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters	University Certification	Single	Night grade English
Holly(5)	50s	F	Caucasian	Bachelors	University Certification	Divorced	Fourth grade
Gonzo(5)	40s	M	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters in Process	Alternative Certification	Married	Fifth grade
Harpo(5)	30s	F	African American	Bachelors	Alternative Certification	Single	6th grade Math
Jean(5)	30s	F	African American	Bachelors Masters in Process	Alternative Certification	Married	Film Production
Dan(5)	20s	M	Caucasian	Bachelors Masters	University Certification	Single	Biology

Note. The numbers inside the parenthesis represent the participants' years of experience.

Profiles

     Amelia. Amelia was a 25 year-old Hispanic first year teacher. She taught in an urban elementary school. Amelia stated "I was afraid for my safety this first year." She was assertive and expressed her opinion. Amelia earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and was competing a master's in Teaching.   She taught fourth grade, and related that she enjoyed the creative process of writing. Amelia stated that she has had to spend a large amount of her own money on basic supplies and learning materials.

     Rebecca. Rebecca was a 22 year-old Hispanic first year teacher. She taught in an urban middle school. Rebecca stated that classroom management was her biggest challenge in her first year. She taught eighth grade math and had a low socio-economic student population. Rebecca received her Bachelor of Science at a very large well-known university. She was nominated by two of her colleagues. The colleagues stated that she was an excellent math teacher who motivated her students. One colleague said that she had "persevered with an inner city clientele and a challenging ' hands on' curriculum and in spite of all of this, she has achieved beyond that of other veteran teachers."

     Jeanette. Jeanette was a 37 year-old Caucasian first year teacher. She taught in a small religious middle school. Jeanette taught sixth, seventh and eighth grade science. She stated that it was scary to develop relationships with students at first. Jeanette had a Bachelor of Arts degree plus an additional 30 hours of biology when she decided to pursue an education program. She was certified through an alternative certification program. She was completing a master's degree in education at the time of the interviews. Jeanette acknowledged that she doubted herself about the decisions she made

in the classroom everyday. When referring to the resilient qualities that she possessed,

she stated, " I have gotta laugh or I'd cry all the water out of me."

Svetlana. Svetlana was a 24 year-old Caucasian first year teacher. She taught

ninth grade English in a small high school. She stated that she chose her district because

it was within an hour's drive of Austin. Svetlana earned a Bachelor of English Literature

and a master's degree in Teaching. Svetlana admitted that classroom management has

been her biggest challenge. The person who nominated Svetlana stated that she not only

met the criteria of a resilient teacher but she also was a thoughtful, passionate and

energetic teacher during training. " She is a serious student of teaching and learning who

was chosen to teach students who are traditionally underserved. She is willing to take

risks as evidenced by her willingness to co-present at last year's TCTE conference and by

her initiative in establishing a Critical Friend's Group in her new school" (Dean of

Instruction ISA, 2006).   Svetlana credited her teacher preparation program as a major

contributor to her development of resilience.

Simone. Simone was a 33 year-old Caucasian third year teacher. She taught the

third grade in a small urban school district. Simone stated that she tried to see each day

as a new beginning. She acknowledged that she enjoyed her third graders. Simone

earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Interior

Design. The colleague who nominated Simone stated that she "always has a positive

outlook even when situations are difficult and willing to change/adapt as the needs arise."

Matthew. Matthew was a 45 old Caucasian third year teacher. He taught in a large

suburban middle school. He taught seventh grade math. Matthew stated that he felt

teaching was a calling. He came from a business background and has also been a

minister. Matthew had a Bachelor of Arts in Business and was completing a master's degree in education. He was certified through an alternative certification program. Nominated by several of his colleagues, Matthew was noted for going above and beyond the requirements of his job. One colleague stated, " He is sure of himself and knows exactly where he wants to take the students, but is flexible enough to go back if necessary." Matthew was the leader for the seventh grade math team.

Amber. Amber was a 27 year-old Caucasian third year teacher. She taught art in a large suburban high school. Amber felt that schools should provide more real experiences for students. She had a Bachelor of Fine Arts and was completing her master's of art education. Multiple colleagues nominated Amber for the study. One colleague stated, "regardless of the issues that come up, Amber finds creative ways to teach."

Sara. Sara was a 28 year-old Caucasian third year teacher. She taught biology in a small urban school district. Sara was the chair of the science department. Sara stated that she enjoyed the students but not their parents. She had a Bachelor of Marine Science and a master's degree in biology. Sara returned to her university to take education courses and participated in a nine-month internship. She had unique field research experiences off the East coast of the United States before entering the education field. Sara stated that this knowledge helped her make biology real to her students.

Jane. Jane was a 26 year-old Caucasian third year teacher. She taught ninth grade English in a university's professional development school. Jane credited her preparation program as the main foundation for her resilience. She had a Bachelor of English Literature and a master's degree in Teaching. Jane was assertive, articulate and

passionate about her social justice agenda. The person who nominated Jane stated," Jane is one awesome teacher. She has been unafraid to ask difficult questions of our department, her team and our school" (Dean of Instruction, 2006).

Holly. Holly was a 52 year-old Caucasian fifth year teacher. She taught fourth grade in a small urban school district. Holly had a retail and manufacturing background. As an ex-military wife, she took nine years to complete her Bachelor of Elementary Education degree. Holly was a leader in the use of technology on her campus. The person who nominated Holly stated, " She has been given three classes in a row that are ' the classes from _____, yet, she has been successful and has stayed with it."

Gonzo. Gonzo was a 44 year-old Caucasian fifth year teacher. He taught fifth grade in a large suburban elementary school. Gonzo came from a business background with a Bachelor of Humanities and was certified through an alternative certification program. He was completing his master's degree in education at the time of the interviews. The person who nominated him stated, "He has a sense of humor about the stressful things that happen at our school, but he also knows when to be serious." Gonzo, highly regarded by his colleagues, had been the grade level chair for three years. His colleagues stated that he has demonstrated a tremendous ability to work with at-risk students in a positive and encouraging way. " He sets high expectations for his class and shows students by his example how to succeed in school and in life."

Harpo. Harpo was a 30 year old African American fifth year teacher. She taught sixth grade math in a large suburban middle school. Harpo stated that every job has its difficulties. She had a Bachelor of Spanish and was certified through an alternative certification program. Multiple colleagues nominated her and stated, " She is a positive

role model not only for her students, but also for the faculty. She loves what she does

and you can see that in her students."

Jean. Jean was a 31 year-old African American fifth year teacher. She taught film

making in a large urban high school. Jean stated that humor helped to keep her sane. She

had a Bachelor of English Communication with a concentration in film and was

completing her master's in Teaching. Jean was certified through an alternative

certification program. She had worked in the field of film and television before deciding

to teach. The person who nominated her stated, " She is good at what she does and works

great with the students. She always has a positive attitude."

Dan. Dan was a 28 year old Caucasian fifth year teacher. He taught biology in a

university's professional development school. He stated he tried to build a relationship

with his students. Dan also believed preparation program was a major component of his

resilient development.   He had a Bachelor of Science in Biology and environmental

science. His master's degree was in Teaching.   Dan worked in the wilderness of Alaska

before deciding on the teaching profession. His colleague stated, " His curriculum is

innovative, his classroom culture is productive/supportive and he likes what he does."

<div align="center">Data Collection Techniques</div>

Qualitative data collection techniques were employed in a manner consistent with

the study's naturalistic orientation. Qualitative data were a source of rich descriptions

and explanations that conveyed the interrelated factors associated with the situation under

study (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The researcher selected this approach to take

advantage of the benefits, which Miles and Huberman (1994) so aptly describe:

> Good qualitative data is more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks;…[and] the findings have a quality of undeniability…convincing to the reader (p.1).

Patton (2002) also believes that select case studies provide depth, detail, and individual meaning at a very personal level of experience.   The researcher used in-depth semi-structured interviews, critical incident reports, staff nomination forms and participants' e-mail journaling as the data sources.

Nomination Forms

The researcher used the staff nomination forms as part of the individual case data set. Each school's staff was asked to include any reasons or stories about the nominee that would reflect why that person would be a good candidate for the resilient beginning teacher study. Very few staff members just checked off the resilient attributes listed on the form. The majority of the staff members wrote from a paragraph to a page and a half describing the nominee's resilient attributes and also giving examples of how that person had applied resilient attributes in their environment.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview is the method of choice in naturalistic research to explore unobservable phenomena such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, how people perceptually organize their worlds and attach meaning to their reality (Merriam, 1991). From the perspective of practicality, as Dexter cited in Merriam, (1991) states, "Interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when…it will get better data or more data at less cost than other tactics!" (p.72).

The purpose of the interview, therefore, was to allow the researcher to enter into the other person's perspective (Merriam, 1991), and in this case, to enter into the

perspective of resilient teachers to understand the process of resiliency. A semi-structured interview was the strategy of choice. On one hand, it focused the research and, on the other, it allowed the necessary flexibility to guide the conversation so as to allow the richness of detailed personal perception to emerge.

A list (see Appendix B) of open-ended questions served as a guide for each of the factors to be explored. Each question served as a springboard for follow up questions, which allowed this researcher to "respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging perspective of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1991, p. 74). Multiple interviews were conducted with each participant, audio taped and then transcribed.

Critical Incidents

Major events are labeled critical incidents and constitute self-contained descriptive units of analysis that are presented in order of importance rather than in sequence of occurrence (Patton, 2002). Critical incidents identify aspects of the best and worst practices for participants (Byrne, 2001). Positive and negative critical incidents reveal significant decision-making times in the life of participants (Stitt-Gohdes, Lambrecht, & Redmann, 2000).

The critical incident report is an important data collection technique that captures the complexity of job behavior within the job's social context (Stitt-Gohdes, Lambrecht, & Redmann, 2000). The critical incident collection technique involves gathering of brief, written, factual reports of personal actions in response to explicit situations or problems experienced by participants. An incident may be defined as "critical" when the action taken contributes to an effective or ineffective outcome. A critical incident report

describes a situation and the action that was important in determining whether the outcome was effective or ineffective (Flanagan, 1954). The critical incident is an epistemological process in which qualitative, descriptive data are provided about real-life accounts (Di Salvo, Nikkel, & Monroe, 1989).

For this study, the participants were asked to think about their time as a classroom teacher. Then, each participant was asked to consider a time when they re-evaluated their career choice. Each participant was asked to identify an incident that caused him or her to consider leaving the teaching profession. The critical incident report included events that led up to this particular thought process/decision. Participants were asked to describe the situation, their emotions, people involved, and how each person coped with the circumstances (see Appendix C). These reports were used to answer the question on resilience and the environment.

Electronic Journaling and Interviewing

Changing technology is currently sending researchers in another direction for obtaining data. The interview as a means of information gathering has expanded to include electronic media (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study employed the Internet for electronic journaling of critical incidents and to pose follow up questions after face-to-face interviews. Not all participants used the e-mail journaling aspect of this study. About half of the participants stayed in continuous touch with me through the course of the study and I even get e-mails from them today. The contents of the e-mails were to be only about their personal interactions with the environment and how they felt it impacted their resilience. These e-mails along with the critical incident reports were reflected in the environmental section of the findings.

Field Notes

Patton (2002) states that "everything that goes on in and around" (p. 286) the study is data. He further explains that to encapsulate the entire view of the phenomena, the observer must stay attentive to what happens during informal periods as well as formal times. Patton (2002) believes that field notes contain the description of what has been observed. He also states that field notes "should contain everything that the observer believes to be worth noting" (Patton, 2002, p. 303).

In this study, field notes often confirmed the data given by staff on the nomination forms when they were describing the attributes of resilience that they thought these participants exhibited. There were three participants that had been nominated for their positive work with staff and students. The field notes on these three people recorded how their rooms seemed to have a revolving door. Staff and students were constantly coming in and out before, during and after the interviews. These participants were always very positive, kind, flexible and helpful with everyone that came through the door.

Wolfinger (2002) states that one often chooses to document a specific observation because it stands out. He believes that the researcher should note observations that are "the most noteworthy, the most interesting or the most telling" (p.89) because background knowledge influences which cases are chosen for clarification.

Data Analysis

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), qualitative research is consistently inventive and interpretive. Data collection and data analysis are dynamic interactive processes that occur simultaneously because of the non-linearity of naturalistic research (Merriam, 1991). As Merriam (1991) states, "Analysis begins with the first interview,

the first observation. Emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses direct the

next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to refinement or reformulation of one's

questions" (p.119). Analysis for this study began following the first interview and

continued throughout the study. Smyth, Hattam and Shacklock (1997) warn that

information requiring analysis must be cross-referenced from different sources in a way

that allows connections to be made without the loss of the voice of the participants.

Patton (2002) notes that qualitative findings are longer, more detailed, and more

variable in content then quantitative findings. He also states that analysis is difficult

because responses are neither systematic nor standardized in qualitative studies. The

qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that the classification of

themes and patterns comes from the information collected. Therefore, the role of the

qualitative researcher insists on attendance to detail, and a vigorous use of the

researcher's own intellect in analysis and interpretation of the data (Denzin & Lincoln,

2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that qualitative analysis is much more complex

and potentially confusing than quantitative data collection. They state that analysis

consists of three core steps: (1) developing an organizing system, (2) segmenting the

data, and (3) making connections.

Multiple cases, as Miles and Huberman (1994) explain, are particularly helpful

constructing explanations and testing them analytically. Miles and Huberman (1994) go

on to explain that it is important to understand the dynamics of each particular case

before proceeding to cross-case explanations. Once that understanding is accomplished,

cross-case analysis can commence seeking patterns and themes that overlap individual experiences (Patton, 2002). Hence, data analysis began with the construction of individual case data sets including an overall individual data set matrix.

As previously stated, initial data for each case study were collected through interviews, critical incident reports, nomination forms, e-mail journals, and field notes. The detailed compilation of these items created the data set for each individual participant. Not all participants used the e-mail journal. However, the e-mail journals of those that participated were treated as an extension of the interview transcripts. Each of the 14 data sets were examined individually and coded. Patton (2002) states that patterns emerge by coding qualitative data. He further explains that by simplifying the content through coded analysis, one makes sense of the complexity of the verbatim transcripts.

During the first reading of the interview transcripts, critical incident reports, nomination forms, e-mail journals, and field notes, the researcher highlighted the different ideas, concepts or categories in multiple colors of highlighters. The second round of coding was to give labels to the topics and those were written in the margins. On the third examination of the data, the researcher cross-referenced the concepts within each data set. After this round of coding, each individual data set was again examined and a matrix was developed which included all documents within the individual data set. Major concepts that addressed the research questions from the teacher participant's point of view were incorporated in that participant's matrix (see Appendix D).

The individual matrices plus the individual data sets were reviewed and examined in order to analyze the findings across cases. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that matrices are helpful when you expect a variety of concepts varying across cases. The use

of a matrix helps to verify or disconfirm impressions and it also allows a simple way for

one to add other data. The role of graphic presentation is to clarify and allow the core

themes and patterns to come to the forefront (Tufte, 1990).

From the individual matrices, cross-case variable matrices were constructed.

These variables included definitions of resilience; resilience attributes; and environment

contexts. These variables were then contrasted according to participants' demographic

information such as: years of service, school level, age, certification methods, ethnicity,

gender, and marital status. "Meta-matrices are the basic building blocks for cross-case

analysis," according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.213).

Creating all the matrices and cross case matrices took many hours, when the

matrices were complete, the matrices allowed "a quick analysis down rows and across

columns to see what jumps out" (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p. 242). After careful re-

examination, re-checking each document in the data set and seeing that they contained

the same types of themes thus triangulating the results, the cross-case matrices were

modified to cluster data within matrices for the purpose of understanding related themes.

The process allowed the researcher to piece together themes that provided a window into

the professional lives of these fourteen resilient teachers.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

To establish trustworthiness is to establish confidence in the accuracy of a

qualitative study. When trustworthiness is established, this distinguishes a study from

other forms of discourse through the rigor and conduct of the study. The trustworthiness

of the data is tied directly to disciplined methodology (Patton, 2002). In qualitative

research, the terms of validity, generalizability, and reliability are replaced with

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These terms also supplant

the place of the conventional terms of internal and external validity (Denzin & Lincoln,

1994).   By examining a multiplicity of similar cases, one can intensify understanding of

a single-case finding. This study was fortified with the precision, credibility and the

strength of the findings. By using multiple-case-sampling the study builds confidence in

the findings. "If a finding holds in one setting and given its profile, also holds in a

comparable setting, the finding is more robust" (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p.35). In this

study, through the use of multiple-case sampling and multiple sites, the findings were

found to be comparable.

Credibility

Credibility depends on the richness of the information gathered and on the

analytical abilities of the researcher (Patton, 2002). The standard of credibility, like

internal validity, is applied to test the integrity of the data. The crucial question to ask

oneself is whether or not the participants find the researcher's analysis and interpretations

to be believable. In other words, do the results accurately fit the descriptions, which

represent the multiple realities of the participants (Merriam & Simpson, 2003)? Denzin

and Lincoln (1994) state that one of the important criterion for credibility is the portrayal

of constructed realities. It is only when the constructions are plausible to those who

constructed them that the study is credible and this is called member checks. Another

technique to address credibility includes making segments of the raw data available for

peers to analyze. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also describe three other activities that

increase the probability of producing credible findings. The activities are prolonged

engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. The study employed persistent

observation and engagement over the more stressful semester in the Texas school year, the spring semester when the TAKS test was administered.

From Lincoln and Guba's (1985) perspective, prolonged engagement is necessary to provide a hedge against distortions generated by both the researcher and the participants from creeping into the data, to learn the context, and to create the opportunity for building trust. Its purpose is "to render the inquirer open to the multiple influences-the mutual shapers and contextual factors-that impinge upon the phenomenon being studied" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.304). In this study, the condition of prolonged engagement was met through the conduct of multiple interviews and e-mailing across one school semester. Participants were interviewed at work on numerous occasions across the spring semester until such a point at which, through persistence, sufficient data were gathered to satisfactorily address the research questions.

Persistent observation's purpose is to establish the elements relevant to the phenomenon under study and to clarify the detail (Patton, 2002). In this study, the condition of persistent observation was met through multiple in-depth interviews, review of participants' written critical incidents and journal entries, and observations of participants during formal and informal interview times, with the goal of uncovering those things that really count.

A third method for enhancing credibility of the findings was achieved through the application of triangulation. Triangulation may be applied in numerous ways. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) explain that "Triangulation is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously" (p.8). In this study, the criterion of triangulation was satisfied at the level of sampling by seeking corroboration of nominations from two different

sources. Procedures of triangulation were also applied through data comparison (nomination forms, interviews, critical incident reports, electronic journal entries, and field notes) within an individual data set.

The inclusion of two techniques, peer debriefing and member checks enhanced credibility. To implement peer debriefing, the dissertation advisor, the committee and a doctoral cohort member (with teaching experience) were enlisted to review the findings, synthesize, and discuss for potential research bias. Member checks call for the support of the study's participants to judge the accuracy of the findings. As Patton (2002) explains "having the people described in the analysis react to what is described and concluded" (p.560) not only corroborates results but also confirms that the right questions were being asked.   After the researcher had analyzed across cases and developed the chapters on the findings and conclusions, chapters four (Findings) and five (Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations) were sent to the participants for their review. Not all participants could be found after a year and not all participants replied to the inquiry for member review. Jean's comment with her response to the findings was "Its all about relationships." Five participants returned information after reading the chapters and each stated that they agreed with the findings and wanted a copy of the final report.

Dependability and Credibility

"Reliability asks the question of the extent to which one's findings will be found again. That is, if the inquiry is replicated, would the findings be the same?" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000 p. 102). However, in naturalistic research there are no benchmarks by which one can assess reliability in the traditional sense because human behavior is never constant. There are strategies that a researcher can employ: (1) thick descriptions which

allow the reader to determine how closely the situation matches their own; and (2) the use

of multiple sites, cases and situations (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). What are typically

imposed in naturalistic research are the constructs of comparability and transferability. In

this study, the researcher documented the research framework, decisions, and process in

such a transparent manner that others wishing to explore the phenomenon of resilience in

similar educational contexts could nearly replicate the study's design. The use of

multiple cases also contributed to the study's dependability.

According to Merriam (1988), "internal validity deals with the question of how

one's findings match reality"(p.166). The first strategy employed in this study to assure

internal validity was the development of "rich descriptions" using multiple participants'

verbatim language to emphasize the multiple perspectives of participants' resilience and

its interaction with the environment. This rich description allows the readers to better

understand the context and conditions of the phenomenon of beginning teacher resilience

and how closely their situations may relate to their own.

Multiple modes of data collection as well as peer and member checks were used

to ensure that the results were as described with the data collected. Merriam (2001)

states, "a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results

make sense – they are consistent and dependable"(p. 206). Another strategy was the use

of "multiple sites, cases and situations". The study took place within multiple school

districts and on multiple campuses. There were three different levels of teaching

assignments and three different levels of service years in the profession. There were 14

different case studies. Each case study delineated different yet similar situations. Each

participant's multiple documents (nomination form, interviews, critical incident reports, e-mail journals, and field notes) became a data set.

The researcher triangulated the multiple forms of data from each case study including interviews, critical incident reports, nomination forms, e-mail journals, and field notes within each data set. Assuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the data was an ongoing process. Multiple levels of questioning and feedback was used to check for consistency of responses. Each critical incident report was an item of interest to each participant and was reiterated and expanded in the interviews. Colleagues also noted the same environmental issues on the nomination forms. Thus, themes were triangulated not only within individual data sets, but also, across the multiple data sets. Triangulation of information reduced the influence of researcher bias and enhanced the dependability of the study.

Ethical Consideration

Research with human participants demands careful deliberation and respect for the individuals contributing to the study. Ethical consideration is important in a qualitative study because in naturalistic case studies, ethical dilemmas can arise at any step in the process. Recognizing that the spirit of ethics exists in my own accountability, it is imperative to consider the ethical issues that permeate the research process (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

The following strategies were applied to ensure that the researcher's conduct respected the rights of individual participants, reflected consideration of the aforementioned potential sources of ethical pitfalls, and adhered to the ethical standards set by Texas State University-San Marcos: (a) participants were informed of the full

intent of the study; (b) voluntary consent was sought from each participant; (c) an

agreement was attained ensuring the participant's opportunity to opt out of the study at

any time; (d) participant and site confidentiality was respected in all reports associated to

the study; and (e) a letter was supplied to each participant explaining the purpose of the

study, proposed methodology and ethical guidelines.

Rights of the Participants

Prior to the study participants signed a consent form explaining their rights during

the study. An opportunity to ask questions and clarify any aspects of the study was

offered to each participant. An introductory meeting was held notify participants that they

had the right not to participate in the study and that they could completely withdraw from

the study without consequences at any time. Also, participants were allowed to ask

general questions relating to the research project, which in some cases provided a basis

for further purposeful conversations.

Research participants selected anonymous names in order to maintain

confidentiality. All study participant data was reported using this reference name. This

information was included in the participant consent form and also communicated verbally

to the participants during the introductory meeting.

Summary

After 31 years of practice in the K-12 educational system, the researcher thought

she knew about teachers, teaching and their environment. The reading of the literature

made me very aware that the problem of teachers not staying in the profession is not just

a local one but also an international one. Teaching is a very demanding profession,

draining one mentally, emotionally and physically as the needs of a complex society are

addressed. The use of qualitative methods facilitated the exploration of teacher beliefs about their resilience and its process.   The study was grounded on the notion that teachers posses valuable insight about the process of resilience development. Accordingly, I looked for responses concerning resilience and its interaction with the environment in different places and in various ways to create a deeper understanding about teachers in their natural settings. The voices of the participants can alert educational systems to the needs of teachers and to the urgency of the problems surrounding the promotion of resilience for beginning teachers. Like the rudd, teachers with resilience can flourish despite adversity and/or barren waters.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Failure is the path to least persistence

Unknown

This chapter will describe the contexts within which the teachers worked and present findings from the cross-case analysis of all 14 participants. Looking at the 14 participants through the lens of resiliency and agency helped to direct the inquiry toward intriguing findings about personal attributes of resilience. The findings emerged through analysis of colleague nomination forms, teacher interviews, critical incident reports, field notes and e-mail correspondence.

Thematic Analysis of Data By Research Questions

Cross-case analysis was a critical component of theme construction. For example, while examining the data, the researcher noticed multiple events that involved various types of "mistreatment" of teachers in the workplace. The events of the "Negative Interactions" category were initially coded in one uniform way, but eventually "branches" (Richards, 1999) of this particular theme became apparent. In other words, a category such as "Negative Interactions" had subcategories, which related to the "mistreatment" of teachers by administrators, department chairs, students and parents.

Collecting and analyzing data from multiple cases allowed for the identification of resilience characteristics but also the conditions affecting teachers and how their resilience influenced their ability to "continue on." The ability to "stick around" is built upon internal resources developed over time. These internal resources are needed for retention in the field. Each participant's descriptions of actions, attitudes, beliefs and adjustments to their external conditions contributed to this study. Themes derived from the data are discussed and organized in relation to each research question.

How do Beginning Teachers Develop Resilience?

Participants explained how they began to develop their resilience in their internships and/or their first years of teaching. These teachers stated that reflecting and being prepared through a quality teacher preparation program that included a nine-month internship contributed to their resiliency.

Reflection

Dan clarified how he developed his ability to reflect, a major component to his resiliency.

In our masters program, we had to journal everyday. We talked about what was going on in class and most of the time we would share them with just the professors but then others we would share together. I'm not really somebody who needs to journal. I only kept it when I was forced to. What was good about it is that I got to see what processes that other people were using and take the suggestions from the professors and look at what to reflect about. I don't think it is important how you reflect on what has happened. I think it is important that

you are and what you are considering during your reflection on what has

happened. I think that is the big thing in being resilient is looking back and

learning to examine your mistakes. The other big thing that goes along with

reflection on it is that you have to do it honestly. You have to know what to look

for and you have to do it honestly and if not then it is real meaningless.

Gonzo also told about journaling and reflection and how it is a critical part of teaching.

I do journaling on a regular basis. I try to do it daily. The process of reflection is

a real critical part I believe of teaching and life in general. Journaling and

reflection makes a big difference because it allows you to think through all those

feelings and emotions and choices that you make on a daily basis. Perhaps, in

some way, it better equips you for similar situations that may arise in the future. I

think reflection is really a critical part of what I do as a teacher. I wish there was

a way to make it a regular part of the school day because it is real important. I

think it is good just to get some of it out sometimes anyway. The process of

putting it down on paper is almost like a cleansing process…..spiritual.

Preparation and Nine-month Internship

Four of the participants did a nine month long internship and believed that the

preparation from that time was a major part of their ability to be resilient. Jane explained

this type of internship experience and how it helped to build her resilience.

I think the greatest contributor to my personal resiliency is the preparation I had. I

did a nine month internship and worked in a senior English class. It was great

preparation in terms of like learning how to teach and deal with kids. I had a

year's worth of experience under my belt but it was guided thoughtful experience.

Instead of being thrown in the deep end and being told to swim, I was taught how to swim so when it was my turn to do it on my own, I had the skills I needed. I had and knew what it was like to mess up and I knew how to fix mistakes instead of making more mistakes.

I was in a room with another experienced teacher. In the beginning there is a period of four to six weeks of just getting to know the school, the environment, and the children. I was introduced on the first day as the intern. I was going to be with them all year and gradually over time I would take over more responsibilities. So the first semester is observing, trying out, teaching my mentor's lessons, doing things and getting observed a lot by my mentor and by my professor. Then in the second semester, I took over for six weeks using lessons I created in the first semester that had been reviewed by my professor and by my mentor. They gave me feedback. I implemented them while getting observed and getting feedback. Then the last six weeks, it was a gradual phrase out period so that the kids get used to me phrasing out so now I had time to watch the situation with new eyes. I watched the mentor teach some of my lessons so I could see what they looked like and what was working and what wasn't working and why it wasn't working and what an experience teacher would do to fix that.

What Are the Personal Attributes of Beginning Teachers That Constitute Their Resilience?

When defining what resilience meant to them, the participants described six different dimensions. These ideas included bouncing back, being flexible, keep going,

keeping a positive attitude, understanding oneself, learning from challenges, and overcoming adversities. Matthew, Amber, Jeanette, Gonzo and Harpo all stated that it is about understanding oneself. Matthew stated:

> I think resiliency is flexibility. It is still standing at the end of the end of the day at times. It is not a Pollyanna where everything is just great all the time. It is more of a sense of seeing things for what they are but not letting them over take you or overpower you. And knowing that you will be able to get up the next morning and come back and do it again.

Amber explained:

> To me, it means that like scenario-wise, I'm in a tough situation. I come up with a solution to that situation, and I don't let it bother me. I don't get down about it. I bounce back. I move on, and I learn from it.

Jeanette affirmed that one must keep going.

> To be resilient I think it means to have the ability to take on challenges and obstacles when they come at you and to work through them. It means to continue on down the path….the path you are walking. To continue the course whatever you decide until you've finished it.

Gonzo articulated how being resilient helps one to stick with one's decision.

> I think it means that you have the ability to stick with it. That you don't let those bad times or bad circumstances dissuade you from doing the profession that you were called to do. When you are resilient you don't let those things alter your course and you stick with it and continue to do the best that you can do under the circumstances.

Harpo stated that one must stay positive.

> Resilient, I think, means to have a positive outlook on the situation or challenge
> that one may face. And being able to handle the situation and the outcome of the
> situation and to learn from the circumstances of the situation and to use it to
> enlighten you and to enhance you as you continue your profession. Not letting it
> have a negative effect on you.

Jane and Dan thought it had to do with the bigger picture of teaching as a profession.
Jane clarified:

> I think in the teaching sense it probably has to do with staying passionate about
> teaching. It probably has to do again with remaining flexible and open to new
> ideas and continuing to be innovative. It probably has to do with remaining
> positive about teaching and learning and students. If teachers lack a good teacher
> preparation program they will probably leave the profession within the first five
> years. So I would say that resiliency has to do with sticking around and being a
> positive force.

Dan said the following:

> I think it means you handle the set backs that occur in teaching well. You learn
> from them and how to help prevent the same setbacks from reoccurring over and
> over. It is keeping oneself from repeating the same mistakes over and over again.
> I don't think it is important how one reflects on what has happened. I think it is
> important that you are reflecting and what you are considering during your
> reflection on what has happened. That is the big thing in being resilient is looking
> back and learning how to examine your mistakes.

Findings were consistent with the essence of resilience as described in the literature. Resilience was encapsulated as a vital process involving positive adaptation during significant challenges. As Jean noted, "Each time you go through something similar you get a little bit smarter about it." Resilience was not seen as a select trait for a few but as a fundamental ability inherent in each one that develops over time and is situated in transactions with the environment. Participants' attributes are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Resilient Attributes of Participants

Name	Building Personal Relationships	Humor	Positive Attitude	Sense of Purpose	Faith Spirituality	Initiative	Creativity
Amelia (1)	X	X		X	X	X	X
Rebecca (1)	X	X	X	X		X	X
Jeanette (1)	X	X	X	X	X		
Svetlana (1)	X	X	X	X		X	X
Simone (3)	X	X	X		X		
Matthew (3)	X	X	X	X	X		X
Amber (3)	X	X				X	X
Sara (3)	X	X	X			X	
Jane (3)	X	X	X			X	
Holly (5)	X		X	X	X		X
Gonzo (5)	X	X	X	X	X		
Harpo (5)	X		X		X		
Jean (5)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dan (5)	X	X	X	X		X	
Total	14	12	12	9	8	8	7

Note. The numbers inside the parenthesis represent the participants' years of experience.

Jeanette stated it this way. "As I get older I get more resilient. I finish things. I take on challenges. I think resiliency is earned. I think it is something you earn through your trials in life. You just get better at it."

Themes describing attributes of resilience were developed from the participants' definitions of resilience and their descriptions of life in the context of teaching. These themes were: Relationships, Humor, Positive Attitudes, Sense of Purpose, Faith, Initiative, and Creativity. They are presented in order above in Table 3.

Building Positive Relationships

Relationship is the individual's set of complex abilities that allows him/her to form relationships with others (Vanderpol, 2002). All 14 participants reported that positive relationships were very important to maintaining their resilience. Beginning teachers stressed the importance of personal relationships throughout the interviews. These relationships included: colleagues, students, parents, staff and the community. The personal aspect of relationships reported demonstrated how beginning teachers sought positive relations within their school community. The relationship category was not only important under the personal attributes of resilient teachers but was also an important component of the environmental theme. Rebecca, a first year teacher, explained what it meant to have a positive relationship with someone in the school. Rebecca discussed how important it was to develop friendships with another teacher.

> I know when I do have bad days there is a teacher that is right across from me and this is her first year in this school. She is another math teacher and she has been teaching for five years. She and I will go out after school just to talk….talk shop and to try not to talk shop. She has been kind of a support system for me a little

bit. Whenever I want to get out of my room, I go to her room for lunch or something. So I can talk about something else to get my mind off the kids or get my mind off all the things that I have to do.

Gonzo, a fifth year teacher, explained why relationships in the workplace were important to him.

I have done lots of different types of jobs and through those picked up lots of problem solving skills and relational type of skills. I've always been the kind of person that gets along well with others and that is probably the key. I think it is essential that relationships be developed. I think a lot of it happens just by having lunch together and talking about our personal situations and being friends to each other. I'm the kind of guy that just really likes everybody and I don't consider the janitor or cafeteria staff lesser than me. I always engage them in friendly conversations and I think that is very helpful. We always watch each other's back so to speak.

Amber, a third year teacher, stated relationships were important because of the support they give.

When it comes to the students and being resilient, I know if I have a problem with a student that I can send that student to either teacher on each side of me. If I need a break from that student, rather than sending them to the office, I can send them to one of my colleagues. I can deal with them that way and they do the same with me. When we need a break or we need another opinion, we trade off students. That has been really nice too, to have them available for help rather than really upsetting a student by sending them to the office for something that

maybe too minor for the office but too major to ignore. I will send them to one or

the other of my colleagues.

Dan, a fifth year teacher, described how important it was to build relationships with

students.

I'm pretty good with the kids. I make a great effort to learn their names by the

second time they come to class and just generally get to know them. If a kid that

is real open and not acting like they normally do, I might try walking over to them

and give a joke, a hug, a pat or whatever the case is and see how they respond.

Sometimes you know little jokes let them know that somebody cares about them

and that is enough and they will get out of the mood. Other kids who are real

private, down for a day, I might have them come help me with this or that while

the class is working on something. Then we chat more in private to see if there is

something going on that is a big deal.

So with kids my response is to just build a relationship with them over

time. I'm able to help some and some of them I'm not no matter how much I try.

And with the seniors picking me this year to speak at their graduate ceremonies, I

think that it shows to me that I'm doing something right. I'm having the affect

that I intended.

Svetlana, a first year teacher, suggested that it was important to have a community in the

classroom.

The activity was also good for community building. In my classroom, I want a

community. You know I don't want a bunch of individuals that don't know each

other's names. So, I will take that with me as one way to build that community. I

use things like this activity that are more of deep personal reflection type stuff and also a little bit of the community building while still structuring it in a that is useful to them and to me in terms of where we are as a class and people.

Matthew and Jane viewed relationships with the community as important. Matthew saw building relationships with parents as an important part of his job.

I feel like I need to do a better job of encouraging parents, regardless of their education background, to work with their students and math assignments. We have a lot of families that are first generation Americans. Some are recent immigrants who maybe still going through the citizenship process. They don't feel like they have the qualifications to sit down and do math with their kids cause they have never had math growing up. They do have real life solid math skills that they could impart to their kids without knowing how to do a worksheet. So I see that I need to do a better job of encouraging the parents.

Jane told about the importance of building relationships with the larger community.

The team and our principal were the ones who had to drive the student to his meetings and had to step in where the student's family had fallen short a little bit or couldn't necessarily do what they were required to do. Through the course of this incident, we have made friends and allies of other probation officers. I just think it is unfortunate that his probation officer perceived that we were attacking his ability or credibility because we were standing up for the student. He just didn't realize that we could be his best ally and he could be our best ally in the situation.

Humor

Humor is the individual's ability to find the comic in the tragic (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). According to the participants, humor is the one quality that can often keep one going when the times get rough. If one can laugh about the situation or the world then it does not seem so bad. Humor frequently provides a different perspective, making it easier to deal with the circumstances. This skill often helps to build relationships. Twelve of the 14 teachers claimed humor was an important part of their resilience and it helped in their work with students. Gonzo explained how humor was a release from frustrations.

Researcher: Have you ever considered withdrawing from teaching?

Gonzo: No, Yeah, but thirty seconds later I was over it. You know nowadays you get frustrated. Last week I put out on the instant messenger system a call for a want ad. The message said, ' Does anybody know anybody that is hiring right now?' That was just a part of my sense of humor. My wife doesn't have the same sense of humor. I know other people don't have the same sense of humor so I know when I complain about my job and stuff like that I have to be real careful. When I talk in that way, I'm just expressing my frustration with my job. It is just a way of expressing my frustrations and venting.

Humor generally helps to release tension and ease transitions from embarrassing moments. Dan laughed at himself as he told the story about giving a speech for the first time as a teacher.

> It was a highlight for the seniors to choose me to speak at one of their graduation ceremonies. They could have picked anybody. That has been my highlight because I got into teaching to have a positive effect on people. So I think that it shows to me that I'm doing something right that I'm having the affect I intended. I was real nervous at first. I have to hold on to things when I talk. In this first speech that I gave the whole podium was shaking. I was gripping it so hard it was shaking (laughs).

Using humor to ease a situation seemed to be common behavior for resilient teachers, as illustrated in an interview with Jean.

> Researcher: Describe a significant event that you have experienced recently in the classroom.
>
> Jean: If you were in this classroom, you would know that I have so many choices. (laughs) Don't even laugh about it. I mean, I'm serious. You said all that and I thought whoooo which one do I pick. (laughs)
>
> Researcher: Ok then tell me how you maintain a sense of wellness in times of difficulty or stress?
>
> Jean: Laughter and dementia.

Jane explained how humor helps one keep perspective, especially when dealing with kids.

> Humor, I think is important for resiliency especially in teaching. Especially in

dealing with kids but also in dealing with colleagues in high stress situations or in

just keeping perspective on the nature of this job and what it entails. It helps you

keep perspective and allows you to look at a situation and then pull back so that

I'm not so entangled in it that I have blinders on. I don't lose sight of the bigger

picture of things.

Rebecca emphasized how it is important to laugh with the kids. "The kids make me

laugh, and I never have a boring day. I let them know that I want to be here because they

are exciting and because they can make me laugh."

Positive Attitude

A positive attitude is the ability of an individual to perceive that odds can be

surmounted (Werner & Smith, 2001). Eleven of the participants stated that it was very

important to maintain a positive attitude. Being able to see the "glass half full" instead of

half empty was a large part of their ability to be resilient. Sara, a third year teacher,

stated, "Being resilient, a lot of it is about attitude. Keeping it positive." Harpo explained

that staying positive enabled her to handle difficult situations.

I believe that dealing with the positives is my way of handling the difficult and

enables me to bounce back from the challenges that we as teachers face in the

classroom. I have a positive influence on students because I don't let the

responsibilities that I have to carry as a teacher affect my presentation of the

material. So students are not aware of the stresses that we as teachers face

everyday.

Jean explained that a teacher has to have a positive outlook. "I don't really let

anything get me down or I try not to. Because everything changes so much around here,

as a teacher, you have to be positive." Svetlana described how she keeps positive thoughts in the forefront by keeping a gratitude journal.

> I look at the positive things that are going on. I have a gratitude journal that I started last year in my internship where I write down when students tell me they enjoyed an assignment or how much they learned. I also write down when parents tell about students talking about my class. It helps to keep me focused on those positives. I have a particular ability to find the positive especially in situations that are not necessarily positive or funny. One of the things I use to gage my enthusiasm and my positivism about the day is 'Am I planning on going back to school the next day? And there has not been a day yet when I've said I'm not going back.'

Rebecca explained how staying positive helps you stay around.

> I feel that surviving TAKS and still maintaining a positive attitude says that you are not going to let it get the best of you. Staying positive helps to keep you focused on your goal. I see myself as that positive person because I am still positive about everything and I'm still trying out everything.

Matthew cautioned that teachers can not let the negative paint the picture.

> I think I'm a realist. It is not a Pollyanna where everything is just great all the time. It is more of a sense of seeing things for what they are but not letting them overtake you or overpower you. I think it is maybe being somewhat of an optimist too. I tend to be the person who when in these negative situations, I am able to find something good about it.

Sense of Purpose

A sense of purpose is a deep belief that one's life has meaning and that one has a place in the universe (Werner & Smith, 1992). Many participants referred to teaching as their purpose in life. It was stated strongly that this belief was what gave meaning to their lives despite the challenges. This sense of purpose seemed to be the force behind their persistence. Dan testified about his life in relation to why he teaches.

> I'm not very good in front of a group. I get so nervous I have to hold on to a pen or pencil everyday talking to the first class of the day. But I know what it is like to have to answer in front of the whole class and I understand poverty. I grew up in it. I understand having parents who are not around. I understand being involved in other things, and so a lot of my experiences with kids that typically have some struggles with school are things that I had. So I am able to relate well to those kids. I'm not a minority obviously, but I also went to a high school that was largely minorities (80 % to 75% African American). And most of my friends were minorities when I was growing up. So I know how to relate to a lot of kids we have who typically struggle, poor kids with little or no parental involvement. Playing sports and having other reasons to come to school instead of learning. I have been in that situation all my life. I grew up dirt poor in a trailer. I got into teaching to have a positive effect on people, to make a difference.

Jean explained how sometimes you grow into your sense of purpose.

> Each year, I would say take care of your self this summer and if I come back, it is a good sign that I will be here. I just kept coming back. I thought I didn't want to be with this hormonal bunch of teenagers. Then I got here and I could relate to

them and kind of see myself in them. I realized that you know these people who thought they knew everything and that were sometimes very hard to deal with because of the aggressiveness and the hormones, really did need someone just like the third graders do or the babies do. I thought these kids need someone in the gap that can help them and that knows what is going on. Someone who is not trying to shove some kind of doctrine or certain speech down their throat and respects them for what they are doing. You know I just didn't want the kids getting cheated with someone who didn't care.

Svetlana explained how changing one's view of life could create a sense of purpose.

I was diagnosed with a chronic illness in high school. It was a major perspective change. I realized that I needed to decide what I really wanted out of life and focus on that. I have always enjoyed being at school. I just enjoy figuring out ways to explain things to people so that they can understand it. I also want to help people. I know that I want to be a teacher. It is important to me. It is a career I know that I want to pursue.

Jane recalled how teaching became her purpose.

Originally, I did not want to be a teacher. I wanted to be a physician. I had a teacher that encouraged me to try a different opportunity in high school. The last semester of my senior year, I had an internship at a successful charter school. The internship ended with my getting to be a chaperone on a trip to Washington D.C. with the fifth graders. I was standing in the middle of the night in the middle of the mall in Washington D.C. with fifty fifth graders realizing most of them had never left their city let alone the state of Texas before. They were children of

parents who worked in hotels around the center of town, cleaning rooms and I thought this is like the American dream. This is what is possible through education. So I decided I wanted to do education. I love helping kids learn how to read.

Amber explained how one of her teachers inspired her to try to make a difference in others.

My middle school art teacher was an inspiration to me. I never forgot about that inspiration. I just really thought I could make a difference. That is what I wanted to do. I wanted to make a difference in kids. I wanted to make them realize the importance in art in their lives. I wanted them to know about expressing themselves and expressing their creativity to the world.

Rebecca described how teaching has always been her dream and how she has developed it into her purpose.

Teaching was always my love. I wanted to do this since I was five. I wanted to be a teacher. I picked middle school because I felt like it was the most challenging. I like a challenge. I wanted to be with these kind of kids. They can be tough. But I felt like if I didn't go here, if I didn't go to a school where the kids were going to be a challenge where they need you then I would be going to waste. I felt like, I know the subject, I love it and I'm Hispanic female. That has got to be some kind of gift or some kind of talent when people don't know how to do it and you do. It got to be some kind of talent that they can understand from you. So I've got to use it. I want to go for them. I need to go for them. I know I've got a

mission here. I've got a purpose. I developed my purpose so that is going to be

my goal until I get to be the best.

Amelia argued that it is her job to help those who do not have support at home and to

make a difference.

I have just seen a lot of kids that don't have support at home. I just really wanted

to help them. I have wanted to be a teacher since second grade. I really like

working with kids and feel I can make a difference. I'm really passionate about

it. I just like working with kids and it has always been something I wanted to do.

Matthew maintained that it is important to understand what one's purpose entails.

I made the decision to become a teacher at around age 41. I had already been in

the sales industry for almost twenty years. I have worked with kids and I have

kids of my own. I like kids and as my wife says, I get kids. I was also raised in

an education environment and knew what it meant, not a 8:30-3:30 job. I didn't

go into this blindly thinking it is a cush job. I was looking at what would I enjoy

when I changed jobs. I like kids. I like education. The reason I do this is that I

feel like I'm here for the kids that are struggling. I'm in teaching for these low

performing kids.

Holly also came into teaching later in life and explained how she feels it is her gift and

purpose.

I believe that teaching is my gift. I knew it was going to be busy, that you would

not have any down time. But my job is to nurture these kids and instill a life long

want for learning. I have to get them excited about learning. I just look at it this

way. I am going to make a difference in some kid and I will. Different kids will

remember me for different things but I will open a door and I will turn on a light.

Gonzo stated that becoming a teacher was in part because of his faith and his love of

children.

I knew that I love children. I love my own children. I actually started teaching

Sunday School first. I was also involved with coaching after school. I woke up

one morning and realized it wouldn't matter how many cases of Velveeta Cheese

I sold. At the time I was reading Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly*

Successful People. He tells you to evaluate why you do what you do. I knew it

would be some sort of an ordeal because I would take a pay cut. So it was a

sacrifice for my family as well. I realized my choice was to decide to follow

God's purpose for my life and teach.

Faith

Faith or spirituality is the convictional knowing in which one grounds, unifies,

and creates order in our lives (Parks, 2000). Faith, whether it be a belief in a higher

power or having a sense of spirituality, is the element the participants felt gave them hope

and carried them through difficult situations. Jeanette explained how attending mass

every Friday was the highpoint of her week at the Catholic school where she taught.

I really enjoy going to mass on Friday. I work at a Catholic school so going to

mass has been a highpoint. I grew up in the Catholic religion and I think that

gave me the ability to also be resilient. To know that it was not all on my

shoulders. That there is something bigger than me that's helping me get

through it.

Simone explained that faith is a support especially when you are far from home. "I don't have any family here and I'm going to church but I try not to bring work into other areas. So that's my support group." Harpo explains her support system. "My church is my support. I say a prayer and ask for some guiding help. I might not hear it but I will see it somewhere." Holly also believes that her main support comes from church.

> I have support from my church. I'm a Christian. I have a lot of faith. Going to church is supportive. I have always had faith that I was going to be taken care of and I always looked for opportunities and I never gave up. Sometimes I think about teaching as missionary work or something like that. Also, to keep myself healthy, I listen to my Christian music. I read some scriptures or books by Christian authors.

Matthew explained how faith creates an internal strength.

> I'm a Christian and I approach my job as a ministry. I'm not banging the kids over the head with religious ideas but internally for myself, I look at what I do in that way. Just looking at people not for what they present but perhaps what is further deeper down, which is hard at this age because these kids don't know who they are themselves. I sing in the choir at church and on Wednesday nights I go and practice. It is a great mid week boost. Sometimes I feel like I am crawling in there on my hands and knees and then I walk out floating on cloud nine.

Gonzo reported that his faith was the main reason that he became a teacher.

> My Christian faith is what was probably the biggest factor in my becoming a teacher. I have to give credit to God. I became a devout Christian at thirty-three. It was a process to become a teacher because it was still several years after that

that I decided to become a teacher. In that process my faith led me to start

questioning my purpose in life. Then as I began to seek out my purpose it was

God that directed me towards becoming a teacher. It took a lot of prayer and it

still does.

Jean also believed that a lot of her support came from her church.

I have always spent a lot of time in church. I was in church a lot during the rough

time with the director. I was on the phone a lot with my mother who was in

church a lot because of me. I think at one point since my husband is so active in

church that my pastor kind of got wind of what was going on. And he kind of

pulled me aside and said I just want you to know that I'm supporting you in

prayer. Church is just a real support network of family and friends.

Initiative

Initiative is the individual's ability to take action (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Eight of

the participants related how being resilient helped them to take initiative on issues that

were important to them or for the students. Sara explained how she stood up for her

position on a team because she believed that maintaining the position was important for

her students' well-being as well as her own.

I went and stood up for my position with the vice principal and that didn't

really do any good. We had already had one conversation about where I told her

how I felt. She did not make any kind of conciliation or say that is what we were

going to do. So my next alternate was to go to the principal and basically I don't

think he realized what was going on. He tried to reassure me that they did not

want to shove me out of the program. That he felt I was an integral part of the

program. Hopefully, things will work themselves out before the end of the year

but basically I have decided that if they can't keep me in the classroom, if I am

not worth fighting for then they need to find someone else that is willing to do this

program before school as they want. Because I am not willing to give up what I

think is best for the students or for myself just because they decided this is easier.

Jean remarked on how concern for students can motivate a teacher to take initiative, even

when faced with opposition.

I was the associate producer of the program and the producer (lead teacher)

decided to resign before the end of the school year. They weren't really prepared

for it. The kids kept asking me what was going to happen to them. All of a

sudden it became really important to me. I knew it was important to keep the

program running smoothly, so I petitioned for his job. The school director would

practically ignore me when I went to her office to discuss moving up. She

constantly reminded me that I didn't have the teaching experience or the 'right'

degrees. She would get on the phone or talk to others near the office; it was mean

and rude. I felt neglected and very stressed. Parents started to voice their

opinions along with mine. It was a combination of lots of people saying it would

be a shame if you passed this person over for any personal feelings that you have.

They just kept telling her that obviously I was good for the job and that I wanted

to do the job. They would tell her that we know she is really good at what she

does. I just kept trying my best because I figured if I was here, I was going to

work hard to do the best. I was doing all the jobs in filmmaking because

everyone had left and I just kept talking to her.

Svetlana described how she took initiative in building support for a positive communal atmosphere.

> You know the negative stuff just files down hill so I was trying to implement positive things. One of the supports that I actually started is a critical friends group. It is made up of some other teachers, the technology person, and our librarian. It is a place where we can problem solve and be positive. It is one of our norms that it is not just a place to complain about things. It is a place to actually do something or figure out solutions. I have a supportive principal, and I asked if I could start this group. Every time I have come to him with an idea to do with students or like this group, he was very supportive in trying to help me figure out how to do that. I sent out an e-mail. It was really hard to explain what a critical friends group is cause I was sending it to an audience that I knew no one had really ever heard of this. But I sent it out and I tried to follow up with talking to people that I knew would be interested in that type of thing. They were people who are more interested in solving problems than complaining about them.

> I started the group because there are positive and negative sides to all relationships in all schools. I was exposed to possibility thinking in my internship and that kind of thinking is not prevalent in my current school. So we decided as one of our norms that we will respect each other and remember that we are bringing our work to the group to critique in certain ways so we are very vulnerable at that moment and the comments need to be constructive and specific.

> The critical friends group actually is a very diverse group. We have only had two meetings and already one of the things brought back was that from

meetings like this you realize what all the different roles in your school are. It is already getting at a more communal atmosphere for us to get to know each other as people and that will help us in our professional things.

Jane described turning frustration into initiative to work on change in the school structure.

The first initial thing the frustration does is to ramp up my performance in the classroom. Because I think if I can't change a whole school structure, at least I can guarantee that whatever a hundred….a hundred and fifty kids that wander into my classroom…I can at least guarantee them this experience in this moment. On a broader scale, it caused me to seek out the proper channels for making change. I joined two committees that potentially would have the opportunity to change things. I also spoke with my principal when I thought it would be beneficial even if I knew that it might not make a change at least it would let him know that there was support for the other side of the issue or a voice for whatever the side was that I thought needed to be heard. I think I discovered that the only thing that you can do in situations where change is slow is find the people who are usually the loudest and most resistant to change and try to change their minds.

There was a woman in the department that was very vocal, often vocal against things like procedures and policy that I thought would be beneficial to the kids. She thought that change was not the answer because she had taught for many years. She thought people would try innovative things and then they would just be fly by night activities. So in one instance I was able to speak with her and change her mind. I got her on the bandwagon with an idea that she was able to

act as kind of a changer of minds of other vocal veteran teachers who were
against the idea.

Amber explained that sometimes one has to take the initiative by going through the back door to create positive experiences for students.

I have had another teacher who went to the administration on her own and ask that I have my photography program reinstated. That is where I have had the most success with kids is in the photography studio. My department head still has them convinced that there is no money for it. So I'm fighting back. I've created the Dead Photo Society. We meet every Wednesday and Friday mornings an hour before school starts. I work with whoever wants to work. Everyone is invited. I've had about ten consistent students showing up every time. And three of these students went to state and won with their photography this year. That was pretty cool. Kind of in your face sort of thing.

Dan noted that one often has to take initiative to protect students from procedures and policies detrimental for student learning.

There has never been an incident that made me re-evaluate my career choice. A generic worry I have about the day I might leave the profession is one I have about our new national and state requirements for education and how local school districts are responding to them. I would consider leaving if the curriculum became too prescribed or too heavily monitored.

With the TAKS tests in place, school districts more and more are test-driven. However, these tests only ask students to do the bare minimum. They are not designed to challenge students or see how high they can fly.

Under pressure from above, our district science coordinators wanted to implement a TAKS benchmark every two weeks. They wanted to take a whole class period devoted to the benchmark. Well, I have five classes in two weeks so that takes 20% of my educational time towards preparation for a test that about 95% of my kids are passing. And it is a minimum performance test. I think this would show the kids that we only expect the bare minimum out of them. I also think the more often they are given the text the less seriously they will take it.

I felt angry discussing this with the district coordinators. I got my academic dean involved. She agreed with me. We got the rest of the science teachers in the district to agree too. So with my academic dean supporting me, we got through those meetings and got the policy decision reversed. We now give two benchmarks per year.

Amelia argued that one has to take initiative when policy is being implemented that is unfair to students and teachers, even if one's actions may have no impact.

I like to keep the peace but I also speak up when something is not right. They have an owl buck system which is like you can buy stuff with like a behavior management system. They claim it works but if you ask the administration. Yeah, the kids will behave for this long (measures with two fingers about an inch of space) to get what they want. But it is nothing that really sticks.

The administration has a problem with follow through. That behavior system I told you about well they are now telling the kids if they don't have their documentation, they are not going to get their incentives. Well, they didn't make teachers start documenting until the third nine weeks. So how are we going to have documentation for the whole year? I wrote a letter and got a couple of other teachers to do the same. And so now they got on the announcements today and said that any kid that gets referred to the office no matter how many Owl bucks they have will not receive their incentive. They are always changing the rules about everything. We need a consistent behavior management plan. This owl buck stuff isn't working because it doesn't teach them a reason why they should do acceptable behaviors.

Creativity

Creativity is the individual's ability to use the imagination (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Part of the participants' resilient coping skills was being creative. Creativity is important for helping teachers to adapt to an existing situation or develop a solution to a problem. Amber used creative problem solving to address students' problems in her classroom.

I've become pretty darn resilient as far as the crap goes. The biggest disappointment is the lack of administrative support. It seems they don't care about the environment in this school. It still bothers me and frustrates me that I still have kids that come in here and sleep through my class. They also don't turn in assignments and I have to fight that everyday. I wish I could motivate them all but I can't seem to do that. I wake them up a few times and if that doesn't work,

you know I have other kids that care about what I have to say. They want to learn from me. So for the sleepers, I take a picture of them sleeping so that I have the proof and go on with my business.

Jean explained that one has to be a creative problem solver to get information across to students who may see no future for themselves. She related one story of just such a student.

In terms of that student, my goal was to stop pushing and turn supportive because that is the only thing you can do is become supportive to what they want to do. If you don't become supportive and say you are making a terrible mistake then they are going to get hearsay or some bad sources and end up with some bad life choices. And essentially that is what it is about making some life choices. That is what I found myself doing for this one graduate last year. She had been in the program for four years and decided she was going to go to cosmetology school. I just about died. Been in a filming program for four years and you are going to braid hair! So I pushed for a very long time and then I just decided ok let me tell you some real options. Did you know there are very few minority hairdressers in the filming business? Did you know that they make this much money per year? You have the filming knowledge. You understand how to work on the set. You understand so and so. I combined the knowledge from here, working on film sets, making money, and still doing what she said she wanted to do. It became "Oh really, can you give me more information?" So I did, and I pushed to support.

Svetlana imparted how using creativity can help engage students in the learning process.

It is a really good exercise, especially for ninth graders, to learn how to listen and not talk. It also helps to build community by getting them to understand individuals. First, they are placed in two circles facing each other. They don't get to choose who they will talk to because every two minutes, the outer circle has to move two people to the right. I always have an agenda for what we do and this one had open type questions that they would have to reflect on later in their journals. I try to give my classes a chance to work with new things. This was more of a deep thinking personal reflection type stuff. It is also a little bit of the community building while still structuring it in a way that it is useful to them and to me in terms of where we all are in terms of a class and people.

Matthew stated that being creative helps to keep him sane.

I teach math to all high school ages too. It is a privilege because I get to be with middle schoolers during the day and at night for four hours I'm with high school students and they are different. It kind of keeps me sane. I think that is another thing that helps to keep me resilient. I get to go outside of my boundaries now and again to try other things.

What is the Role of Agency in the Development of Resilience in Beginning Teachers?

Participants believed that making choices allowed them to have some control over their lives in the classroom. They believed that choice was empowering because of its impact on attitude and perceptions. Participants believed that having a choice or being in control of their choices was a major part of their ability to be resilient.

Choice

These participants when faced with situational challenges, realized choice was necessary to create the needed changes. The reflection on the circumstances allowed them to: be flexible, deflect attitude, understand options and persevere. Matthew saw choice as part of his resiliency because it helps his ability to be flexible.

I always have a choice in how I deal with situations. I think having a choice gives me the flexibility to shift in order to make a potentially negative situation positive. I think that is what resiliency is turning difficult situations into teachable moments or into a positive thing.

Gonzo argued that having a choice meant one could persevere.

It is always a choice. We can always quit or walk away from something. But for me and maybe this is a bit of my competitiveness nature, but if you make a choice to quit something then you are admitting defeat. And I'm not that kind of person. I made a choice to be a teacher. And as bad as things get sometimes with teaching, I'm not going to let that deter me from being a teacher. I have to stick with my choice. My choice, I made my choice and nobody else made it for me. And nobody else is going to take it away from me either. So I'm going to stick with my choice.

Svetlana also discussed how choice helps teachers to persevere.

Having a choice could play a very big role because a person who believes they have a choice in ending up where they are can say 'You know what, I chose to be here so I'm going to stick it out.' Whereas, if a person is in a place where they feel like they were forced there, they are not going to be as in a certain attitude to

push forward on that track. So being able to choose is very important.

Sara discussed the relationship between choice and attitude.

> Well, you can choose your attitude about things. Sometimes it is very hard to be positive but it is still a choice. You can choose how some things affect you. Obviously, some things are going to make you upset or sad no matter what and you don't plan that but you can choose whether you are sad or angry about it forever.

Simone viewed choice as a major part of resiliency.

> I think choice has a major impact on resiliency. I never had anybody to make choices for me. So I kind of made my own choices based on what my mom and dad taught me when I was younger. They never forced me to do anything to make any kind of choices. I also think it depends on what type of person you are. You can either be resilient or you can let them make choices for you and make you not be resilient.

Dan reported that having options was a big plus for teachers.

> I think options is big. I think being able to choose what I taught was a huge part in reducing my stress level. Choice helps. It helps because many teachers enjoy figuring it out and that is part of what lets them excel. They can come up with novel ways of doing things or creative ways or at least ways that work best in their individual situations. I think having a choice for teachers to do that really helps.

Empowerment

The ability to understand and know that there is always a choice appeared to empower these participants. The capacity to use their understanding and reflective choices seemed to be a major factor for these teachers to create changes in their environment. These resilient teachers seemed to have the ability to understand the protective factors in their environment (supportive colleagues, teaming, critical friends group and mentors) and how to use these factors plus monitor the setting to promote the best interaction with the context. Jeanette explained how choice empowers people.

I think choice empowers people. I think when you take choice away from people you take away their power. You take away their power and there is no way they can be resilient. Because when they are powerless, they are victims. I think by me having a choice, gives me the ability to have the power to choose and create. Not to be so victimized but to be an empowered person and to build my life, make my choices and hold on to the responsibility that is mine to finish….to do that helps me to be resilient.

Jane saw choice as impacting teachers' attitudes and perceptions.

I think choice is tremendous. I think having a choice over even little things makes a huge difference. Research with little kids shows choice makes a huge difference in their learning. So research with adults must also be true that choice over little things has an impact on positive attitudes and perceptions about the job. But it also creates the feeling of efficacy and of like the ability to do things and make change. I would say having choice over larger issues, which is something we have here. We have choice over curriculum and choice over policy. I think that

is tremendous in making you feel like what you are doing is worth while and making you feel like you are not doing things in vain…..that you are doing things for a purpose. Not only for children but also for the benefit of adults and others as well.

How do Environmental Factors Impact the Development of Resilience in

Beginning Teachers?

To understand how environmental factors impact resilience building in teachers, one must understand the context in which these teachers start their careers.   Participants discussed the environmental factors that were discouraging as well as those that allowed them to grow and thrive. They also expressed the importance of relationships in the environment. These 14 teachers saw relationships as a two way street, not only being built by the teachers' personal interactions with colleagues but also as a structure that needs to be built within and come from the school system.

The major environmental factors that impacted these 14 participants were: Teaching Today, Pressure and Influence of TAKS, Negative Interactions, Types of Support Received and Types of Experiences that Impacted Resilience. The subcategories of each of the environmental factors as reflected in the data from each participant are shown in Table 4.

The participants did discuss the pressures of TAKS and how it had influenced their practice. However, for the TAKS category, the participants' comments were too diverse to allow for the designation of specific subcategories. So an "X" is used in the table to denote that participant mentioned issues related to TAKS.

Table 4. Environmental Factors

Name	Teaching Today	TAKS	Negative Interactions	Support Types Received	Experiences That Impacted Resilience
Amelia (1)	Counselor Politics	X	Student, Parent Administrator	Team	Supportive Colleagues University Support
Rebecca (1)		X	Colleague	Team	Strong Content Background Supportive Colleagues
Jeanette (1)	Counselor	X	Student, Parent, Administrator	Colleagues	University Support
Svetlana (1)	Counselor	X	Dept. Chair Student	Colleagues Team Administrator Critical Friends' Group	Freedom/new ideas Strong Content Background 9-month Internship Prof. Development
Simone (3)	Counselor	X	Student Administrator	Team	Supportive Colleagues
Matthew (3)		X	Student Parent	Colleagues Team Administrator	Positive 1st year Supportive Colleagues
Amber (3)	Politics		Student Parent Administrator	Colleagues	Supportive Colleagues
Sara (3)	Bureaucratic Politics	X	Parent Administrator	Administrator	Freedom/new Ideas Strong Content Background 9-month Internship
Jane (3)	Counselor	X	Colleague	Colleagues Team Administrator	Freedom/new Ideas Strong Content Background 9-month Internship
Holly (5)	Counselor	X	Student Parent Administrator	Colleagues	Supportive Colleagues
Gonzo (5)	Bureaucratic	X	Student Administrator	Colleagues Team	Supportive Colleagues
Harpo (5)	Counselor	X	Student	Colleagues	Supportive Colleagues
Jean (5)	Counselor		Administrator	Colleagues	Supportive Colleagues
Dan (5)		X	Student Parent	Colleagues Team Administrator Critical Friends' Group	Supportive Colleagues Strong Content Background 9-month Internship
Total	11	12	14	14	14

Note. The numbers inside the parenthesis represent the participants' years of experience. The "X" under TAKS indicates no single theme developed but that it was discussed.

Almost all of the participants reported having frustrations due to the teaching

conditions of today. They reported the politics and bureaucracy were major

dissatisfactions in the educational system today. All but two of the participants discussed

how TAKS was impacting their practice. Every participant had some type of negative

interaction with students, parents, and/ or administrators. The participants were very

vocal about the type of supports they received and the types of experiences that impacted

their resilience. The types of support received by the participants included colleagues,

team, administrator, and critical friends' group. The types of experiences that impacted

the participants are supportive colleagues, university support, strong content background,

9-month internship, professional development opportunities, and freedom to try new

ideas.

Teaching Today

The increase in accountability requirements, including a push to reach higher

academic standards and implement more rigorous curriculum while still addressing the

increasing social and emotional challenges faced by the students, has created a situation

infused with stress. To better understand participating teachers and their resilience, one

must first understand the context in which they do their daily work. Gonzo, an elementary

teacher with five years of experience describes the frustrations he feels.

> Teaching today requires so much other stuff. The bureaucracy is incredible.
>
> Bureaucratic paper work, data that has to be examined and reexamined and put in
>
> various formats and regurgitated to administrators is overwhelming. It is just the
>
> constant barrage of paper work and other tasks unrelated to teaching that is

frustrating and then when you have to deal with students who don't always

demonstrate the highest degree of respect, it becomes pretty stressful and difficult.

A lot of people wouldn't cope that well. People think that teaching is an

eight to three job and it is not. It takes a lot more time than that. People think that

you have all the holidays and summer times off. You know really good teachers

are working during those times. There is lots of stuff to prepare. Both themselves

mentally and as well as their classrooms and their lesson plans so they can be

effective teachers.

Amber, a young third year high school teacher, states her frustration with the

political aspect of teaching. "It is all the secretarial work, the putting out fires, the brown

nosing, the kissing up and putting up with bull crap that is making me old fast." Harpo, a

young middle school teacher of five years, acknowledges that she didn't realize

everything that teaching a career required.

It was definitely hard to become adjusted to the responsibilities because I thought

I would be teaching and pointing to the board and giving homework, tests and

quizzes. I did not know it would entail everything else that it encompasses. You

are not just a teacher for some students. You are at times a counselor. In some

schools teachers are expected to do much more than what they were hired to do.

Jean, a 30 year-old high school teacher with 5 years of experience, explains her situation

when she first started to teach.

When the lead teacher left, they weren't really prepared for it. Not only was I

doing his job and my job but our secretary had left too so I was doing all three

jobs in filmmaking. I was still writing lesson plans for the photojournalism

substitute and teaching them to her. I was doing four people's jobs and I was

stressed. Like completely stressed. That's when I started feeling chest pains. You

know it is like a job and all the stuff in between that makes your job what it is.

You know you are going to work at nine and getting off at 4:30 and hoping that

you are out of there at seven. I was very drained.

TAKS Season

Participants spoke about the importance that is placed on the Texas Assessment of

Academic Skills (TAKS) in their schools and the need for being resilient. Rebecca, a first

year middle school teacher articulated this feeling.

I felt in January and early February that I could feel the stress really building.

The whole tone of the classroom and the tone of the school changed I think with

TAKS coming around. So I feel that surviving those periods and still maintaining

a positive attitude and still saying you are not going to let it get the best of you

and keeping your goal in mind…that seems to be …being tough…building up

your skin.

These teachers' stories revealed the impact TAKS testing has not only on their lives but

also on their students' lives. The focus on TAKS as the only measure of success with

students is affecting teachers to the point that they have began to doubt themselves and

consider leaving the profession. Gonzo stated the following:

Teaching is not about the TAKS test. It is really about the kids. I think often

times and perhaps unmeaningly, the administration tends to make us feel like we

are not doing a good job of teaching. Perhaps that is one of the biggest causes of

teacher turnover. When you get someone telling you that your TAKS scores

weren't as good as they could have been and telling you all the programs you are

trying and asking what interventions are you using and why are you letting this

kid fail? When you know that you are doing everything you possibly can to try to

help this kid out and make him not fail and motivate him to learn and the kids are

just not doing it for you, then you begin to express a lot of self-doubt. I hear this

a lot and teachers start to wonder and begin to question himself or herself as a

teacher and wonder if teaching is really worth it.

Jane, a third year high school teacher, described how TAKS is affecting students.

I worked with one kid that had completed all requirements for graduation except

for TAKS and I worked with him for the two years that I was at the other school.

Another teacher worked with him this year and he just in this last taking of it

passed, which was amazing because English was not his first language. He was

incredibly bright in every area except for the TAKS English skills, which are not

at all real life skills.

Svetlana, a first year high school teacher discussed how TAKS created problems between

faculty members over how to teach. She described difficulties with her department chair.

I guess she felt like I had to be drill and kill on the TAKS stuff. So I had a little

bit of tension there with it but with the newsletter project the students were really

thinking about writing in terms of who am I writing this for. So that was very

beneficial for them. We could take that and talk about the TAKS because TAKS

was a big concern. You know TAKS writing, well here's your audience. Here's

what you need to put in there for your audience in order to get the score you need

and that sort of thing. In that way we could also make the TAKS writing a little

more authentic in terms of writing.

As teachers are grading their benchmark tests and preparing their students for the

administration of the TAKS test, some administrators are evaluating their teachers on the

students' benchmark performance. A few administrators do not believe the results of the

benchmarks until the TAKS results are in, and sadly by then, a breach of trust has already

developed. For instance, Amelia, a first year elementary teacher spoke of her experience

with an administrator who did not support her during the school year when she was

dealing with violent students and abusive parents but, once the TAKS results came back,

the administrator totally changed her demeanor towards Amelia.

> She saw me in the hall the other day and she said, "Your scores are really good."
> "I'm like now you believe me." I had my summative review and she was trying
> to keep me and everything yesterday. Now I'm doing such a great job. My
> principal is really happy because she said I did better than the other teachers with
> the writing TAKS because I'm really passionate with creative writing.

> I had asked for help earlier in the year and I just didn't get it. I had an ED
> kid basically choke me with my lanyard at the beginning of the year and she
> didn't come until much later. I tried to talk with her about it and she told me she
> didn't have time to talk right now. She never once talked to me about the
> incident.

> One time during tutoring a man ran in here with a gun, we were like
> what's going on cause we saw the cops. The kids had just been let out. They
> didn't tell us anything. No lock down. No anything. You don't have the support.

I've had really severe allegations against me that were totally

unwarranted. I talked to the principal about all this and she basically ignored all

the comments I made. I don't think she believed in me until she saw the scores

because when we would do the interim assessment, she would be like you guys

are grading these so there is room to fail.

My kids would get high scores cause we would grade them based on our rubrics.

So I don't think she believed until she saw the numbers.

Negative Interactions

Many of the teachers in this study reported various types of negative interactions

with students, parents, department chairs and administrators. These situations ranged

from being put into a position that could have ended in serious harm to students to the

teacher to being subjected to pornography. Amelia described the yearlong harassment by

a student and his parent in her critical incident report.

I've had this student who was in my class and I had requested for him to be

removed twice and hadn't gotten any support from the principal. I had talked to

his mom and had bent over backwards for both of them. They would call me on

my free time. I would call them on my cell phone. And this kid was disruptive

and the parent said she was supportive but she wasn't. She wasn't really

supportive. The harassment lasted all year.

About four weeks ago the principal called me in and said that she had a

serious allegation against me from a parent. The principal said that the allegation

was that I had yelled at the whole class and said I hate this school, the kids and

the principal. I said that absolutely did not happen. I told her all I've done is bend

over backwards for this kid. I asked 'Why would I say that?'

I took off the next day because I couldn't handle it. When I came back,

the kids hugged me and said that this particular student told them that he had

gotten me fired. He also had been telling it around that I'm pregnant. I went to

the principal because I've been so frustrated and angry. I have not done anything

and I keep getting harassed. I don't understand why or what they want you know.

Also, someone keyed my car. I have a pretty good idea of who it was. They

know my car.

I am a first year teacher trying my best. It makes me so mad. It has really

been a struggle this year. I'm doing my best and this is what I get. Really severe

allegations that are totally unwarranted so I talked to the principal about all this

and she basically ignored all the comments I made. Finally, after that she moved

him out of my class. We had four weeks of school left. He continued to accuse

other teachers and spread rumors about me.

The lack of administrative support in several of the case studies created a lack of

trust. Jeanette, a first year middle school teacher explained in her critical incident report

how she lost trust in her administrator.

I had missed roughly two weeks of school due to my father's death, my daughter's

diabetes and the flu. I was out on Monday and Tuesday, returning to work on

Wednesday but still not feeling well. When I returned on Thursday my principal

requested I go home because she could see how sick I really was. She said to stay

gone till Monday and to get better.

When I returned on Monday I was greeted with an odd incident. My sixth grade students informed me that they had been given a survey form from the substitute who I shortly found out was a part-time teacher and a parent. This particular teacher was a permanent part of the staff and I thought we were becoming friends. I found out that day that the principal did not know about the incident. This incident being that this particular teacher gave a survey to the sixth graders asking if they knew how many days I had missed, and if they felt like they were learning any science, if they liked me....things that would lead them to answer in a derogatory manner. The students informed me that she threw the surveys away, stating that this doesn't feel right.

When I was talking to the principal regarding this issue she informed me that this particular teacher had come to her asking for my removal, that I be fired, because she felt her children were not getting enough science education. The principal told her she would not fire me but would take a look at my curriculum and adjust them if they needed to be adjusted....this was not done but the psychological effect was there.

In short my profession and my person were slandered in my first year of teaching, by a parent that was also a teacher. I feel violated, angry, defeated. The care and hard work I had put into my classes, working with the staff, and my science class was ruined from one parent's feelings and her mean words. The trust between my students and me was broken and the ability for me to communicate with my peers and fellow teachers was broken. I no longer went to the teacher's lounge for lunch and ceased any relationships I may have been building with other

teachers. I started waking up in the mornings during the week in a panic state because I did not want to work near that person and from feelings of inadequacy as a teacher. It caused me to freeze up in my classroom with my teaching and in science that meant less hands on projects, because that is where I was criticized the most. In conclusion, I feel I walk on pins and needles every day at work since February and it is now May. I am looking for a new position and feeling a little unsure of myself as a teacher.

Holly, a fifth year elementary teacher had a similar problem with an administrator and parent.

I've had a group of kids that I bet there are thirteen of them that have attention issues. One of them was medicated inconsistently. Some of them I would say would be ED. There was not a lot of parent support. I had a parent I've had numerous problems with this year. She is the one that is inconsistently medicating her daughter. Her mother thinks that I have issues with black people. Her mother has been trying to build a case. I had explained to her mother how her daughter would blurt out and run across the room. She would engage the other students and get them off task. I had been writing in her agenda and had explained to her mother that I was going to send her to the office if she had another episode.

The parent would just show up at the classroom door and want to argue about things. I would tell her that I couldn't do this right now because I'm teaching. I would have conferences with the principal and this parent, and the

parent would accuse me of taking an attitude with her. I had this kind of problem with this parent all year long.

Two weeks before school is to be out the principal tells me she is going to come into my classroom spontaneously throughout the day and check on the student's behavior and the interaction within the classroom. She did it for three days and it gradually diminished the amount of times she showed up. One day the counselor came instead of the principal. I think this kind of message tells the student that she only has to behave for the principal not the teacher. After the counselor visit no one showed up for the rest of the year. I realized I wasn't going to get the support I needed from the administration. Everything that they do is just a immediate response and there is no follow through. I was ultimately left to survive on my own.

These types of incidents not only created a lack of trust between administrators and teachers but also caused beginning teachers to doubt themselves. Sara, a third year high school teacher described in her critical incident report a verbal attack by parents that caused her to have misgivings about her abilities.

The first time I knew this parent was unhappy with me was at the beginning of the second semester. I received an e-mail from this parent saying she appreciated my creative approach to teaching biology but that she was insulted that a Disney movie (the Lion King) was being shown. The assignment was to identify different scientific errors and habitats. They were also to place the animals in the proper phyla and identify what type of consumer they were.

The next time I heard from her she was upset because the students were assigned the review questions at the end of the chapter. She sent an e-mail that it was too much work and she ended the e-mail with the fact that she was very disappointed in me. She also sent a P. S. stating that I had better keep the due date the same as what was said. I e-mailed back explaining that it was my discretion as the teacher to decide whether my students needed more time or not. That e-mail led to a parent meeting with the vice principal.

I was kept in that meeting for over an hour listening to both parents how they thought I was a horrible teacher because I made learning fun. I tried to get my point across and the father would shut me down with his loud voice. Both parents thought because they had gotten a degree in biology twenty-five years ago that they knew how to teach the subject. Neither one was a teacher. After about twenty minutes my assistant principal asked them what did they want from the meeting, and they never gave a direct answer of what they wanted.

My assistant principal kicked me under the table and told me to be quiet as they continued to bash me and talk to me as if I was a child. Finally, at the end the assistant principal told them that we would have to agree to disagree and only communicate through her for the rest of the semester.

I felt that nothing productive occurred. They were not going to listen to reason. It was totally an hour of we hate you and bashing of me without my being allowed to get my point in. I was unable to make sense of it because their son had an A in my class. At the end of the semester the mom sent me a 'Thank You' card for all the work I did and that she knew teaching freshman was difficult. The

very next week she went to the superintendent to complain about my teaching

again. So at the start of my summer I was called in to explain my teaching

strategies to the administration. The irony of this experience is that these parents

were leaving the area during the summer due to a job change.

It made feel like I was dealing with crazy people. It made me feel like my

voice was not important. It was very clear that the parents were going to be

listened to before the teacher. It made me question myself because if you think

the administration values you then it shouldn't be so easy to question you based

on the opinion of one parent. I lost faith and trust in the administration because

they allowed those parents to berate me for over an hour for no apparent reason.

Participants' stories revealed how it became difficult for them to do their jobs when they

perceived they were not respected by the administration, including department chairs.

Some department chairs have been given considerable power over the teachers in their

departments without oversight by administrators. Amber discussed in her critical

incident report her chair's attempts to ruin Amber's program.

Two years ago, I was asked by another teacher on my campus to chaperone a

group of students to a state contest. I agreed to the duty and was very excited

about the experience and knowledge I would gain from this trip. I thought my

department head would be excited for me because I would be seeing hundreds of

pieces of student work from some of the best students that Texas has to offer, an

invaluable experience for a first-year teacher.

Little did I know that my department head and this other teacher did not

care for each other and not only did they not care for each other, but by

participating as a chaperone, I would now be cast to the other side of the fence, as far as my department head was concerned and she would do everything in her power from that day forward to make my life a living hell.

While on this trip I received a warning call from my boss at Central Office explaining that my department head was very upset that I left on this trip without her approval, even though I had my principal's approval and my boss at Central Office's approval, and that she was ruffling all sorts of feathers trying to get me in trouble. The bottom line was that I had done nothing wrong but my department head proceeded to make up lies that she shared with my principal to make me out to be a horrible teacher that had no respect for authority. I was so angry; I don't know that I have ever been that angry before in my life!! Here was this woman (my department head) who thought I had hung the moon before I left on this trip and now all-of-the-sudden, I am the devil because I am traveling with someone she did not care for…how childish. Oh, I was angry!!

When I got back from the trip, we had mediation…my department head, our principal and me. I was so excited that I would get to tell my side of the story and my department head would look like a fool because I was in the right. Wrong! My department head sat there and told lie after lie about things that I had said and done, to the point where I was in tears. My principal totally sided with my department head and even commented that crying was a sign of weakness and the last thing I should be doing in a situation like that one was crying.

The 2004-2005 school year was one of the worst years of my life. I hated my job because of my department head. My heart would race and my limbs would

shake when I so much as saw her in the hall. I was miserable. My department

head convinced the administration that there was no money for my photography

classes and that is where I have had such success with the kids. There were

almost seventy kids signed up for the next year when they cancelled it.

Amber also talked about finding pornography in her classroom and how she felt

she was not supported by the administration. She explained how she dealt with this

situation.

Two boys were looking at their Sony PSP under their desk while in my class. I

walked over to see what they were looking at and saw that the screen showed a

nearly naked woman. She was not wearing a shirt and was wearing very little as

underwear. I collected the PSP and referred both students to the office. This was

not the first time I had had a student do this. They were both were just talked to

and the owner was given his PSP back and told not to bring it to school again. The

administrators took no disciplinary action.

In some cases, situations were described in which the assignment of inappropriate

duties led to situations where not only were the students were put in jeopardy but also the

teachers and the school system. Gonzo shared in his critical incident report an experience

of this type.

During the last semester I was located in a portable room, which was kind of

secluded from all of the rest of the school. I teach 5th graders and had a class of

about 25 students of mixed sex, race, and abilities. I had multiple positions in the

school including helping with technology. My technology duties included making

sure that the computer network was operating properly. This involved creating

new user names and passwords for employees and students and keeping track

of those, and installing, moving, and servicing computers and printers.

Needless to say, all of the extra duties at times, required my presence at

other places on campus other than in my classroom. In these situations my students

were left in the room unattended. These situations were quite stressful for me as

I always worried about my students while I was out of the room.

My worries were not unwarranted as one morning I was called out to the

principal's office to help with a computer problem. When I returned to the room

my students were working very quietly, which was unusual so I suspected some

thing was wrong. I walked around the room watching my students work when

one little girl grasped my pants leg and very quietly whispered that she needed to

talk to me in private and it was very important. We stepped outside and she bust

into tears and told me that one of the students had a gun. I told her that I needed

her to stay calm and assured her that everything would be ok and that she was safe.

I sent her to the restroom, and went inside. I calmly went to the computer to send

an instant message to the administrators to come to my room immediately.

The administrators arrived and I told them which student was suspect in

private. They asked the young man to come with them. Afterwards, I had to calm

the students down and of course there was an investigation. It turned out to be

a pellet gun, although he had fired it into a cardboard box. He threw the gun

out the back door of the portable into a field, and the holes in the box also

provided evidence. The young man was older and bigger than the other students

and had threatened them, if they told. Fortunately, one young lady was brave

enough to do what was right. The young man was suspended and sent to an alternative school. The lesson was learned by the administration and I was moved into another portable, with an adjoining occupied room.

Supportive Environments

While results presented above show how environmental factors can create obstacles which in turn forces teachers to develop resilience, other comments by interviewees revealed how positive aspects of the environment also serve to develop resilience. The majority of the participants agreed that the support of their team played a major role in helping them develop resilience. Working with a team made these teachers feel like they were not alone. Dan believed that working with a team is an important asset in teaching.

I think one of the big things that I cannot over state was that I did not feel like I was alone. I work on a team and I had four other teachers that all have the same kid. It means that this is something that we can figure out together. I think that is a huge part. My grade level team is amazing. Because we have the same kids, we have the same issues. Helps out a lot. Whether or not the team gives suggestions or offers advice or whatever it is lets you know you are not by yourself. There is a team approach to it.

We also have a critical friends group. It is a group of us about six or seven people. We meet once or twice a month and talk about school life, issues, philosophy and to even fine tuning a worksheet. We work assessment or making a lesson plan to just helping others out. So just having somebody else's eyes looking at what you are doing without my bias coming into it really helps. If I

have had any success in being resilient, I think it is not owed to me but to the

people I'm around and the place that I'm in. Personally, for me, it is definitely

the environment.

Gonzo noted that the support of colleagues was an important part of the ability to do one's job.

There is a lot of support in the school especially your co-teachers. All the

teachers are just huge helpers. I've always been fortunate to have someone next

door to me who kind of reminds me and helps me to stay organized. Colleagues

are tremendous. I think that it is really important to have a good team that helps

each other.

Simone agreed that teaming was an important aspect of teaching.

Your team is very important. You can vent in frustration to them and they know

and understand. They can also support you if you are having trouble. They can

like if you are having behavior issues with a child, and they can have them in for

another group activity or on the playground they can document also what is going

on. The team can back you up if you feel like 'Am I the only person who is

seeing this?' So that helps you feel like you have support.

Harpo thought her coworkers were her major source of support. "My coworkers, the

teachers that I work with closely on my team are very supportive and helpful with any

questions or concerns I may have about the students or concepts that I may be teaching."

Jean agreed but also saw co-workers as being a sounding board. She explained:

These co-workers in here are great. They are usually like a sounding board for

me. There is so much going on in my head that I need different perspectives. So

Ms. S. who is a bit older than I am will give me that mature outside perspective

on things. She's an assistant, not necessarily a film person. So if I come with a

problem, I'm only seeing it from maybe the film making aspect. She will see it

from your average person or outside person aspect. Ms. R. who is so cautious of

hurting anyone she doesn't even eat meat, she will give me that softer side of the

perspective. So they will sound out and support me where I am going.

Jane also reported co-teachers are also important for support. "I have an excellent

network of peer teachers, specifically the world geography teacher that I pair with. We

collaborate for curriculum. She is like a mentor to me. She is experienced. She is

talented and positive."

Svetlana learned about teaming in her internship. She felt it was so important that

when she was in her first year of teaching she started a critical friends group to be her

support. Svetlana explained how it felt to be part of a team during her internship.

One thing that I found very beneficial especially at an internship level was the

teaming. We had the ninth grade team. We had our team meeting every other

day. So I had the support not only of my mentor but of other teachers on the

team. I got to know them really well as people and as educators. So if I felt like

maybe I couldn't talk about something with my mentor, I could talk to someone

else on the team. Also, part of the support of the team was that we could talk

about students and bring students in to talk to with the whole team. The

communication was better with the parents too. I felt at least among the ninth

grade in terms of helping students and identifying issues early on that the team

aspect was positive. Now I will try to get someone to do interdisciplinary

planning with me but it doesn't necessarily work out because there is not that structure to help teachers work together cause we don't have that team time.

Rebecca also stated she received a great deal of support from her team.

I feel like I have a lot of support because my team is wonderful. No one seemed like they were annoyed by my questions. I would ask a lot of questions sometimes. No one ever looked at me like they were annoyed, which was good. I didn't feel bad going back to them.

Amelia argued that it is the team that helps one survive even in a rough school.

That's the thing about this school that's hard because the faculty, the teachers are great. We are all in the same situation. And I hate to say it but I've heard other teachers say 'us against them'. And I'm like why are they saying that. But now I can see because I can clearly see it through my experiences and everything I have observed. The support, it's the other teachers and that's about it.

Matthew explained what it was like when everyone was supportive.

I have tremendous support across the board; academically, behaviorally and just emotionally. We laugh a lot together. Our school has teaming, so our kids for the most part see the same set of teachers. It is wonderful. We have one period together everyday that is our team time. If a kid is acting up in my class and I ask everybody how is he/she doing in your class and everything is great. Then maybe the student and I have a personality problem. But if he/she is acting up in every other class, then we have an issue. We then as a team can bring the student in. We can get the student to the counselor or get the parent in and try to figure out what is going on so that the student can be successful. I know teaming costs

money because that is forty-five minutes out of the day that I'm not teaching kids, but it has been so valuable.

We also have a great administration. I don't feel like I have to prove myself all the time. They ask how can I help you do your job better. Also they deal with discipline. They don't mess around. I don't have to worry about them sending kids back to me that are classroom disruptions.

I have a co-teacher next door. We plan together, we brain storm together, we photo copy together, and I can always run across to her door and ask for stuff. We are not just team teachers but we are curriculum buddies. We both teach the same thing. We have a good mix of temperaments so we teach together and separately.

Jean, a fifth year teacher, also reported that the supportive environment needs to be extended to beginning teachers through ways other than teaming. She explained how important it was for teachers to reach out and offer support to new teachers.

That incident really shook me up. It shook me because I felt kind of helpless. It was just a very unempowering situation, a stressful situation. I thought this is not the way to teach. This is not the way that teachers should have to work. There should be someone. You need someone who can go and say stop this.

You know there was another new teacher who was hired the year after me and was right down the hall. Sometimes I would go by and she would look so confused cause it was her first year teaching and she didn't know what to do. I thought why isn't there someone coming into her classroom and without being condescending but saying this is how you do it. So I would go and check on her

and start by saying how are you doing? What do you need? So now when I hear

new teachers talking about frustrations and stuff and if I was near, I would kind

of butt in and say 'Oh have you tried doing this?' We need someone to be a

cheerleader.

I wanted them to know that I thought they could do it and to make them

to continue to believe they could do it. I don't know, I just felt like when you are

in that frustrating situation and if you really want to be a teacher or you want to

go further as a teacher than it is good to have someone there on your side.

What Types of Experiences Contribute to the Development of Resilience in Beginning Teachers?

Participants perceived that freedom to try new ideas; mentors; opportunities for

professional development; and positive supportive colleagues, including administrators,

were major components to their ability to be resilient. Matthew described his first year

experience.

My first year of teaching I was teaching math plus being a coach. I was a very

busy person still taking university classes and attending training sessions. It was a

good school and had a great principal which was totally supportive of me. It was

a difficult place to leave because they did so much for me. I learned a lot that

first year. I had peer teachers who would come in and a lot of people contributed

to my teaching mechanisms that year. There were a lot of good things that

happened there.

Freedom to Try New Ideas

Sara agreed that it was important for the administration to recognize the hard work that was being done and to allow freedom to try new ideas. "I have a good principal. He is very positive and very willing to listen to new ideas and to try new things if something is not working. He is willing to listen to his teachers." Jane agreed that the positive support from the administration helps teachers make it through the day. "Both my principal and my assistant principal are very supportive also in terms of answering questions and in terms of just providing encouragement along the way."

Mentoring

Jean talked about how important it was for first year teachers to have someone who looked out for them and showed their appreciation of the work that they did.

When I first came here, the producer (lead teacher) that was here was really awesome. He seemed to understand where I was in life and not just who I was as a teacher. So for the first couple of months he didn't ask me to do a whole lot. He said 'I realize it is your first time teaching and you are doing two different subjects at the same time. I know that you have a baby at home and I also know that you are driven to do what you need to do. So as long as you are doing what needs to be done, I'm going to try to keep the load light until I really need you to do stuff'. He just tried to give me duties when he thought I was ready to take on more so that I wouldn't get shocked and maybe not come back. That really helped having someone you know care like that.

The principal at the time thought I was really smart and spunky so I went with it. She would say something positive anytime she saw me. Also at the time,

we were in the building with another school and that principal was a real people

person. We saw her everyday. She would bring people through our rooms and

introduce us even though we weren't part of her school. She would come in and

say these teachers are awesome. She just wasn't blowing smoke, she would

actually note stuff that we were doing. She was paying attention and that helps

when people know what your blight is and understand it.

Holly maintained that new teachers have to be selective about the teachers with whom

they share their concerns.

I have gained support from experience teachers that have been around for a while.

I observe people's behavior and how they interact with each other. You can see

who are the gossipers, the ones that talk about others. To me that is a lack of

professionalism. I talk to teachers and I kind of get a perspective on their views

and their attitudes. They assigned a mentor teacher and she introduced herself

and that was about it. I pretty much had to figure things out on my own until I

developed a very close relationship with an experienced teacher who actually

became my mentor.

Professional Development

Svetlana argued that new teachers need both positive support and professional

development.

I found the people that I need to go to in this school who can help me with

a challenge or who can be a positive impact on whatever is going on. I also have

a very supportive principal. Every time I come to him with an idea to do with

student he is supportive and tries to help me figure it out. I think that what helps

is having structures for teachers and administrations to interact positively.

I also think that professional development is super, super important. That

is the way we gain perspective because it is really easy just to get tunnel vision

into our school and into our school's problems when forgetting that other schools

are dealing with the same problems. Maybe some other people have figured out

really good ways to deal with it. Like we don't have to build everything from

scratch just because we are one school in this particular situation. There are

similar situations out there that can help us figure it out. I just found it really

helpful to be able to talk to other teachers not a part of my school. It is gaining

that perspective and having communication. Communication makes teachers feel

in the loop so to speak.

Supportive Colleagues

Amber stated that it was important for new teachers to receive support from their

colleagues.

We don't have administrative support around here so it has been finding that

group of friends and colleagues that pat you on the back and keep the smile on

your face. They keep you going. They tell you are doing the right thing. They

tell you when you are being an excellent teacher and to just ignore the rest of the

stuff.

Rebecca and Matthew agreed that supportive colleagues help to ease the transition for a

new teacher. Rebecca reported:

I guess first year teachers kind of freak out easily. The whole first week that I

was here, my entire team came to check on me everyday. They checked on me at lunch. They checked after school. It was 'How did your day go?' So I really appreciated that.

Amelia concurred that supportive colleagues were important but argued that new teachers also need someone outside the school system who understands the reality of the situation.

The teachers are great. I like to talk things out with people. I can't even count how many situations this year where I've called the director of teacher education at the university. I've called and said I can't do this anymore. It hasn't been easy but with support you just keep going when things keep coming at you.

Strong Content Background

It was important to look beyond the classroom, colleagues and the school system to see how the development of beginning teachers' resilience may have started. It was interesting that several of the participants talked about how their pre-service program was the beginning of their resilience development.

About half of the participating teachers discussed having a strong background in their content area. These participants believed this was a major factor in being resilient because they did not have to learn the subject matter at the same time they were learning how to get information across to students. Dan explained how his situation when he started teaching.

I knew my biology when I got here but I didn't know how to teach it very well. It was a subject that I wanted to teach. I didn't have to learn the biology. I didn't have to concentrate on two different things…..both the learning and how in the world I was going to teach it.

Sara defined her experience:

> I taught the comparative anatomy labs while working on my masters in biology. I
> knew that I liked science and that I liked teaching science at the university. I did
> my bachelors, masters in biology and then got my teaching certification. So by
> the time I got to my teaching certification, I already had quite a bit of research
> under my belt. I had done an undergraduate thesis because I was in the honors
> program and then my masters thesis and that is a lot of intensive research. I went
> to a special program at the end of my internship to learn how to teach inquiry
> science, which is basically experimental design for high school students. That
> was a six weeks intensive program on the Gulf coast. So all of those things
> helped me with at least the science portion. I was not adequately prepared to get
> the information across to students when I started but I knew my subject.

Rebecca discussed why it was important to understand your subject.

> I really feel like the education I got helped tremendously. I remember that I hated
> that I had to major in math and when I saw the degree plan, I thought 'O God, I
> have to take 32 hours of upper division math. And I was thinking, I like math but
> I don't know if I like it that much. But as I'm in the classroom and how things
> just pick up like that for me, I was thinking I wouldn't be able to do that
> otherwise. I don't think I understood math that way just coming out of high
> school. I found it easy but I didn't understand it the way I do now because of
> college. I understand the content so much that I can explain it in multiple
> different ways. I know different ways of showing how to do it and I
> believe in accepting different ways also.

Jane explained what happens to first year teachers if they don't have a solid grounding in their content area.

> I think that if you are not prepared and you don't know what to expect and don't have a strong foundation in your content area and pedagogy, then there is no getting out of that dip zone. You will not be learning from the mistakes you are making everyday. You will just continue to make mistakes and feel bad about it and the kids will feel bad about it and it just will become a downward spiral.

Svetlana believed that one should not only have a strong content foundation but also a foundation in good teaching.

> I think a solid foundation in good teaching, which sounds obvious. At the university, we had very high standards of what are good lessons, assessments and objectives. Sometimes during this year it was very easy to forget some of that when I had a teacher say, 'Oh just give them this worksheet' or ' Oh, just calm down you don't have to work that hard. Different things like that. But having that foundation….knowing what a good unit looked like and knowing what a good classroom set up looks like allowed me to combat that. Since I had that foundation, I could work against some of the bad habits that other teachers were trying to get me into.

How Does Resilience Contribute to Beginning Teachers' Retention?

Resilient teachers have tactics that they use to function in an atmosphere of chaos as well as in those few moments of calm.

Resilient Teacher Strategies

The participants identified several strategies:

(1) Resilient teachers not only seek out positive relationships but they recognize and accept offers of friendship from colleagues.

(2) Resilient teachers have a sense of purpose; thus understanding themselves and the reasons for why they are in the teaching profession.

(3) Resilient teachers need, seek and sometimes create positive support systems.

(4) Resilient teachers acknowledge their strengths and seek to improve their lesser abilities.

(5) Resilient teachers recognize good mentors and will seek them out.

(6) Resilient teachers are reflective; considering multiple choices and understanding what the consequences of those choices may be.

(7) Resilient teachers use humor to expel stress and create a different perspective.

(8) Resilient teachers exhibit life long learning habits.

(9) Resilient teachers seem to know where to expel energy because they seem to know what they can impact and what they cannot.

(10) Resilient teachers' faith gives them a sense of hope for a brighter tomorrow and they persist to work towards that end.

(11) Resilient teachers often act as change agents.

Despite the many difficulties apparent in the school system today, resilience empowered these dedicated teachers with determination to stay in the profession. These teachers talked about knowing what good teaching and learning looked like and how that helped them avoid practices that some of their colleagues suggested. They discussed wanting to

learn and develop better teaching practices. The participants stated that they felt it was their job to check on new teachers coming in and help them become resilient. Dan conveyed: "I think there are beginning teachers that get frustrated and leave. I think there are beginning teachers that get stronger and better and stay."

Survival

Endurance is not the outcome of a life lacking in challenges but rather the result of abundant personal resources, which are used to solve problems in all the different aspects of life (Flach, 1997). The first year teachers described what it was like to survive. Jeanette talked about her frustrations during her first year.

> It was very frustrating working in the school and not knowing how everything worked like with the calendar. Holidays would come up or special days would come up or special events and I would be totally clueless and nobody would come and tell me. I was disappointed that I was not able to do as much as I wanted to because the administration was so disorganized. I felt that they just threw me in there and I had to figure everything out. There is no one that comes to me once a month and says 'Let's sit down and conference about how your classes or year is going'. The principal didn't seem to have time to help me at all. That was disappointing and frustrating too.

Amelia further expanded on the frustrations of a first year teacher. "This is a tough school. I've almost said I can't do this anymore. I feel I'm getting burnt out. I like teaching. I don't want to quit. I've been trying my best for these kids and getting nothing back." Rebecca reported on how difficult the day can be with students that show no respect.

Some days are tough. I had given all my students dry erase boards and they

were pounding them and were loud. It was my biggest class, a group of thirty

kids. They were really loud and I remember I went home and cried. I was

trying to make it a fun activity for them but they were just banging the boards.

I was kind of shocked how they responded. They were not listening to me at

all and it was the second week of school. After that, I tried motivating with

raffles and so many different things. I felt like my goal was to keep them in the

classroom. I sent out the ones that I really, really had to but I felt my goal was

to keep them in here. I know that they got off task a lot. I know the noise level

got to be a little whacked. But I do a lot of group work.

I talked to the dean and was honest with her that it was discouraging to

see that because I know I've tried so many things. I would have complaints from

next door that the kids were too loud. And I would have an ESL teacher in here

with me and I kind of felt judged constantly because the kids were acting out.

I felt I was being graded on what my kids were doing. I would see her eyes

looking at me like you are not doing anything right. That felt bad too. She

would observe the kids doing something and not do anything about it and then

after the class she would tell me all the things the kids had done. I felt judged

constantly, just had that feeling everyday. It was tough. I guess that the first

year is your defining moment.

Svetlana explained how first year teachers tend to be very judgmental about themselves

and especially when they are just trying to accomplish the many required tasks.

First year teachers tend to think there must be something with our own teaching

when there is a problem. We look at our selves first like it must be me and

something I'm doing. We ask what can I do to change when in fact it might

be the student. We need to talk to our colleagues and identify issues so we

would know it is not just me in my class. It would really help you to see what

other teachers are doing in their classroom to get a better picture. But that

priority just comes down. Other priorities happen.

Svetlana stated how this was a choice she made. "A person who believes they have a

choice in where they are ending up can say you know what I chose to be here so I'm

going to stick it out."

Sticking Around

Teaching today takes resilience. Each day is different and teachers must adapt to

be able to take care of students. Svetlana explained it this way, "You especially need it

with teaching because anyone day that you walk into the classroom you know it is going

to be something new no matter how much you think you know about the day." Harpo

stated it this way:

Being a teacher, you definitely would have to be resilient. Or definitely be able to

handle any type of situation that occurs because every day is just completely

different. You need to learn from each situation and be able to handle it and

adjust yourself so that you can still function through out the day.

Jean declared resiliency was necessary to take care of students.

Being a teacher I think you have to be resilient because it changes so much.

There is just so much going on. One day you come in and everything is perfect

and the next nothing works. You have to be the person who stands up and can get

through all that and keep on going and find strength for yourself and for other

people.

Participants stated that resiliency was necessary because a teacher must solve so many

problems to get students where they need to be. For example, Holly explained,

I think being a teacher you have to be resilient because the little personalities that

you deal with each year, they change through the course of the year. You know

you have to adapt. I think being resilient you have to be adaptable, flexible and

you have to constantly be a problem solver. Cause you have to figure out what is

going to work best for your kids and get them where they need to be.

For well-prepared teachers to stick around for the long term, they need environments that

support and foster resiliency. Jane talked about just such an environment.

To be someone who sticks around, you have to know what are the high points and

what are the low points and that helps you gain perspective so having a nine

month internship in a classroom before I started my first year of teaching let me

know first of all what children were like. It gave me a safe environment in which

to practice my skills and my beliefs about pedagogy and theories of teaching. It

let me see teaching in a context. In a context of the day to day decisions impacting

the week long decisions impacting the year long decisions and how they impacted

and the inter-connectedness of those things.

Svetlana explained what helped her to survive and want to go back the following year.

Some of the biggest things that helped me survive and want to go back and do

well this next year are: (1) self-reflection; (2) the good foundation in content; (3) a

good internship where I learned what is good teaching; (4) and what is not such

good teaching; (5) also where I learned what good learning is; (6) and what is not good learning; and (7) also that ability to seek out support when it is not right there.

Summary

These fourteen teachers were very clear in the message that they sent about what they needed to stay focused on their job. The information was overwhelming that they needed a positive environment with good relationships in their educational communities. They needed to have a special time set aside to work, dialogue, and reflect separately and together as colleagues. Mentoring was another big component of what these teachers believed was necessary for beginning teachers to be resilient. But assigned mentors were not as helpful as was the availability of all faculty and staff for answering questions and creating a sense of community and shared purpose.

The building of positive relationships was a major factor in their being resilient. It was not just the fact that the environment reached out to them but also that teachers had the ability to reach out to their surroundings. The building of relationships was explained as a two-way street. In the beginning when these new teachers were first on campus, they had colleagues who came to them and checked on them with genuine feelings and regard. It allowed them to believe that they could reach out for help and understand when they needed that help.

Participants believed that having choice and a sense of agency created a more positive attitude and allowed them to be more flexible. The interviewees talked about how having a choice often could turn a negative situation into a positive one; that by

having a choice they could commit to being around. Choice helped them to be more resilient.

These teachers' ability to stick around was built through the development of internal resources that the literature says are inherent in all of us. It was the feeling of these teachers that they were in the education profession for a reason. The driving force of these resilient attributes seemed to be having a purpose in life. To know one's self and one's passion or purpose enabled these teachers to stay focused on their goals…..their goals for themselves and goals for their students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Diamonds are nothing more than chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs.

Malcolm S. Forbes

This study started by looking at how biological entities adapt to different environments and continue to survive. They use their strengths to change to meet the challenges of the new surroundings. The human species is not that different when confronted with challenges or change in the environment. The human organism constantly seeks stability when confronted with changes or difficulties in their surroundings (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002) This innate ability to thrive in the face of adversity is a normal process in the human organism. Bernard (1991) states, "The development of human resiliency is none other than the process of healthy human development" (p.18).

Early research on resilience examined "at risk" youth and their environments looking for what were the "protective factors" or supports that would buffer the effect of adversity. Werner and Smith (1992) found that the protective factors of the environment made a profound impact on these children who were growing up under difficult conditions. One of the biggest misconceptions about resilience coming from the first research studies was that only certain people possessed resilience and that other people

do not have it (Benard, 2004). Masten and Coatsworth (1998) maintained that resilience is a normal process of human adaptation no matter the environmental conditions.

Recently in the study of resilience there has been a shift away from a focus on "deficit " thinking to a focus on understanding strengths with the belief that schools should build resilient students. The focus of this qualitative study, as delineated in Chapter One, was to investigate how beginning teachers who were perceived to be resilient in the eyes of their peers developed resilience in the context of a complicated educational environment and how their resilience impacted their retention in the teaching field. Chapter Two provided perspectives on resilience from the literature.

The third chapter outlined the methods of the phenomenological multiple case study and how it was analyzed. Nomination forms, interviews, critical incidents, e-mail journals and field notes were used to create individual case data sets. The fourteen case reports were prepared and examined; for each case, a case matrix was developed which included major concepts that addressed the research questions. Following the development of the individual case reports, cross case analysis allowed the construction of variable matrices. Variables included definitions of resilience, resilience attributes, and environment contexts. These variables were then contrasted according to participants' demographics such as years of service, school level, age, certification methods, ethnicity, gender and martial status. This process allowed the researcher to piece together themes that provided a window into the professional lives and the work environment of these fourteen resilient teachers, which was reported in Chapter Four.

At the outset, the teachers defined the conditions within which they worked and how it impacted their lives and their resilience. It is important to understand this dynamic

interaction between the teachers and their context in order to fully understand the resilience process. It was apparent that being resilient allowed the participants to develop personal potential, challenge the system, and become change agents. Another significant aspect of this study was that the teachers did not just limit their commentary to their professional lives but also offered their perspective regarding factors that pre-service teachers needed in order to enter the field with the capacity to become resilient.

Several interesting differences were apparent when viewing the variables of cross case matrices. These variables were contrasted according to participants' demographics such as years of service, school level, age, certification methods, ethnicity, gender, and martial status. These differences included the following: (1) the elementary teachers did not see resilience as developmental as did eight of the middle school and high school teachers; (2) the teachers in their thirties, forties and fifties were more vocal about their faith and how it intertwined with their sense of purpose; (3) a section of the single group, all females in their twenties, were more open about being assertive when they thought it was necessary. Otherwise there were no noticeable differences in the variables of resilience that were reflected in the cross case matrices.

Numerous themes emerged from the analysis that revealed certain personal qualities, beliefs, behaviors, skills and areas of knowledge associated with teacher resilience. The data contained rich descriptions of daily life in the teaching field. Participants' stories ranged from negative interactions to triumphs and celebrations about students' success. In order to bring a vigorous understanding to the findings and to shed light on the concept of resilience within the context of teaching, research and theoretical

literature related to teacher resilience will be integrated with a discussion of the findings below.

Initially, it was assumed that the fourteen study participants, nominated by peers, were indeed resilient. The research findings of this study indicated that these beginning educators did demonstrate attributes of resilience, which they used to maneuver through their demanding and challenging work atmospheres. The results did not suggest that the exhibition of attributes of resilience during stress or challenging contexts differs according to gender or ethnicity. These results corroborate the prior research on resilience, which describes resilience as the developmental process to successfully adapt and thrive in the face of difficulties or challenges (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Werner and Smith, 1992; Garmezy, 1990; and Coutu, 2002).

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

Analyses of themes present in participants' interviews indicated a number of dimensions of resilience. The major components of resilience included: the personal resilient attributes of building relationships and a sense of purpose; a positive, supportive environment; a feeling of always having a choice (agency); the ability to see difficulties as challenges; and the sense of having had excellent preparation. These components also appeared to influence retention. Past research on resilience indicates that an array of attributes of resilience interacts with the environment, depending on the type of challenge (Benard, 2004).

Relationships

For this sample of educators, relationships with colleagues, administrators, staff, students and the community were consistently portrayed as critical to their resilience. Both female and male educators identified relationships as the most important component of their work situation. Previously reported research on resilience with "at risk" youth consistently points to the importance of building positive relationships with significant adults as a major key to successfully navigating future challenge as individuals move through adulthood (Werner & Smith, 1982, 2001).

Resilient teachers proactively seek enabling positive relationships and a sense of community in their schools. "We must learn quickly now how to work and live together in ways that bring us back to life" (Wheatley, 2002, p.7). Gonzo proposed a theory about how to build and keep good relationships:

> That friend I told you about that died, he showed me how to fix things. He was the kind of guy who could fix anything. And even though he has passed away, he has left me with a valuable gift in knowing that if there is anything that breaks especially mechanical things, that if you just pay attention to the way you take them apart then you can figure out how to put them back together and you can find the parts that are broken. I think that applies to life and relationships. If you just think about it and pay attention when things go wrong, which they do then maybe you need to back track and take them apart and see what went wrong and fix that. I use this with people and it takes time to go back and talk to each other and figure out what it is that the other needs but then we are able to fix it.

By developing positive caring relationships, these teachers enabled safe, caring environments where they and their students were free to explore ideas through innovative methods. The participants' relationships developed trust and rapport. They built confidence and competence. Their relationships empowered and energized these teachers in the work they do.

When relationships are negative or nonexistent, it is personally depleting and impinges on one's existence. "A relationship in which you do most of the giving and receive very little in return ultimately prompts a sense of deficit and emptiness" (Loehr & Swartz, 2003, p. 81). Poor relationships frequently intensify problems thus making them more challenging to solve while positive, healthy relationships often lead to collaborations and solutions. These participants reported that experiencing social support from colleagues, family and friends was a central part of their resilience. The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine state that nurturing relationships are vital modes of development. Supportive relationships provide an environment of encouragement; good exemplars; and beneficial critiques for physical, intellectual, psychological, and social growth (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Resilient teachers not only seek support but they maintain personal and professional support systems.

Sense of Purpose & Faith

Stories shared by participants suggest that in order to be resilient, a teacher must develop a complete understanding of the self, the inner being, fully acknowledging and recognizing whom that person is. Over half of the participants demonstrated this in telling the stories of why they became teachers. They expressed a deep, ethical sense of service and care for their students. The concept of having a purpose and acting

responsibly concerning that purpose is congruent with Coutu's (2002) belief that resilient people have "strongly held values, [and believe] that life is meaningful" (p.48). The participants' knowledge of self, their values, their feelings of what was best for students and their sense of purpose drove them and became measures by which they evaluated their environment. These values often led them to become change agents in their schools.

Svetlana, driven by a clear sense of purpose, went public (by speaking with her principal) when confronted with conflicting expectations as presented by her department chair's description of how TAKS preparation should be accomplished with students. It was through her personal sense of what was right for her students that she steered her instructional practice in a vastly different direction by using the school newspaper to address writing skills.

Intertwined with the sense of purpose for eight of the participants who exhibited that attribute was a strong religious belief or spirituality. Spirituality is often regarded as a view of one's place in the universe. When people have "the courage to look within", or find what one holds sacred in their life, the importance of their being builds a context for their understanding of situations and difficulties (Ganje-Fling & McCarthy, 1996, p. 253). Holly, a fifth year teacher, explained how faith saw her through a difficult childhood.

> I had an abusive dad who was an alcoholic. He beat up my mom and he beat
> me up too. He would beat up my brothers. I was kicked out of the house
> right after I graduated from high school because that was the year 18 years
> got the right to vote. His argument was you are an adult now you can go
> take care of yourself. I lived with one of my high school friends and her

family. I worked at two jobs and started junior college. It was hard

for me but I always had faith I was going to be taken care of. I'm a

Christian and I have a lot of faith. It helps.

This spiritual understanding seems to act as a protective factor in building resiliency.

Kennedy and Kanthamani (1995) found that subjects reporting spiritual experiences are

inclined to generally have a greater sense of meaning in life.

It is the personal self-awareness of these teachers guided by a moral compass that

creates a foundation for ethical decisions in times of difficulties. Resilient teachers

consider it their personal responsibility to practice their craft to the best of their abilities.

Werner and Smith (1982, 1992) state that having a sense of purpose is one of the most

powerful forces that compel young people to healthy results despite difficulty.

Difficulties vs. Challenges

The majority of the participants saw difficulties as challenges to be overcome.

They talked about remaining positive in the face of change or adversity. Frederic Flach,

M.D. (1997) explains that change is part of the life cycle. He states change is necessarily

stressful and that "Stressful times are, by their very nature, disruptive. They rarely take

place without some degree of pain, and are accompanied by a risk that we may not pass

through them successfully" (p. xiv). He also explains that to experience episodes of

personal troubles and improve when the world around us is relatively stable is one issue

but it also is different to have to do so when throughout the world the rate of change

taking place has become extremely accelerated. The acceleration of change being felt by

teachers has created the feeling of chaos among many educators. Gonzo explained,

There are a lot of other teachers that come to me and express self-doubt.

They state that the administration wants so much stuff that they can't keep up.

They question themselves about whether that makes them a bad teacher. I

see that a lot. I think those things really lead to a lot of teacher turnover.

One of the challenges that teachers face today is the belief by the American public

that educators are not doing a good job. Andy Hargreaves (1994) talks about how

political and administrative strategies for creating educational change presume that

teachers have low standards for young people and that students are failing because

teachers are lacking in abilities. Hargreaves states it is this false belief that teachers are

unskilled, unknowledgeable and unprincipled that has led policy makers to create the

remedy of more accountability in the form of more control in what and how teachers

teach and in the standardized testing of students, such as the TAKS test in Texas.

Consequently, due to the high stakes testing and increased accountability requirements

teachers' work has become more intense just as Gonzo described. Rebecca, a first year

teacher, saw it as a challenge. She stated,

> The tone of the school changed with TAKS coming around. So I feel that
>
> surviving those periods and still maintaining a positive attitude and still
>
> saying you are not going to let it get the best of you and keeping your goal
>
> in mind that is resiliency.

High-stakes testing has increased anxiety in the educational community and

created "one of the most stress-filled learning environments in history" (Casbarro, 2004,

p. 2). A person's ability to focus and think clearly is lowered when their anxiety level

increases. Students need focus and clear thinking to do well on tests and teachers need

focus and clear thinking to prepare students for the test (Heubert, 2002). The

standardized testing of students with the TAKS test in Texas has not only intensified

teachers' work but has taken the focus off the essence of teaching. The focus on the

TAKS test as the only measure of success with students affected some participants to the

point that they began to doubt themselves. Simone described how it made her feel:

> So third grade is a TAKS level. I've never taught a grade level that has not
>
> been so involved including Georgia and Florida. It is frustrating because
>
> you try to do everything that you can do but there is only so much that you
>
> can do. And it just seems like you are running around in circles. It is just so
>
> stressful. I don't think it is worth it. I feel I have never been more satisfied
>
> with the job and yet more dissatisfied with the job. It is just that there is so
>
> much that you have to do all the time. You can't get everything done. I
>
> don't get everything done and I kind of let it go but subconsciously it is like
>
> you didn't get this done and that done.

The participants revealed that it is significant to acknowledge that life has

challenges and that it is just a part of life that one has to work through those challenges

with fortitude. Holly explains it this way, "We are here to learn from our mistakes. It's

growth." Svetlana demonstrated her "can do" attitude when she explained about her

challenge.

> I had a major challenge when it came to classroom management. I came
>
> back to it even though it kept hitting me in the face. I thought "No, I won't
>
> let you win." I tried to incorporate positive reinforcement into class because
>
> students were very negative with each other. So I would try a system and

it wouldn't work. I would try a new one and then finally I just said 'I'm

going to stick with one and see how it goes.' I have tickets that I give

the students. It says just exactly what I want to tell them on it already. So

I just have to hand it to them. I've found that they really like getting those.

So I've been able to measure the success as well when I was faced with the

challenge of so much negativity.

The concept of accepting difficulties as a part of life is consistent with Coutu's (2002)

"acceptance of reality" (p. 48) and Maddux's (2002) belief that resilient individuals

perceive problems as challenges to triumph over.

Environment

Understanding what encompasses teacher resilience also requires an

understanding of the dynamics of the interaction between the teacher and the

environment. Environments varied from school to school for these teachers. Some

participants were in very supportive environments and others were in surroundings that

they perceived that they or their students could be in physical danger. One teacher had a

student bring a gun to school and fire it when the class was not supervised. The teacher

had been pulled out for other duties and the administration did not put anyone in the room

to cover his class. Another teacher had a gunman who had robbed a store run into the

school and the administration did not follow lock down procedures. Amber, one of the

teachers from one of these more difficult environments, stated that in these types of

situations, "If you have any chance of being resilient, you will know it within the first

two to three years of teaching."

Since the release of *A Nation At Risk* (1983) and continuing with *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001), teachers have been the center of concern with the education reform process. The increase in accountability requirements including a push to reach higher academic standards and implement more rigorous curriculum while still addressing the increasing social and emotional challenges faced by the students has created a situation infused with stress. Mishler (1979) notes that contexts drive the way people understand the meaning of events, saying, "meaning is always within context and contexts incorporate meaning" (p.12).

Negative Interactions. Organizational environments of teachers often are problematic and stressful (Chan, 1998). Eight of the participants talked about "feeling mistreated" in the workplace. These incidents ranged from being put into physical danger to being subjected to pornography. These teachers talked about enduring verbal attacks for over an hour by parents and having a parent try to get them fired, with nothing being done by administrators to correct the situation. Many participants talked about the lack of respect that they were subjected to from students, parents and even administrators. Holly explained what the atmosphere was like on her campus.

> There has been a lot of frustrating moments when you see things that are
> inconsistent with policy. Like the way kids are placed in classrooms. The
> way students are leveled. You notice that there is favoritism, a lot of
> gossiping and talking behind people's back. A lot of things are shared
> openly that shouldn't be. There are liaisons that obviously are
> inappropriate. I think there is a lack of professionalism at this campus.

According to a 2006 survey conducted of 1,200 teachers from Missouri and Illinois, 77% have either experienced or witnessed violent behavior in the past year. Also, 25% of these teachers stated that they have seen knives, guns or other dangerous weapons at school during the year. Sixteen percent of the teachers said that either students or parents have assaulted them. John Oldani, former superintendent of one of the school districts involved in the survey said that any occurrence of violence towards a teacher or student is one too many. He also stated that while discipline guidelines are in place, the survey suggests that administrators aren't following their own policies (Zigman, 2006).

Workplace abuse in its many forms affects the mental health of teachers by creating stress that ultimately becomes overwhelming. The emotional and verbal mistreatment of teachers by students, parents or administrators is one of the leading problems in education today. Blasé and Blasé (2006) state that principals generally have not implemented recommended improvements in teachers' professional environments that emerged from research published during the 1990s. Reform efforts require that principals and teachers work together collaboratively to solve educational dilemmas. Such collaboration only flourishes when principals build trust among their school staffs (Blasé & Blasé, 2006). Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that trusting learning communities performed higher on standardized tests than those with low levels of trusting relationships.

When environments are non-supportive, a ripple effect permeates the staff and student body, creating an unhealthy atmosphere. A lack of administrative support, disrespect, and a lack of opportunities for personal growth are often noted as the reasons for beginning teachers leaving the profession according (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2005). Jane explains what happens to teachers when they feel that they are not being heard or supported. She said they tend to go "toward the dark side and sabotage the system".

> I tempted to make positive change in some way. I was lucky because I never got completely shot down. I had a friend who started at the same time as me at a different school. Her department coordinator was not open to hearing her suggestions in fact she was openly hostile towards her. Her principal didn't want to have anything to do with instructional decisions at all. And so whenever she would have a problem and present it, she was immediately turned away and shot down. I was supported even if the support was 'Well, I understand your frustration. There is not anything we can do.' but I wasn't told to stay in your classroom. I wasn't told that was a dumb idea. It was support because you can't call it a hindrance. My friend was shot down multiple times with anger or insulting remarks. She didn't continue to make her voice known to the proper channel. She became more militant and instead of being productive, she became more passive aggressive within the system. Since the system wouldn't work with her, she started sabotaging the system.

These resilient teacher participants reflected their values and beliefs while responding to their situation in terms of their personal attributes. They responded to hostile environments in ways that revealed their essence as persons. Their experiences, responding to hostile environments, in turn, influenced how they defined their educational roles.

Environmental Barriers to Resilience. Educators contend with multiple expectations daily, such as demanding pressure to achieve higher test results, inadequate resources, diverse and often uninterested students, social and emotional student issues, and a lack of community support and gratitude for their efforts which wears down teachers' enthusiasm and motivation (Henry & Milstein, 2004). In line with the previous statement, the 14 educators included in this research listed the following as environmental barriers to their success in teaching as related to their resilience:

- Lack of administrative support and follow through

- Lack of respect by students and parents, and allowed by the administration

- Lack of choice in professional development plans

- Lack of appreciation by the community

- Lack of ability to express their talents (felt under used)

- Lack of communication within their setting

- Lack of collegiality (isolation)

- Lack of mentoring and collegial support

Three of the participants were in environments that were characterized by many of these barriers. They discussed the possibility of not remaining in the education profession due to their disappointment over these factors. Amber related how her situation made her think of dropping out of the profession.

> I'm scared to say that I don't want to do this teaching thing for the rest of my life. I know in this job we are affecting lives but when you don't have administrative support and you don't have parental support, it is impossible to make that happen. It is very difficult. It is making me old fast.

Amelia stated that she considered leaving everyday.

> I have seriously considered withdrawing from teaching altogether. Some days
> when I have bad days, I'm like you know I want out. Well, from this school. I
> know it is going to be better somewhere else. So I don't seriously want out. I
> don't want to give up working with kids. So I don't know.

Two of the three teachers have changed not only schools but districts. Sometimes
teachers may be required to leave a negative environment to stay resilient. It is strenuous
to remain positive and motivated when one lives in a draining situation. But if the
environment is responsive to a teacher's developmental needs and their ideas and skills
are valued, then they are likely to become more resilient ((Henry & Milstein, 2004).

> *Supportive Environments*. Research illustrates that resilience development is not
accomplished in isolation (Benard, 1996). Landgraf (2002) states that "if we want better
teachers, we have to treat our teachers better"(p. 1). Halford (1998) states that when
teachers feel cared for then they in turn are more caring of their students. Teacher
collegiality thrives because it is encouraged and then also student achievement is higher
(Talbert & Wallin 2001). When teachers have a voice and do not feel marginalized they
are more interested in sticking around. Jane explained how having a voice is related to
resilience.

> I think that by giving teachers more voice, they would encourage resiliency.
> An authentic voice, not just like plenty of places say we want your opinion
> and here's your voice but nothing comes of the opinions you share, the
> ideas that you share, the work that you are willing to do. I don't think
> teachers can remain resilient in an environment where they have no voice.

Dan, a fifth year teacher, described the environment at his school.

> At this school there is a good balance between freedom and support. I know there are people I can go to when I need help. I never feel like people are looking over my shoulder or trying to fit me into a mold or anything like that. I have a great deal of freedom to be able to try things and see what works best and monitor and control my own kids learning as much as possible. At the same time I feel like I'm not alone.

Many of the participants spoke of being part of the team and having a mentor. Often they explained that the mentor assigned was not very helpful. There didn't seem to be any type of organized format for mentoring in these schools. Several of the participants discussed seeking out their own mentor. Another major supporting factor was how these teachers felt about teaming. They considered it one of the chief reasons of why they were successful and resilient. Dan stated that teaming is amazing. "We have the same kids, the same issues. It helps out a lot."

School culture and support were major issues discussed by all participants. These findings agree with the current literature concerning the school environment. Factors that correlate with teacher attrition are working conditions and inadequate support by administrators (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). Also, beginning teachers are often given difficult class assignments and schedules, which allow little time for reflection. They may be assigned ineffective mentors who may be unwilling or unprepared to support beginning teachers (Hebert & Worthy, 2001). Henry and Milstein (2004) make it clear that "The environments that surround us for example, our families, organizations, and communities – significantly affect our ability to cope and bounce back" (p. 250).

Choice

Participants controlled their attitudes and thus their perspectives in order to control the negative effects of adverse situations. As in the Agentic Model discussed in the literature, one could see how these teachers reflected and made decisions on those choices. When these teachers discussed the negative interactions of their environment, a directional change could be seen that led them not only to take imitative but also to persist. Examples of this reflective choice was when Amber created the Dead Photo Society, Jean and her decision to pursue the directorship of her program in spite of the negative behavior of her supervisor, and Svetlana's pursuit of collegiality with the critical friends group when confronted with a negative department chair. It seems to be the understanding of having personal control over one's actions that increases the development of resilience. Harpo discussed this personal control:

> I chose to be a teacher. I think one has to be definitely aware of what you
> are getting into in the situation that you choose. You need to be aware of the
> negative and the positive aspects of that choice. I think that will determine how
> resilient you are.

These participants had the ability to realize that there was a choice no matter what the circumstances and preceded to act on that choice independently, which allowed them to feel that they had a sense of control over their environment. This ability to create a difference in their environment empowered these participants. Resilient teachers recognize they have a choice and fully commit when it is their decision. When people are fully committed to the profession of their choice they will then embrace that activity with

a sense of interest and commitment that comes from knowing their true self, they will

stick around (Deci, 1995).

Retention

Many of the teachers in this study believed their resiliency helped them to stay in

the profession. Gonzo explained:

> I think if I wasn't resilient, I would have quit this a long time ago. There are
>
> plenty of things that I could do. There are things that would not require the effort
>
> that teaching does. There are certainly lots of things that don't require the
>
> patience that teaching does.

Simone stated, "I think you have to have resilience to survive in the education world. It's

important that you get it. I don't know how you get it but somehow you must because

there is some type of issue everyday. " Amelia, a first year teacher, agreed with Simone

that it takes resilience to survive.

> You have to be really strong. I wouldn't be able to survive if I wasn't resilient. I
>
> have people who support me. The team is awesome. We are all in the same boat
>
> you know. I think someone else would have been out of here already but I really
>
> like working with kids. I'm not a pessimistic person. I'm always hoping. Hoping
>
> in all areas of my life (laughs). Hoping it will get better. You have to see what
>
> you can do and be a problem solver. You have to work with your team.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2005), about ten

percent of beginning teachers leave the classroom before they complete their first year.

Ingersoll (2003) reports that by the fifth year of teaching, fifty percent of public school

teachers leave their position. Using data from the 1990-2000 Schools and Staffing

Survey, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that beginning teachers who experienced

support through induction or mentoring programs in their first year of teaching were less

likely to leave the profession.   The sample of more than 3,000 beginning teachers also

reported that, the more types of support experienced, the less likely they would be to

leave or change schools.

> Dan, one of the fifth year teachers, explained why mentoring is so important:
>
>> Mentoring really helps. I have had two interns in the last two years. They
>>
>> help keep the focus on your practice and they keep you constantly thinking
>>
>> about it because they ask a ton of questions. So just having somebody
>>
>> else's eyes in here looking at what you are doing without my bias coming
>>
>> into it really helps.

Johnson (2006) in *The Workplace Matters: Teacher Quality, Retention, and Effectiveness*

states that "Those seeking to improve schooling must understand the important links

between the workplace, effective instruction, and teacher retention, teacher quality, and

effective teaching all tend to point to a set of workplace conditions that facilitate these

goals" (p.17). According to Olson (2003) schools that are more successful in retaining

new teachers have six qualities: (1) safe and orderly environments; (2) respectful of all;

(3) ongoing support for new teachers; (4) timely provision of materials; (5) strong

instructional leadership by principals; (6) and the development of others' leadership skills

(p.21). Simone is a third year teacher who does not have all these factors in her work

environment. She explained how resilience impacts teachers when they are dealing with

children that have so many problems.

> Basically you have to be resilient everyday. Everyday there is some kind of

problem you have to deal with like behavior issues or academic issues. You

can't worry about it . You have to move on with a positive attitude. You

start the next day fresh and focus on whatever comes. I just try to do better

at whatever it is. Like for instance, I had a child last year that had Tourette

syndrome and you can't take what they do personally. It is not personal, so

you just bounce back and treat it like it was a new day.

According to Eberhard, Reindhardt-Mondragon, and Stotlemyer (2000),

mentoring of new teachers during their first year is not enough. They extended mentoring

through the third and fourth year of teaching for participants in their study. The

researcher found that, teachers not receiving sustained mentoring had a lesser chance of

being successful and creating an impact as they gained experience. Bernshausen and

Cunningham (2001) contend that, without resilience, new teachers cannot sustain their

enthusiasm and commitment over time.

Preparation

Participants acknowledged the contributions made by teacher education programs

in fostering resilience and persistence. Many participants talked about their teacher

preparation programs with warmth and regard. In their reflections, they freely admitted

that they could not see the reasons for having to take so many courses in their content

area, but after being in the field were very glad they did so because the course work

provided them with confidence.

NCLB required that all teachers in core subjects be highly qualified by the year

2005-06 (Ruddock, 2007). The definition given to highly qualified teachers is based on

the generally accepted assumption that good teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects

they teach. They have subject matter competence. "Knowing one's subject, knowing how to teach it, and actually being able to teach it are all critical" according to Ruddock (2007, p. 20). The first year teachers all stated that knowing one's subject allowed them to spend time on learning how to teach it and motivate students. Jane discussed how her teacher preparation program helped her during her first year of teaching.

> I think it helps that my undergraduate degree is in my content area as opposed
> to something called education. I felt fully confident in my English abilities. So
> the only things that I was struggling with were the great dilemmas of how you
> get information into kids heads and how you work within a system that is highly
> bureaucratic and convoluted.

Four of the participants went through a year long internship as part of their preparation program. They felt like this gave them a more realistic view of what educators do. They believed that this was the foundation of their resiliency.

Recommendations

All educators should be aware of resilience theory and how it applies to their work environment. The research makes it very clear that resilience can be learned but not directly taught. Resilience is a developmental process that progresses through changing/challenging life circumstances. Thus, teachers and administrators need to understand resilience and how it is developed. By teachers and administrators understanding how their own resilience is developed then they can become role models of resilience. If teachers are to develop resilience amidst the challenges of the standards

education reform era, teachers and administrators have to understand the resilience

process and build a climate that would allow for its development.

Recommendations for Practice

     1. Considering the cost of teacher turnover (half a billion dollars a year) to the

state of Texas, the Texas Education Agency needs to develop recommendations to

administrators on how they can restructure their campuses to promote positive

relationships and collegiality to build resilience. These participants have stated that it is

very important for them to have time to dialogue with their colleagues and build positive

relationships. Relationships can only happen if teachers have the time to set norms and

get to know one another as they discuss the day-to-day issues of educating children. It

would be beneficial for the Texas Education Agency to make recommendations to the

state legislators for professional colleague/team time requirements to be implemented in

the school day that would allow teachers the time to professionally dialogue and build

their grade level or department teams. This restructuring of time for the implementation

of professional dialogue would be cost effective compared to the cost of teacher turnover.

Some suggestions for the use of this time would be to: (1) dialogue about the latest

educational research, best practice, new professional books and articles, (2) discuss

students and their achievements/challenges, (3) look at disaggregated data, (4) develop

lesson plans/units, and (5) brain-storm about the school's challenges.

     One of the consistent themes of support referred to by the participants was the

concept of teaming, which requires additional time in the school day for teachers to

dialogue. For teaming to work, additional time must be set aside for the team to discuss

and investigate educational issues. The report, *Next-Generation Models of Education*

Accountability: The Teacher Professionalism Model by the Education Commission of the

States, (2003) recommends creating a collaborative culture, which would include school

schedules conducive to collegiality.

2. In light of the fact that all 14 participants had had some type of negative

interaction in their school environment, it is recommended that administrators become

more aware of and involved in the atmosphere of their schools. The formidable cost of

500 million dollars a year to replace teachers in Texas makes it a high priority for

administrators to (1) understand resilience, (2) determine their own strengths, (3) develop

resilience, (4) be role models of resilience, (5) build a collaborative atmosphere, and (6)

promote a respectful school culture that permeates the whole community. The literature

is very clear that resilience can be learned but not taught. That means that resilience has

to be modeled throughout the educational system at all levels. Noonan (2004) states,

> Adults are teachers in more ways than one, and the way that has the
>
> greater impact is less what we say than what we do. We must act as good
>
> models, offering a balance between holding up clear expectations and
>
> extending a hand to help (p. 62).

Administrators must become role models of resilience and promote supportive

educational environments.

3. All 14 participants spoke about the type of supportive environments that they

needed to accomplish the task of teaching. Administrators need to make a climate check

on the school's culture and become proactive in building a supportive environment.

Jacobsen and Polin (2006) state that a positive school climate directly influences

achievement and that the creation of a positive climate is directly related to the

commitment of the school's leader. Discussions concerning the behavior norms of

students are a constant in school districts but very rarely are conversations had

concerning the behavior norms of teachers, administrators and parents. Administrators

need to be proactive and start conversations about what types of behavior are expected of

adults in the education community. By promoting and helping faculty, staff, and the

community to set positive cultural norms, administrators would ensure the beginning of

an environment that would support resilience.

According to these 14 participants, there was a relationship between teaming and

feeling supported. Therefore, campus administrators need to be actively involved in

assuring that the environment has multiple avenues that foster support of not only

beginning teachers but also the rest of the education community. According to Brion-

Meisels and Selman (1996) functional teams are indispensable to school climate, both for

what they can achieve and for the message they send about the significance of

collaboration. Some suggested support avenues are teaming, creating critical friends

groups, mentoring, and clustering grade level classrooms to create teams. The promotion

of a positive environment should be a continuous priority for the campus administrator

because these 14 participants stated it was a key to their resilience and retention.

4. It is recommended that administrators actively promote the credibility of

teachers and respect for the jobs they do when communicating with students, parents, the

school district and the community as a whole. A framework of credibility, trust and

positive expectation for interaction among all stakeholders will foster positive, productive

relationships and align all participants in the education community towards a common

goal. If teachers are not supported and respected in what they do, the problem of

retaining quality teachers will continue. Rivers and Sanders (2002) state that students who have been taught by fully certified and experienced teachers can overcome significant environmental challenges. A direct correlation can be made linking student test scores to the presence of qualified experienced teachers (Rivers and Sanders, 2002). Consequently, understanding and developing resilience is not only important to retain the beginning teachers but it is also significant for the student populations and their educational needs.

5. It is also recommended that professional development opportunities be offered which engage educators in meaningful dialogue to identify their own attributes of resilience. At its best, professional development would involve continuous and ongoing discussions about how resilience is developed and how resilience can enable educators to meet educational goals. The staff development should also include organizational strategies for resiliency building, and should incorporate the voices of educators in dialogue on the challenges and successes of education reform. As these participants stated, they wanted an authentic voice as opposed to one that would simply be disregarded.

According to the participants of this study, some of the topics for discussion during periods of dialogue should be about structure and how teaming and the critical friends' group could be implemented. For staff development aimed at resilience development, educators would be looking at a strengths model instead of a deficit one. This would allow educators to look at how they accomplished work during challenging times.

The main concept to remember when administrators look at building a supportive environment is what Jane stated, "It is all about relationships." Resilience is about building positive supportive relationships with students, fellow teachers, administrators and parents. In order to build supportive relationships, one must be able to have conversations. To create positive dialogue, one needs time within the school day. It is the positive supportive relationships that have made a difference and helped these14 participants remain in the profession.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

1. Teacher preparation programs play a crucial role in the retention of qualified teachers. Diane Ravitch (2003) in an address during the White House conference on Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers stated,

> We have more then enough teachers with degrees and certifications. What we
>
> don't have is the academic preparation of teachers. Only a minority, 39%, have a
>
> bachelors or graduate degree in any content area. The majority of teachers today
>
> have a degree in education and even their masters may be in pedagogy. There is a
>
> mismatch between teachers' academic preparation and the increasingly rigorous
>
> demands of the classroom (Ravitch, 2003, p.1).

Five of the participants discussed the importance of being well grounded in their content area. This solid preparation in their academic field gave them confidence. Four of the participants talked about the value of a nine-month internship as one of the most beneficial factors in their ability to be resilient and successful their first year. It was important for them to be able to understand the beginning, the middle and the closing of a school year. They stated that by being able to observe all the functions that occur

throughout a continuous year that they did not feel the reality shock often experienced by beginning teachers as described by Feiman-Nemser (2003) in their first year. It is recommended that universities schools of education re-evaluate their teacher preparation programs considering (1) the requirements for content specialties and (2) length of pre-service practice in the field.

In the report, *Next-Generation Models of Education Accountability: The Teacher Professionalism Model* (2003) by the Education Commission of the States, it is recommended that teacher preparation be extended to include at least a yearlong clinical phase. This reports states that beginning teachers need a longer period of clinical assistance and also an extended mentor program from an external mentor.

2. Teacher preparation needs to address attributes of resilience so that teacher candidates are aware of the importance of resilience and so they can start reflecting on their strengths before entering the profession. This will help them to remain in the field. Feiman-Nemser (2003) explains that beginning teachers stories typically reflect themes of reality shock, lonely struggles to survive, and the loss of idealism. Rebecca, a first year teacher, explains her thoughts concerning her preparation program.

> Stop making it so ideal. I wanted something more real. Not all these lessons and projects that look so wonderful and incorporate multiple subjects. Tell me what to do when a kid says they are not going to do it. Give me something else to go through, something more real so I know that is what I'm going to have to go through too. And then if I still want to do it, I've gone through it. I will know.

There is strong support from this study that the contribution of education programs in fostering teacher resilience is important. Teacher preparation programs have the capacity to ensure that coursework is tied to field experience and that critical reflection is interwoven throughout the experience. Many participants felt like they really didn't know what to expect their first year, especially when it came to classroom management. These participants felt that role-playing would be a positive method for addressing possible classroom situations.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Since four of the participants maintain that their nine-month long internship was a major component to their resiliency, it would be beneficial to investigate teacher preparation programs and the impact of a nine-month long internship as compared to a semester long practicum and how they influence the development of resilience. Does the participating experience of a pre-service teacher in the beginning, middle and closing of the school year help with the development of their resilience? It would also be beneficial to investigate pre service programs and how they support their education graduates through the first year of teaching. How does the continued support of professors that have built a relationship with pre-service students impact the building of resilience through the first year of practice? Since relationships and relationship building was a high priority for all fourteen participants and was a major component of their resilience, it would be valuable to examine pre-service programs and how they help to develop relationship building skills with pre-practice teachers.

2. In view of the fact that relationships were a key support structure for these fourteen participants, it would be informative to examine how schools promote the

building of relationships among colleagues especially for beginning teachers. Trust and being able to depend on the team or fellow colleagues was a major component to the participants' ability to be resilient. How are structures within a school designed to promote this type of community or relationship building? Given that the first five years of a beginning teachers' career is the most critical for retention, the researcher recommends that studies examine whether there is one critical period in that five years that is more conducive to the development of resilience for beginning teachers. How would years of practice impact the resilience building of teachers? Future research should also examine the context and how it interacts with resilience development for beginning teachers. Some factors to consider would be: (1) administrator to administrator interactions; (2) administrator to teacher interactions; (3) teacher to teacher interactions; (4) teacher to parent interactions; (5) administrator to parent interactions; (6) campus expectations; (7) campus support systems; (8) relationship and community building (9) campus structures; (10) professional development; (11) mentors and training; and (12) student behavior. How do school contextual interactions promote resilience development in beginning teachers? Also, would the same conclusions about the importance of resilience in the retention of beginning teachers be found in rural districts as compared to these urban districts? Would the environment be as negative and chaotic in a rural area as in the urban or suburban districts? What types of support systems would be available for beginning teachers in rural districts as compared to the urban areas? Another area of interest would be to examine how the age, personality factors, choices of specialization in educational disciplines impact their resilience. How did the young beginning teachers with less

professional experience compare with older beginning teachers that had more experience in other professions in resilience development?

　　3. It would be instructive to conduct a broader study on resilience with involving other educators, including administrators. A question to explore would be how do administrators influence resilience development in teachers? Also, a larger sample size would be useful to explore the differences in how resilience is developed among personnel in various educational job assignments, (e.g., central office administrator, building level administrator, teacher, nurse, counselor, librarian, para educator, transportation, maintenance) and how resilience impacts other educators' job performance. In looking at a variety of educational job assignments, research might explore how the central office administrators could be effective role models of resilience for the rest of the district?

Summary

　　The human organism like all other species seeks to stabilize the biological system when confronted with change or difficulties in their environment. The development of resilience is the mechanism that allows stability to happen. It is this innate ability that allows teachers to survive and thrive in an atmosphere of chaos. The development of resilience happens when these teachers seek out protective environmental factors that help to buffer the effect of adversity. Their decision to choose to react to life's challenges in such an affirmative resilient way is a positive growth process. Resilient teachers seek and in some cases develop support mechanisms to help them cope with the difficulties prevalent in their surroundings.

It is the ability to look at one's strengths and recognize one's inner self that enabled these fourteen resilient teachers to not only challenge the system but also provide solutions to perceived difficulties. A sense of purpose was the driving force of the resilient participants and it led them to create a better educational environment not only for their students but also for themselves. Their sense of purpose led them to a sense of optimism about the future.

Building positive relationships was a major issue with these resilient teachers. According to Benard (1991) providing caring support through unconditional positive regard and encouragement was one of the most critical elements that promoted resilience. These teachers believed in people and strived to build productive relationships with students, colleagues and administrators. The resilient participants proactively developed positive relationships. They wanted, needed and built an atmosphere of colleaguity. Relationship was a major component in their ability to navigate challenges.

Several of these participants, in very difficult teaching environments, chose to look at the positive side of their situations. Research on resilience states that with an adequate resilience-supporting environment, strength can emerge from adversity (Higgins, 1994). These teachers found that support in colleagues. This allowed them to interact with their environment based on their values and beliefs. It was this dynamic interaction between teacher and context that created change agents; resilient teachers use their voice to promote ethical practice. They considered it their personal responsibility to practice their craft to the best of their abilities.

Quality teaching comes from one being highly prepared in their subject. These resilient teachers were very knowledgeable and possessed habits of life long learners.

They worked for quality programs and asked for professional development. The resilient participants were seekers, not only of knowledge, but positive relationships and support as well.

With almost fifty percent of beginning teachers leaving the field in the first five years of practice and that turnover being reflected in a half billion dollar cost to the taxpayer, school districts and university preparation programs need to investigate how they can help these teachers become more resilient. Educational systems must have practices that work to build resilience by enhancing a sense of the inner self and promoting the skills needed for interactions with a chaotic world (Robinson, 2000). According to these fourteen participants of this study, being resilient is a key to being able to "stick around."

APPENDIX A

RESILIENT TEACHER NOMINATION FORM

Your name:_____ Date:_____

Your position: _____

I am asking you to help identify participants for a study that I'm conducting on resilient teachers.

To be resilient, means having the ability to withstand an interruption or difficulty in one's life without permanent damage to the biological system. It is not only just rebounding but also being able to understand the necessity for change and adaptation.

To be appropriate for inclusion in my study:
1. Teachers <u>must have</u> the following criteria:
   - fully certified to teach in the state of Texas.
   - (a) One year or (b) three years or (c) five years of teaching experience.
2. Teachers <u>must demonstrate all or the majority of</u> the following resilience characteristics:
(Please check all that apply to your nominee)
   - self-assured, secure and positive in the view that life is complex.
   - have positive relationships.
   - focused in their perspective, having a clear vision of what they want to achieve.
   - flexible in their response to uncertainty.
   - organized and structured in their approach to managing ambiguity.
   - proactive in their approach, engaging challenges.
   - quickly regain their equilibrium after disappointing events.
   - maintain a high level of productivity during periods of stress.
   - remain physically and emotionally healthy while dealing with high levels of stress.
   - do not just survive periods of high levels of stress but rebound stronger than before.
   - do find the comic in the tragic episodes that develop during high stress situations.

Name of Teacher
Nominee:_____

School:_____

Years of Teaching Experience:_____Current Teaching Assignment:_____

Please tell me a little more about this teacher and why you chose them._____

_____

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions:

1. How do beginning teachers develop resilience?

   a. What are the personal attributes of beginning teachers that define their resilience?

   b. What is the role of agency in the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

   c. How do environmental factors impact the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

   d. What types of experiences contribute to the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

   e. What other factors contribute to the development of resilience in beginning teachers?

2. How does resilience contribute to beginning teachers' retention?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

What influenced your decision to become a teacher? What skills and talents did you bring to the classroom and your career?

Describe your teaching career to this point in time. What have been the highpoints and the low spots (frustrating/disappointing moments) of your career? How did you respond to each of these events? How have these choices influenced your career?

Why do you think your colleagues selected you to represent a beginning resilient teacher? What does it mean to be resilient? Do you consider yourself resilient? Why?

Describe a significant event that you have experienced recently in the classroom and how you responded. How did you view the event as it happened? How did you respond? What type of choices was evident? Did you reflect on the event after it happened? Explain. How does reflection affect our choices in similar situations? How did you evaluate your response? Did anyone help you with the decision? Explain.

What type of support do you have in the school system that helps you evaluate your response to difficult events? Describe how the school staff (administrators & teachers) supports you during difficult times.

What other types of support both personally and professionally during difficult times do you have besides the school system?

Have you ever considered withdrawing from teaching? If so why and what helped you decide to continue on in education?

How do you maintain a sense of wellness in times of difficulty or stress?

APPENDIX C

Critical Incident Questionnaire

Name_____ **Date**_____

The following is a "critical incident" questionnaire. You are asked to write a paragraph or two describing an incident in your teaching career. Please send it back completed via e-mail (lm1129@txstate.edu). Thank you for your help and participation.

Prompt: Think about your year or years as a classroom teacher. Tell me about a time when you seriously re-evaluated your career choice. In other words, identify an incident you remember as causing you to seriously consider leaving the teaching profession. What events led up to this thought process/decision? What happened? Who was involved? (Roles rather than personal identities should be given here). Tell me about the emotions you experienced 1) at the time of the incident, 2) immediately after the incident had been managed and 3) since the incident. How did you cope with your emotions? Did you need support? Did you get it? How did you cope with the emotions of others? How has the experience affected you? How did the incident affect your ability to carry out your duties? How did the incident affect inter-personal dynamics with students, staff and family? How did the incident affect your decision-making ability?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Descriptors	Sample Case Matrix (Rebecca First Year)	Personal Example of Resilience
Resilience Defined	I know it is not always going to be. I know every year it is not going to be this hard. That it is going to be easier as it goes." Pg. 32	Second week of school. Students were pounding dry erase boards. Were really loud. Was the biggest class. Talked to team about student behavior…gave ideas. Kept saying to self "Just calm down it is early enough to fix it. It is not like its May and they are doing this. It was early enough to change." Pg. 2-3
Like you can bounce back. That you don't take it personal and you are able to survive this hard period of stress. I feel that surviving those periods and still maintaining a positive attitude and keeping your goal in mind is resiliency. I guess being tough and building up your skin. Pg. 1		
	Humor	
Positive Outlook	"I just go to Austin or go stay in a hotel. Something where it is out of the routine so I don't have to see my work piled on the side there. I don't have to see my work clothes. (laughs). Even though she laughed often at herself or what she was saying, she never told me a funny tale about the kids or school. (field notes) Because ya'll can make me laugh and you need me more." Pg. 11 "I mean the kids make me laugh and I never have a boring day." Pg. 11	**Teaching takes Resilience**
I haven't quit yet. I'm still positive about everything and I try out everything. I guess that is why I was selected they see me as a positive person. Pg. 1		"I have a very tall ladder to climb to get to where I want to be. I felt that is resiliency. I saw that after a whole year, I know I'm going to be at the bottom. I know that I've got a long way to go so don't take it as discouragement. Just take it as more room to grow, more things to learn." Pg. 3 About the discussion with principal on classroom discipline
Resilience is Developmental		
"I think first year just seems to be the defining thing. I know I can't base my whole career on my first year and I think a lot of people do that. They think it is always going to be like this and		

Traits of Resilience

---

1. Persistence
2. Seeks support
3. Positive outlook
4. Creative
5. Self Knowledge
6. Assertiveness
7. Construes meaning
8. Sees challenges

Personal Skills

- Open minded
- Patient
- They know I can understand their situations
- Don't take it personally
- math

Developmental

None mentioned

Teacher Role Models

- Kindergarten teacher
- Mother
- Cousins

In School Support

- Team

"The whole first week that I was here, my entire team came to check on me everyday. (laughs) They checked on me at lunch and they checked after school." pg. 4

- Mentor

"They gave me a mentor and I don't know how they picked my mentor but they picked a good one. Because she probably the exact opposite of me (laughs) when it comes to stress. She doesn't worry about grading, doesn't worry about anything. She is the department chair of her department. Pg. 4

- Academic Dean

"I felt very comfortable with her so I've gone after about a month and just wanted to know how I was doing. Just to check on myself basically….see my own progress and so I have her as a resource." Pg. 4

- Math specialist

"I asked for help from her for content and so I meet with her at least once a week." Pg. 4
"I feel like I have a lot of support. The team was wonderful. The mentor really helps. Everyone no on seemed like they were annoyed by any questions I would ask. No one ever looked at me like they were annoyed which was good." Pg. 5

- Team leader

"I've talked with him because he gives me advice with the math, what the kids have difficulty with and what they don't and also with how to deal with the kids because the kids are scared of him. So I tried to talk to him about it." Pg 24

Outside School Support

- Mother is an educator

"She has been an educator for 35 yrs." 12 of which she has been a principal in a very difficult district. "I have lots of teachers in my family." Pg. 5

- Cousin

"I have a cousin who is a math specialist in Austin ISD. He has given me a few ideas." Pg. 5

- Boyfriend

"He gives me an outsider perspective. He had a rough childhood. He is like, the kids I remember when we were little, we did all that kind of stuff and this is what we were thinking. So I'm sure the kids today are thinking the exact same way. So this is what you need to make sure you do. So it is kind of like another

perspective…almost like one of the kid's perspective sometimes (laughs). He was there. Pg. 22

Admin. Support

None stated

Lack of school support

Mainly Admin.

Making connection- Building Relationships

"I know when I do have bad days, there is a teacher that is right across from me and this is her first year in this school. She is another math teacher and she has been teaching for five years. She and I will go out afterwards to have a drink or something like this to just talk…talk shop and try to not talk shop as much as we can. She has kind of been a support system for me a little bit. " pg. 21-22 "She is on my team so I do see her everyday during team time. She is actually one of the teachers that I walk with during lunch. We walk like for fifteen minutes during lunch. We don't have a set time but I always do see." Talking

about whether had a regular time with her mentor. Pg. 30

Essence of Teaching

"I know there are two sides to the stories so the way their acting in here is sometimes not a response to me at all. Their bad days are not because of me at all. I think it helps because I don't take it personal. I can't take it personal. I think the patience, the open-mindness and the understanding…all of that stuff helps a lot." Pg. 4
"I wanted to do this since I was five. I said I wanted to be a teacher. Since I was five years old and I think when I hit high school, I wanted to be a math teacher. Cause it was always my love. " pgs. 7-8
"I think that helps when you are a teacher, when you are able to be patience with someone and try to understand the content so much that you can explain it in multiple different ways and know different ways of showing it and accepting different ways." Pg. 10
"I think that helps to be a teacher..to remember to realize who you are

teaching. And how you are going to teach them so they can get it." Pg. 10

Service Oriented

When I did my student teaching I said I don't want to teach an honors class because I…in the program that I went through, my freshman year they put me in a ….I taught three lessons in an eighth grade middle school honors algebra. The kids were snobby and like you are not going to teach me anything. I said I want to go where the kids are going to give me a challenge. Where the kids are going to be tough. I wanted to be with these kind of kids, which makes it sometimes more difficult to be resilient. It makes it more difficult to stay in cause they can hurt you. (laughs). They can be tough but I felt like if I didn't go here, if I didn't go to a school where the kids were going to be a challenge, where they need you then I would be going to waste." I felt like…I know the subject, I majored in the subject and I love it and I'm a Hispanic female. I want

to go for them…I need to go for them." Pg. 8 "I liked knowing that I knew something that others didn't or found difficult and knowing that I could teach them how to do it. I think I liked having that knowledge that I know how to do it and other people don't and so I've go to be able to show people." Pg. 9

Lack of Admin. Support

Admin. Did not do any remediation on classroom management

Lack of Leadership

Principal did not come in and help with classroom management or give her any pointers or instruction. Did not send her to any staff development on classroom management or make arrangements for her to observe anyone's class.

Questions

Assigned a mentor but doesn't feel she understands classroom discipline problem. Sought out other teachers that understood. So mentor is about just administrative situations

(paperwork) and other teachers are for how to teach kids. Do all the resilient teachers seek out their own mentors beyond what is assigned to them?

First Year

"The first year is your defining moment." Pg. 31

Resilient Role Model

• Mother
"I'm very close with my mother and so she ….since she has been in it for 35 years, she is a big support system as well. Cause I can talk about things with her and she has been there. She works in Edgewood so she's got pretty tough kids too. She knows the game and so she is very supportive of me and she understands when I have tough days and she understands…she was a principal for twelve years. So she understands the view point from her end when I say well, I 'm worried when the principal came in. And she would say from a principal's point of view that is not big deal." Pg. 5

Empowerment

"So I went to the dean and asked her advice and asked is she going to take to this very well if I told her my concerns and she said just come to her like you came to me and that's what the conference is for. So I just felt…I felt like I had to vent and feel like someone had to tell me that It wasn't the worse thing in the world." P.16 Talking to the dean about how to approach the principal.

Experience

"I found in middle school that I loved to tutor. I loved tutoring my friends and I liked helping. I liked knowing that I knew something that others didn't or found difficult and knowing that I could teach them how to do it. I liked when people understood from me when the answers I said or understood the way I explained it." Pg. 9

Frustrations

* Benchmark testing. "I would be at the bottom and I don't like

being at the bottom at all."
* Classroom management.
"Whenever my classroom management would get out of whack and I was really working on that. You know when I would have a complaint from next door that the kids are too loud." Pg. 14
"I felt upset like I had failed. I felt that I was discouraged, upset." Pg. 15 talking about being marked down on PDAS for classroom management.

Lack of collegiality

Dept. chair/mentor not understanding her problem with classroom management.
"I have a mentor that they had assigned to me. Unfortunately, I will talk to her, like I said unfortunately; she says she has never had a problem with classroom management. She said it is something that she found easy. So I have difficulty talking to her about that when it is my weakness the classroom management.. So I have difficulty talking with her." Pg. 23-24
"I have an ESL teacher in there with me during

one period. I kind of felt judged constantly because the kids were acting out. Felt judged and looked bad upon why am I not doing this and why not doing that and it just didn't feel good to be and see how my kids were and know that I was being graded on that. She would kind of make facial expressions of like 'Oh my god…look at what is happening there.' Or what are we going to do about that. I would talk to her after class you know like…she would tell me something she had observed and I would kind of like respond to all the things that she had observed. Occasionally she intervened with the kids. But no not really. I kind of felt like 'Can you do it too?' She was there to help my ESL kids and she did help them. To translate during tests and stuff like that but I was like why can't you do some of it when they are in groups like there are seven groups in here. I felt I can help some and you help the others, walk around with me please. I felt judged constantly, just had that feeling everyday…it was tough." Pg. 25-26

Lack of Classroom structure or discipline

Second week of school and students banging dry erase boards. "So horrible banging and I was trying to make it a fun activity for them but they were banging the boards." Pg. 2 Worked on classroom management all year. "Change the mode, change the routine that we are doing, you know have respond correctly to them the way they acted. Give them a punishment. I talked it out with them." Pg. 3
"I did get my evaluation from the principal and she did give me below expectation on my classroom management which I kind of expected because it is my first year and it hurt and it was discouraging that God I tried. I tried motivating and I do raffles with them and I tried to do so many different and I kind of felt like my goal was to keep them in the classroom. I sent out the ones that I really, really had to but I felt my goal was to keep them in here and I know that they got off task a lot and I know the noise level got to be

a little whacked. But I do a lot of group work." Pg. 3

"I know the kids tried to test me a lot. I know in the beginning because I had never been here before so they tried to feel me out." Pg. 18

Reflection

On fight in room. "I just can't turn my back. (laughs). Just thought that anything can happen in the classroom. I was kind of scared that I didn't want to get between it. It made me you know worry about where I put kids, where I spot them so they aren't next to each other cause one of those kids in particular has almost started a fight with another one and stuff like that. So it made me worry about how I placed the kids. How I group the kids, that is a big factor in there." Pg. 19 " I just think quicker to respond and watch where I put them. Watch what I am doing more. I guess I don't trust them as much. Cause anything can happen in there." Pg. 20

Choice

"I think your choices are your goals. So my goal is …I when I was young my goal was to teach. And now I've developed more the goal to make math not scary. I think it does play a big part if that's my goal my mission that's my choice then I'm going to try to live it out to make sure my mission gets completed." Pg. 9

"There is another teacher on the team that apparently had a very difficulty time last year. She came in half way through the year and the kids had had different subs all the way through and were just goofing off. As a first year teacher too…to bring some structure, it was hard for the kids to take to that and it was hard for her to get them to also…so talked with her a little bit and she was like I remember that and so now all I do is this , this and this so… So what works for her and what works for my team leader, works for my mentor, what works for my friend, you know, I get to figure all this out and decide what will work for me and what I can do." Pg. 24 (choice)

"I think my choice to be in a lower socio-

economic area to teach in a predominantly Hispanic…minority school….I wanted to give back and in my city. I wanted to be with kids that need me." Pg. 17

"So those choices about trying to be here and not somewhere else with some other kind of kids that probably made my first year more difficult and maybe makes it harder sometimes and stresses me out and makes the day tougher but its ok." Pg. 18

Learning to Revise / Rethink Choices

"To make sure it doesn't happen again. Where I put them, how I group them. I honestly don't trust them. I have to be fully aware that anything is possible. I know that I had my back turned fully to the majority of the class and I need to not do that. I know after that I did group the kids more…desks were moved. That way I was helping more than one kid at one time and I could easily walk around the classroom better and make sure that I could get to them easier. I tried to listen

carefully. Yesterday, I had two girls that looked mad and started talking worse, and I just quietly walked over to them and stepped in between them." Pg. 20-21

Reaction to Critical Incident

"Towards the middle of the year, right before Christmas there were a couple of days that were just rough. I was struggling with one particular class. The students were loud and a lot of them would be off task. I was embarrassed about their behavior, the disrespect some of the students displayed and the noise level that came out of my classroom. At times, I would get complaints from the counselor that was right next door. Through all of this I was tired, stressed, embarrassed, worried, and discouraged. I thought that maybe I was not meant to teach, or maybe I was not meant to be in middle school. I wondered if my students were learning at all. I also thought of how I might be seen in the

eyes of my colleagues. I talked to another math teacher about some of my problems with the kids. She is another 8th grade math teacher on the other team, who I have befriended. She has been teaching for 5 yrs. and she gave me some advice and gave me little supportive talks every now and then. She was stressing about similar issues but had more experience on how to deal with them. I guess I felt more comfortable talking with her because I see her as a friend, as well as a colleague. I think it was the little support along the way that helped me think I could keep on going. (critical incident report)

Critical Incident Caused

It was the last day of school before the kids left for Christmas and I was dreading having to deal with my last class. I went to a teacher who I had never asked for advice before. She is on my team and has a pretty strong character. I gave her a brief idea of what I was going through and she told me

to be tough and give them bookwork. She said the meanest thing I could do to them is give them work right before Christmas and tell them it is the last grade I am going to put in for their report cards. I gave something easy, but a lot of it. I explained to them that I had continuously been upset with their behavior and gave them their assignment. The kids sat in silence and completed their work. After Christmas things changed, and now I think my last period is my favorite class. (critical incident report)

Reflection on Critical Incident

"As I watched the students I realized how I really needed to change in my tone, my expectations, and my perspective of my students. I needed to not be so afraid of punishment and never fear being strict. Structure and consequences are harmless and can only help my student and maintain my sanity. I realized I need to make sure I go home happy without regrets. The

stress is going to come from every angle and things are going to get harder at various points in the year, but there are solutions to every problem and I have to be able to roll with the punches until I find one. (critical incident report)

Reflection on Career

"Maybe towards the middle of the year when I was having that difficult class. (laughs) (talking about withdrawing from teaching.) I was having difficult days. Maybe, because they are my last class and I was having so many problems with them. I just felt upset all the time and then with bench mark scores coming every month and they were not being as successful as I wanted. Thought maybe this is not what I'm suppose to be doing. Then that teacher told me to work them the day before Christmas break. Broke my heart to do it but I still did it. And sure enough when they came back they were fine." Pg. 25

Handle Stressful Situations

"I have problems sometimes when I keep stuff in. I get rashes from being worried so much that I wouldn't talk the way I needed to…wouldn't get it out as much. I guess I feel so comfortable that I can get it out. Like this is what happened, its bad, I should not be embarrassed by it, it happens to everybody ." pg. 22

Personal Life

"Unfortunately, I haven't seen much of my friends since I started. (laughs). I think my social life has suffered a little bit this first year. The talking on the phone has stopped a lot you know cause I'm tired when I get home and it is a different feeling. I say I feel so old. We took kids to UTSA and I said these people are my age and some of them are older than me. What am I doing? I feel so much older now you know I'm only twenty-two but I don't feel like that. I feel like I'm forty-two sometimes. (laughs). Pg. 6"

Immobilization
Overwhelmed

"I remember I went home and cried about it cause it just upset me." Talking about disruptive class. Pg. 2

Survival
Focus on Own Needs

"I tried motivating and I do raffles with them. I tried to do so many different and I kind of felt my goal was to keep them in the classroom." Pg. 3

TAKS

"I felt in January and February, I could feel the stress really building on. The whole tone of the classroom and the tone of the school I think changed with TAKS coming around. So I feel that surviving those periods and still maintaining a positive attitude and still saying you are not going to let it get the best of you and keeping your goal in mind that is resiliency. Pg. 1
"I do a lot of TAKS practice. That was tough to get them to really sit and quiz and then get them to do

their work." Pg. 3

Reasons for Becoming a Teacher

"That has got to be some kind of gift or some kind of talent that when people don't know how to do it and you do and then they can understand from you that's got to be some kind of a talent. So I've got to use it." Pg. 9

Testing Exploration of a new Terrain

"Scores were sixty-seven and my goal was sixty as a first year. Our department chair's was sixty-seven also and that makes me happy to know that it is comparable. That what I do works and it is not drill skill like some of the other teachers that I hear about." Pg. 12

Schools Build Teacher Resilience

"I think what would have helped me personally is I like the mentor and everything but I think I would have liked for my principal to have been more personable. Not to have feared her so much

would have been nice. I wouldn't have been so scared because I didn't know everything. So I felt I couldn't give her everything she wants. Also cause I don't know what she wants exactly. When she is upset with just a few people, she gets mad at everybody. It would have been nice to have not felt she was mad at me. I think the mentor program is a good thing. I guess it would be nice if there wasn't so much pressure but that kind of a tough thing to get rid of ..that accountability thing. Pg. 28

Teacher Preparation Programs to Build Resilience

- Stop making it so ideal.
- Need to know what to do when kid says don't want to do that or don't turn in homework
- Need something more real.
- Advice on classroom management
- Be real and let me know it is going to be tough

- Inform about the paper work
- Inform that the administration is going to be tough…that they hound you.

"Give me something else to go through so I know that is what I'm going to have to go through too. And then if I still want to do it. I've gone through it and I still want to do it." Pg. 29

- Education

"I really feel like the education I got helped tremendously. I remember I hated that I had to major in math and had to have 32 hours of upper division math. I didn't understand math coming out of high school the way I do now." Pg. 11

Adult Resilience Characteristics

Positive Outlook

"I want to be able to be with kids that…I always loved a challenge so I want to be with kids that are going to be a challenge that I can…that I'm going to have to work for." Pg. 17

Assertiveness

"I did get my evaluation from the principal and she did give me below expectation on my classroom management. It hurt and was discouraging. I talked it out with her and was honest with her that it was discouraging to see that because I know I've tried so many things but I thought its my first year. I was glad I could talk with her about it. She took my frankness and my honesty about it. So it was good." Pg. 3

Family Support

Mother brought flowers for first TAKS week

Professional Support

. "We have gatherings together every so often. I think that is a high point knowing that I'm with a faculty that likes to get together every so often. That likes to get together. That tries to be personal. That they are friendly. I think that is a high point that they care how I'm doing and stuff like that." Pg. 11
2. Team support. "If something happens, we have said as a team all together that if

something happens in like in my class…don't let it go. Either message the other teachers and let them know this is what has happened and to be aware of it in your class. Cause the kids are scheduled together. They follow each other all day long so let the other teachers know and if they are misbehaving write them up. Then if they get several write ups cause they are just having one of those days then it looks like the kids fault and not just me not doing my job." Pg. 21

Seeking Support

1. asking dean about meeting with principal.
2. Seeking teacher across the hall's help in classroom discipline.
3. Seeking team's help in classroom discipline.
4. Seeking math specialist's help with content.

Form Positive Relationships

- Teacher across hall
- Teacher from another team
- Walking group

Construe Meaning

"I know a lot of things I need to start off strong with in the beginning for next year. And to make sure I don't let them think they can test me as much and pass every kind of test they give." pg.23

Feelings of Self-Worth

"A highpoint would be getting my TAKS scores and knowing that I did do my job. I was happy cause it felt like my kids did learn something and I am doing my job. I'm on my way to getting where I wanted to be." Pg. 12
At least I can say now because the scores matter so much to everybody else that they were learning. They may have been loud but they were learning." pg. 15
"To see the growth to scores of sixty-seven makes me feel amazing to know that I got some of those kids there that you know will bad mouth everybody and will have parents that were shot or something like that. That they know their math. They know their eighth grade

math because of me. That tremendously helped me and made me feel like I chose the right career." Pg. 18

Social Competence Factors

1. Communication
"I ask a lot of questions and I guess that makes you know that I am requiring help and seeking it." Pg. 1
2. Empathy/Caring
"I didn't have a hard childhood but I know some of the lives they are leading aren't great. I think that helps to understand them. To know that I can reach them some way." Pg. 10
3.Compassion
"I just remember thinking to myself, I got to help these kids that hate each other." Pg. 20

Problem Solving

1. Planning
"Group kids more…move desks. That way I help more than one kid at a time. I can walk around classroom better." Pg. 20
2. Resourcefulness
"I talk to my mentor a lot and my other math teacher on the team. I

ask is this going to work or is this going to work?" pg. 1 "I asked for help from her for content." Pg. 4
3. Critical Thinking
"You know all this stuff is going to happen. I just need to think quicker to respond and watch where I put them." Pg. 20

Autonomy

1. Positive Identity
"I've already said I'm going to come back next year. I guess that is why they see me as a positive person." Pg. 1
"I'm not a quitter. I am not going to give up on the kids." Pg. 2
2. Internal Locus of control
"I'm willing to go that extra effort. Go that extra mile." Pg. 7
3. self-efficacy
"So those choices about trying to be here and not somewhere else with some other kind of kids that probably made my first year more difficult and maybe makes it harder sometimes and stresses me out and makes the day tougher but its ok." Pg. 18
4. Adaptive distancing
"I don't take it personal." Pg. 4
5. self-awareness

"I will stop being worried if I just vent and have someone tell me just stop it." Pg. 16
6. humor "I mean the kids make me laugh and I never have a boring day." Pg. 11

Sense of Purpose

1. Goal Direction
"Cause I know I've got a mission here, I think. I've got a purpose. I developed my purpose so that is going to be my goal until I get there." Pg. 9
"When I was young my goal was to teach." Pg. 8

2. Optimism
I know every year it is not going to be this hard. That it is going to be easier as it goes." Pg. 32
3. Hope "Just calm down it is early enough to fix. It is not like its May." Pg. 2

Sample Cross Case Matrix

Themes

Participants

	Relationships	Support	Teaming	Pos Environment	Service
First Year					
Amelie	X	X	X	X	X
Jeanette	X	X	X	X	X
Rebecca	X	X	X	X	X
Svetlana	X	X	X	X	X
Third Year					
Amber	X	X	X	X	X
Jane	X	X	X	X	X
Matthew	X	X	X	X	
Sara	X	X		X	
Simone	X	X	X	X	
Fifth Year					
Dan	X	X	X	X	X
Gonzo	X	X	X	X	X
Harpo	X	X	X	X	
Holly	X	X	X	X	
Jean	X	X		X	

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VITA

Linda A. Combes Malcom was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma on September 14, 1946. She joined two brothers and became the only daughter of Lester A. Combes and Velma L Combes. She graduated from Coalgate High School, Coalgate, Oklahoma. Linda received a full scholarship to East Central State University in Ada, Oklahoma making her the first member of her family to graduate from college.

She later earned a Masters of Elementary Education with an emphasis in gifted education from Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas in 1986. Linda also completed her administrator program from Southwest Texas State University in 1997. During her 31 years of experience in public education, Linda received numerous awards. In 1999, she was named Texas State Elementary Art Teacher of the Year. She also is a working artist and received first place in the 2005 Artists Who Teach Show.

In 2002, Linda entered the doctoral program at Texas State University–San Marcos. After teaching for 31 years, she decided to retire in 2004 in order to study teachers and the work that they do. While finishing her doctorate degree, Linda was employed as adjunct faculty at University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.
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