

STRESS AND COPING BEHAVIORS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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One hundred percent of teachers interviewed for this study reported that the teaching profession is stressful, with 72% describing the profession as extremely or very stressful. This study recognizes and investigates the stressors that affect primary school teachers, and identifies the coping behaviors that are used in response to these stressors. A mixed method design was used to assess stress and coping behaviors among current primary school teachers. Two quantitative focus groups provided insight into stress and coping behaviors through the perspectives of current primary school teachers at a specific school in rural North Carolina. A quantitative pilot survey was then administered to measure the responses and coping strategies that primary school teachers employ when stress is present in the workplace.

The results indicate that unrealistic expectations set forth by school officials and parents are the most frequent source of stress followed by excessive paperwork, and school administration. The results also indicate that primary school teachers will most often employ neutral coping behaviors, followed by positive coping behaviors and negative coping behaviors. With these stressors being a part of the teaching profession, it is suggested that primary school teachers participate in stress management educational programs in order to more effectively handle stress.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teacher stress is defined by Kyriacou as “the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression, resulting from aspects of work as a teacher” (Brown & Uehara, 1999). In recent years, steadily increasing costs and consequences of teacher stress has received growing concern. To reduce the negative effects stress has on teachers, more attention needs to be placed on this growing epidemic (Bachkirova, 2005).

Recent research has shown that teachers, along with servicemen, social workers, and linguists, are the most affected by rising stress in their respective work environments. One out of three teachers report teaching as being very or extremely stressful, causing the teaching profession to have the highest annual turnover rate. Professions other than teaching have an average annual turnover rate of 11 percent, while the annual turnover rate for teachers is 15.7 percent (Mrozek, n.d).

Teacher stress is caused by environmental factors as well as individual characteristics. Major environmental factors include poor working conditions, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads, and student behavior. Individual characteristics can include gender, age, personality, and the ability to cope (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). These factors lead to 30 percent of all novice teachers leaving the profession within five years, and if given the opportunity, most of these teachers share that they would not choose the profession of teaching again (Mrozek, n.d).

This proposed mixed-method research study will use a convenience, non-random approach to assess stress and coping behaviors among primary school teachers. By studying current teachers working in a primary school environment, this research study hopes to gain

insight into the stressors that effect teachers and explore the strategies they use to cope with these stressors.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this proposed mixed method study is to recognize and investigate the stressors that affect primary school teachers, and to identify the coping behaviors that primary school teachers use in response to these stressors.

Research Questions

Teachers are expected to fill many roles in their daily tasks. These roles may include assessor, planner, curriculum developer, information provider, role model, facilitator, and resource developer. As a result of balancing these many roles, stress will always be a part of the teaching profession. Knowing that stress will always be present, there is a need to assess stress and the different coping behaviors used by primary school teachers. The researcher would like to answer the following specific questions: What are the causes of stress for primary school teachers? What strategies do these particular teachers use to cope with their identified stressors?

These questions will provide insight into the phenomenon of teacher stress, and may lead health educators to better understand the phenomenon of teacher stress. The researcher hopes that the information in this proposed research study will provide effective programs that will assist teachers to handle stress more effectively through positive coping mechanisms.

Significance of this Study

Becoming aware of possible causes of stress for primary school teachers and the coping behaviors they utilize is significant for many reasons. Teaching as a profession is progressively becoming a stressful occupation (Hepburn & Brown, 2001). Teaching is more stressful today because teachers have many deadlines to meet as well as more responsibilities to shoulder.

These responsibilities include lesson planning, teaching, accountability for student performance, classroom management and discipline, supervisory role, and extracurricular activity conducting and monitoring (NUT, 1999). Identifying possible stressors can help teachers choose positive coping strategies rather than negative strategies that may be unhealthy towards other aspects of life. If they can identify possible stressful situations, teachers can actively use coping strategies to deal with it, or even be able to avoid the situation altogether. Coping with stress is important for teachers so that their stress does not interfere with the achievement of their educational goals and they have better quality of life; both personally and professionally (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

Stress can have negative effects on teachers' mental and physical well-being (Sutton, 1984). Knowing this, it is vital that teachers are able to recognize stress so that they can take the appropriate steps to deal with it in a positive manner. The teacher, not the learner, is now regarded as being the primary carrier of stress, and is mostly affected by the stressors of the day to day activities and organization of modern education (Hepburn & Brown, 2001). It is essential that teachers are able to develop proper coping strategies for stress that are unique to their individual personalities. Everyone reacts to stressors differently. It is important to research and practice alternate coping strategies to find which will help each individual. This will allow teachers to have a greater sense of purpose, motivation, and clarity about their own abilities (Bachkirova, 2005).

This proposed mixed methods study will involve a convenience, non-random sample of current primary school teachers. A convenience sample was chosen in the interest in time and resources for the quantitative data. A purposive sample was used for the qualitative data to ensure inclusion of the target population this study intends on researching. The pilot quantitative

sample will give insight into their perceptions of stress and explain why teachers identify work-related factors as sources of stress (Blasé, 1986). Teachers need to identify how much stress they are experiencing, and how it is affecting their teaching before they can learn and incorporate positive coping strategies. It is imperative that teachers learn that stress can be diminished with simple strategies which could then lead to a healthier and more fulfilling career.

There have been similar studies that have focused exclusively on primary school teachers. Bindu and Sudheeshkumar (2006) focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and stress coping skills among 500 primary school teachers in India. The study found a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and stress coping skills and teachers who create a supportive organizational climate, enrich the design of tasks, reduce conflict, and are provided guidance tend to more satisfied and better equipped cope with stress.

Howard and Johnson (n.d.) interviewed principals at three target schools in Australia in order to identify teachers who persistently and successfully were able to cope with stress. Unlike other studies, the authors focused on what these teachers were doing right in order to positively cope with stress. The authors found that these teachers had a sense of organization, strong support groups, took pride in their achievements, and had competence in areas of personal importance. Cockburn (1996) administered a questionnaire to 335 primary school teachers to obtain information on how teachers acquire coping strategies, their knowledge of strategies available to them, and their opinion of these techniques. The questionnaire showed that most teachers are aware of stress reduction techniques and acquire new techniques through their own teaching experience, but will not seek out expert sources for advice. This proposed study is important because it will investigate the causes of stressors that directly affect primary school teachers.

Research on teacher stress has relied primarily on quantitative methods. When highly structured survey instruments are used, subjects' responses are controlled, which results in a mismatch between subjects' responses and their perceptions about teacher stress. Open-ended methods, on the other hand, give participants the opportunity to specifically describe the meaning of work stress from their perspectives. Studying teacher stress through an open-ended method could better explain the phenomenon of teacher stress.

This proposed study will also explore possible strategies that primary school teachers can use to cope with stress that is directly related to their specific work environment. This proposed study will contribute to the field of health education and promotion by providing primary school teachers with insight and information on how to effectively cope with stress at work so that they can continually meet educational goals.

Definition of Terms

Burnout- Emotional, mental, or physical exhaustion that comes from job-related stress

Coping Strategies- Any physical, psychological, social, or material factor which helps teachers overcome job-related stressors and achieve valued outcomes with students

Strain- Any unpleasant behavioral, psychological, or physiological outcome in a teacher

Stress- The body's non-specific response to a demand placed on it

Stress Stimuli- Organizational characteristics that initiate a reaction in a given setting

Stressor- An activity, event, or stimulus that causes stress

Teacher Stress- Any characteristic within the school environment that poses a threat to the teacher

Limitations of the Study

1. By using a convenience, non-random sample of primary school teachers, specific generalizations cannot be made about the total population because this sample is not representative of all primary school teachers.
2. The participants in this study will possess a great deal of knowledge about the teaching profession which may affect the outcome of the results. Participants may also have a much greater interest in the subject matter, which may also lead to results that are nonconforming of other primary school teachers.
3. Since participants will be asked to respond to items that review past experiences of stress, the way in which they respond may be affected by their memory recall. Also, participants may have a tendency to under report undesirable results because they do not want to portray the teaching profession in a negative way.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study include participants that are:

Current primary school teachers

A staff member at Richlands Primary School in Richlands, North Carolina

Currently have at least one year of experience working in a K-2 environment

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Introduction

Teaching is commonly recognized as one of the most stressful occupations in our nation. Teacher stress results in such consequences as early retirement, long and excessive absences, new teachers leaving during training, and an increase in teachers leaving the profession within their first five years (Bachkirova, 2005). In recent years, professional satisfaction has been decreasing while job pressure has been on a steady rise for teachers. These issues have raised many questions about the growing problem of teacher stress (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

It has been reported that teacher stress affects the learning environment and ultimately prevents achievement of the teacher's educational goals. This leads to disinterest, negligence, bitterness, and absenteeism among teachers, and can result in teachers leaving the profession (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). In North Carolina, about 28% of teachers who resign each year leave the profession due to a career change, health, being dissatisfied with teaching, teaching at a private or charter school, or for unknown reasons (Annual Report of the Reasons Teachers Leave the Profession, 2007). Although leaving for a private or charter school is listed above, it is rare that this happens because private schools require most teachers to hold an advanced degree and teachers usually are not compensated as well. In fact, half of private school teachers who resign each year, do so, to teach at a public school (Miner, 2009). Increasing attention has been given to understanding teacher stress to further study this alarming phenomenon (Blasé, 1982).

Even though stress is quickly becoming a recognized occupational hazard of the teaching profession (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982), little theoretical work on teacher stress has been attempted or completed (Blasé, 1982), and recently there have been no studies that have focused specifically on stress within the primary school environment. The few studies that have been

tried lacked subjects' perceptions (Blasé, 1986) and have been flawed in other areas. Some studies have been focused on large urban school districts, which is not representative of smaller districts in which the majority of teachers are employed. Also, stress has not been dealt with as an organizational matter; meaning ways to lessen job related stress have not been discovered (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986).

Teacher Stress, Strain, and Burnout

With teacher stress getting increased attention, it is important to understand what stress and teacher stress are. Hans Selye describes stress as the body's non-specific response to any demand (1976). With teacher stress getting increased attention, it is important to understand what stress and teacher stress are. Stress results when people perceive a situation as threatening and are unable to cope. Stress triggers the cerebral cortex and limbic system to carry messages to the hypothalamus. When these messages reach the anterior hypothalamus, the autonomic nervous system (ANS) is aroused which controls the heart, lungs, stomach, blood vessels, and glands (Palmer & Dryden, 1995).

The ANS is made up of both the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). The SNS conserves energy levels, increases tears, gastric acids, mucus, and saliva which helps defend the body. The PNS aids in relaxation and helps restore a person to a state of equilibrium. In a stressful situation, the SNS prepares the body for action by increasing the strength of skeletal muscles, heart rate, sugar and fat levels, perspiration, mental activity, while reducing blood clotting time, intestinal movement, and tears. The SNS also allows the bladder to relax, pupils to dilate, and most blood vessels to constrict (Palmer & Dryden, 1995).

During the stress response, the pituitary, thyroid, and adrenal glands are activated. The pituitary gland releases adrenocorticotrophic hormone, which activates the adrenal cortex in order to increase arterial blood pressure, mobilize fats and glucose from adipose tissue, and reduce allergic reactions. The pituitary gland then releases thyroxin, which is a thyroid stimulating hormone. Thyroxin increases metabolic rate, respiration, heart rate, blood pressure, and intestinal motility. Too much thyroxin and over activity of the thyroid gland can lead to anxiety attacks (Palmer & Dryden, 1995).

The adrenal gland produces adrenaline and noradrenalin, which is released into the blood supply. The adrenal gland increases heart rate and pressure in which blood leaves the heart, dilates gastrointestinal activity which leads to person to feel as if they have “butterflies” in their stomach (Palmer & Dryden, 1995).

Activity of the adrenal gland starts the stress reaction in which Hans Selye refers to as “The General Adaptation Syndrome” (1976). The General Adaptation Syndrome consists of three stages; the alarm stage, resistance stage, and the exhaustion stage. The alarm stage is the initial reaction to stress and comes about when a person first recognizes there may be a trouble and prepares to deal with the threat. This reaction is commonly referred to as “fight or flight.” A person’s instinctive impulse draws from energy reserves and puts it immediately at their disposal to either defend one’s self (fight) or to run away (flight). The activation of the SNS and adrenal glands allows for hormones such as cortisol, adrenaline (flight), and noradrenalin (fight) to provide instant energy to take appropriate action (Selye, 1976).

In the resistance stage, stress is on the verge of being resolved. Homeostasis begins restoring balance and a period of recovery and renewal takes place. The exhaustion stage occurs if stress has continued for some time. When this happens, the body’s ability to resist is lost and

all energy supply is gone. The exhaustion stage may be referred to as adrenal fatigue, maladaptation, and dysfunction. If stress is not resolved by this point, overload and burnout may occur.

Teacher stress is described as any characteristic of the school environment that poses a threat to the teacher (Sutton, 1984). While these definitions are widely accepted, Guglielmi and Tatrow argue that there is no agreement on what stress is, as the term holds different meanings for different people (1998). The difference in the definition of teacher stress is influenced by how that person is affected by their job demands, and their ability to cope with these demands (Blasé, 1982). The impact of teacher stress depends upon an individual's social support, personality characteristics, and job satisfaction (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

Two types of stress can ultimately affect teachers. Task based stress, such as dealing with disruptive students, refers to problems that are associated with a variety of specific tasks that teachers must perform in their teaching role. Role based stress, such as an absence of sufficient resources to perform adequately, refers to how teachers' expectations of their role fit in with the actual work-related responsibilities needed to fulfill their role (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982). Stress within teaching is driven by the organizational factors related to the way in which teachers are expected to work (Hepburn & Brown, 2001). Organizational factors that contribute to teacher stress can include unreasonable directed time budgets, excessive paperwork, unrealistic deadlines, and intimidating inspection regimes (Hepburn & Brown, 2001).

A teacher's personality is a factor when explaining the amount of stress that is present. Teachers' skills, motives, and perceptions of their work environment determine the amount of stress that may take place (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). A teacher who does not have a conflict between personal values and those of educational authorities, has a high ambition to succeed

professionally, and is not easily upset or excited; tend to experience the least amount of stress (Bachkirova, 2005).

Teacher stress is closely linked to strain and burnout. Strain is any unpleasant behavioral, psychological, or physiological outcome in a teacher (Sutton, 1984). In general, strain is the result of an interaction between a person and their environment. Strain is measured in terms of physiological dysfunction, psychological dysfunction, or behavioral dysfunction (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Physiological dysfunction refers to any cardiovascular disease and bodily complaints (Sutton, 1984). Psychological dysfunction refers to depression, anxiety, and negative effect towards life and job. Behavioral dysfunction explains any change in normal behavior such as drug abuse (Sutton, 1984), smoking, drinking, absenteeism, or unhealthy eating (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

Burnout is the emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that comes about from job-related stress and roughly describes any negative responses by teachers to work-related stress (Blasé, 1982). Teachers who are idealistic and enthusiastic are most vulnerable to burnout (Farber, 1991). Buffers for burnout include social support, sense of control, and dietary habits (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Burnout tends to occur when effort and coping resources fail to overcome stress, and stems from an individual perception of a significant discrepancy between effort and reward (Farber, 1991). It is characterized by depersonalization and a decline in personal achievement. A burnout cycle begins when teachers show a decrease in effort and major valued outcomes, and an increase in job strain. Burnout is the end state of “burning out” which is the gradual attrition of important technical, psychological, and social resources (Blasé, 1982). Sutton (1984) found that there are two dysfunctional responses to burnout. First, teachers feel forced to do low quality work or not finish their work at all. This often leads to

lower self-esteem, high blood pressure, and anxiety. Second, teachers may choose to keep up with the demand. This often leads to family problems, and a lack of sleep and relaxation (Farber, 1991). Teachers can be considered burned out if they show attitudes that depersonalize students, as well as exhibit low levels of personal accomplishments in their work (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Burnout can also be explained by ineffective performance with students which is a direct sign of a decrease in work satisfaction, involvement, motivation, and effort (Blasé, 1982). Burnout leads teachers to experience an increase in physical and mental problems, an increase in absenteeism, and a higher desire to want to leave the teaching profession (Hastings & Bham, 2003).

Causes of Teacher Stress

Teacher stress can be caused from a variety of situations. Stress often comes about when teachers have difficult negotiating various aspects of interactions with students (Hepburn & Brown, 2001) or from any circumstances that are considered too demanding, depriving of time, and interfering with instruction (Blasé, 1986). Stress can best be explained by categorizing factors into first and second order stressors. First order stressors directly interfere with teacher effort and can include student apathy, student disruption or discipline, poor student attendance, high student to teacher ratios (large classes), paperwork, prep work, irresponsible colleagues, obtrusive supervisors, lack of effective leadership such as assistant principals or principals, and seemingly non-supportive parents. Stressors that occur most frequently tend to be organizational issues dealing with students, administration, other teachers, and other work relationships (Blasé, 1986). Second order stressors do not interfere directly with teacher effort and can include issues such as low salary, emotional fatigue, frustration, helplessness, stagnation, boredom, and loss of motivation or enthusiasm (Blasé, 1986).

Stress among teachers can also be grouped into three categories: role demands, instructional problems, and interpersonal relationships (Sutton, 1984). Role related stress is said to be the difference between teachers' role expectations and their actual experiences within that role (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982). Role demand stressors include ambiguity, overload, conflict (Sutton, 1984), preparedness, and non-participation (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982). Organizational characteristics such as policies, structure, and processes can also be categorized as role demand stressors (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986). Instructional problems or task stress identifies problems associated with a variety of specific tasks that teachers must perform in their teaching role (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982). Instructional problems can include difficulties with student discipline, competence, inappropriate procedures for student placement, instruction, inadequate standardized tests, grading systems (Sutton, 1984), notification of unsatisfactory work performance, being physically threatened by students (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982) and sparse or dangerous working conditions (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986). Interpersonal relationships refer to relationships teachers have with fellow professionals or community members within the educational environment. Network interaction and supervision may also fall into this category (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986). The most common stressors in this group are conflict with other staff members, and a lack of social support from supervisors and coworkers (Sutton, 1984).

Causes of teacher stress can also be broken down into environmental and individual stressors. Most stressors can be found in the work environment and include unfavorable working conditions, heavy workloads, organizational problems, paucity of resources, lack of support and or autonomy, and decision making. The work environment can also include physical stressors such as task-related noise, crowding, the size of the classroom and or school, safety or youth violence, as well as administrative pressures such as support from managers and role ambiguity

(Hastings & Bham, 2003). Individual characteristics include the unique attributes of teachers such as personality, age, gender, demographic background, the ability to establish and maintain supportive networks, cognitive evaluation of stressors, the ability to cope, type of teacher, and job dissatisfaction (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Individual stress also can be associated with the compatibility between personal and educational values, ambition to succeed, sensitivity threshold, competitiveness, multiple roles for women teachers (such as parent, caretaker, homemaker, and teacher), and perfection (Bachkirova, 2005).

A major source of teacher stress can be directly attributed to the students. Through survey and interview responses, teachers most commonly refer to students as being responsible for most of their stress (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Stress resulting from student discipline is associated with teachers having to play the different roles of babysitters, police officers, or even harsh authoritarians, which can cause role demand overload (Blasé, 1986). Most teachers view disrespectful behavior, student attentiveness, and sociability as the most stressful student misbehaviors (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Griffith, Steptoe, and Cropley (1999) found that primary classroom teachers suffer more stress than secondary teachers. Primary teachers are responsible for one class throughout the entire school year which makes teachers not only responsible for educational activities, but for moral and social development as well. More responsibility, along with work pressure and student misbehavior, cause primary classroom teachers to have the highest level of stress. These behaviors along with student discipline management, student apathy, student achievement, and student absences all result in teachers experiencing increased stress (Blasé, 1986).

Teacher Responses to Stress

Teachers have varied responses to stress. A response is brought on by stress stimuli, which are organizational characteristics that initiate a stress reaction in a given setting (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986). While some teachers develop confrontational strategies, others experience changes in behavior, emotional responses, or physical or physiological responses.

Over time, teachers develop the technical, psychological, and social coping resources needed to effectively work with students (Blasé, 1982). The majority of coping strategies that teachers use come in the form of confrontational strategies. These strategies are used to reduce or eliminate external stress such as student related stressors (Blasé, 1986). Teachers confront classroom stress resulting from student discipline with strategies such as behavior modification, removing the student from class, scolding the child, isolation, inflicting fear, discussing the problem, active ignoring, paddling, and calling parents. Confrontational strategies used to deal with classroom stress resulting from student apathy include varied teaching techniques and materials, individual and personalized instruction, rewarding positive behavior, and striving to be entertaining (Blasé, 1982). Another form of confrontational classroom strategies is the development of adaptive strategies. Adaptive strategies do not directly affect the source of stress, but do manage the consequences for the teacher. These include ignoring the student, not putting extra work in, and giving up (Blasé, 1982).

If confrontational strategies do not work, teachers often experience personal changes in behavior to cope with the stress. Most behavior changes that occur as a result of stressors are very unhealthy to the teacher. These changes can include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, unwanted outbursts of anger, sedentary lifestyle, and sleeping problems (Guglielmi

& Tatrow, 1998). Teachers also express somatic complaints such as trouble falling asleep, back pains, poor appetite, and a decrease in their overall health and energy levels (Sutton, 1984). Chronic stress symptoms may also occur if stress continues to be present in the day to day activities of a teacher. These symptoms include fatigue, increased illness, and the inability to concentrate (Hepburn & Brown, 2001).

Some teachers may also have an emotional response to unwanted stress. The most common feelings of emotion that occur are anger, depression, anxiety, and self-blame (Blasé, 1986). Teachers experience anger more than any other feeling as a consequence of work stress and is often expressed with strong negative feelings directed towards others. Stress can also lead to teachers being in a depressive state. This is when teachers have a general feeling of being out of control, and a belief that they have little probability of improving their situation (Blasé, 1986). In this state, teachers may also show signs of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishments, and a decrease in self-efficacy (Hastings & Brown, 2001).

Feelings of anxiety are mostly anticipatory and often occur when teachers expect negative consequences to occur (Blasé, 1986). As feelings of anxiety continue, teachers become less tolerant, patient, caring, and involved (Blasé, 1986), and may even become unrealistically biased in their judgments and assessments of learners, which can result in negative outcomes for students (Abidin & Robinson, 2002). Self-blame results in teachers expressing anger towards self, feelings of guilt, and feelings of self-pity (Blasé, 1986). Over time, self-blame can remove teachers emotionally and socially from their students. A loss of enthusiasm may also occur causing teachers to lessen their attempts of humor, elaboration of subject matter, and creative involvement (Blasé, 1986).

Stress may also elicit a physical or physiological response from teachers. Some physical symptoms of stress include fatigue, tiredness, overworked, burn out, headaches, stomach aches, chest pains, sleepiness (Blasé, 1982), trembling hands, shortness of breath, dizziness, restlessness, cold sweats, ill health, confused thoughts or difficulty concentrating, loss of memory, loss of appetite, trouble falling asleep, and the ability to hold productive conversations with colleagues (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986). Some physiological symptoms of stress include an increase in blood pressure, heart rate and or cortisol (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998), irregular heartbeat, and nervousness (Bacharach, Bauer, & Conley, 1986).

Developing positive responses to stress will allow teachers to be more satisfied with their role as an educator and be a more effective educator in the classroom. A decrease in work satisfaction results in teachers being less involved and motivated, causing teachers to demonstrate feelings of resentment, frustration, boredom, irritability, anger, stagnation, helplessness, and depression (Blasé, 1982). Finding positive ways to handle stress will allow teachers to maintain their drive and commitment, thus making them continue to put forth the effort needed to being an involved, satisfied, and effective teacher. A proper response to stress via stress management techniques and healthy coping mechanisms keeps teachers actively involved in what they are trying to accomplish and allows them to fully invest themselves with their students (Blasé, 1982). Teachers who are satisfied in their profession will have less attrition maintaining a stable educational workforce.

Coping Strategies

Dealing with problems or difficulties in a calm and appropriate manner is commonly referred to as coping (www.dictionary.com, 2010). How a teacher copes with stress in the school environment affects the impact of stress on their psychological well-being and on

physiological response (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999). Coping behaviors or resources come in the form of physical, psychological, social, or material factors and help teachers overcome job-related stressors and achieve their valued outcomes with students (Blasé, 1982).

Common positive strategies teachers use to alleviate stress include exercise, social resources, avoidance, reading, hobbies, movement, and meditation (Gulwadi, 2006). These coping strategies used by teachers affect their outlook on the situation, thereby altering the perception of stress (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999). To alter the perception of stress, teachers may invoke inward or outward coping strategies. Inward strategies, such as concentrating on something narrow in the field of stimuli around oneself, include seeking stillness and focus. Outward strategies, such as exercise, involve seeking connections, distractions, and movement (Gulwadi, 2006). Although there are many common coping strategies available, most teachers rely on social support, active planning, restorative experiences, and suppression of competing behaviors.

Social support can reduce the impact of stressors on teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and physical illness risk. Teachers seek support from family, friends, and colleagues in order to receive advice, discuss feelings, get emotional support, get sympathy and understanding, and to talk about their feelings. Teachers who have more support within their personal lives tend to experience less stress in the workplace (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999). Active planning, although a part of the normal workload, allows teachers to take their mind off stress and focus on their work. The process of active planning involves concentrating efforts, developing a plan, taking some action, coming up with strategies, trying to take steps, and doing what has to be done in order to keep their attention on the students rather than the stressor (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999).

Restorative coping experiences refer to teachers being able to release stress in places away from the school environment. Places chosen by teachers reflect qualities that are helpful in offsetting the effects of the source of stress. The places teachers choose most often that make them feel better when stressed include home, nature related outdoor places, city places, churches, and cafes. These environments are helpful in relieving stress because they provide teachers with sensory conditions, social contact, props, and nature related environmental features, which can help teachers alleviate stress (Gulwadi, 2006).

Along with restorative experiences, teachers may choose to employ environmental coping resources. Teachers' awareness of possible environmental conditions can be a very valuable coping resource. A person's ability to know the potential surrounding environment can be used as a resource. Their knack to change these settings, in order to achieve personal goals is referred to as environmental competence. The most common environmental resources that are easily available to teachers include time, money, social ties, organizational resources, and physical environmental resources such as locations that teacher's access and use for their spatial and sensory properties (Gulwadi, 2006).

Some people, either intentionally or unintentionally, employ negative coping strategies to deal with stress. Negative coping strategies are common responses to stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. Although these strategies can provide temporary stress relief, they can cause more stress in the long run (Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia, 2010). Negative coping strategies can include unhealthy behaviors, distractions, violence, and withdrawal. Unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, excessively over/under eating, and drug abuse are sometimes used to relieve stress. Distractions such as television, computer, and filling up schedules to avoid facing problems are common ways to

avoid stress. Violence such as angry outbursts, lashing out, and physical violence often come about if a situation becomes too stressful. Showing signs of withdrawal such as sleeping, procrastinating, withdrawing from family, friends, and activities, and disengagement are ways in which people try to remove stress from their lives (Helpguide, 2010).

Disengagement refers to teachers giving up on the goals in which the stressor is interfering with. Teachers who are disengaged resort to negative coping skills such as not trying, engaging in other activities, day dreaming, sleeping, watching television, and reducing their efforts in the classroom. Disengagement can be applied immediately and without the help of others, but is only a short-term solution. In the long run, disengagement can lead to teachers having cumulating workloads, disruptive classes, and feelings of lowered self-esteem and helplessness (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999). Suppression of competing behaviors refers to teachers putting aside all activities in their lives so that they can concentrate solely on work. Teachers have a tendency to prevent distraction, focus more on work tasks, prevent outside interferences, and concentrate more on their thoughts on work in order to suppress competing activities. Lessening the demand of other aspects of life and only focusing on work leads to teachers having an increased perception of stress levels, which prevents them from taking time to relax (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999).

Summary

Past research generally has been limited to only identifying sources and consequences of stress for teachers. There is a need to further understand why these sources of stress affect teachers and why they choose particular responses to stress. Considering why particular sources of stress affect teachers will allow the health educator to suggest positive stress management programs and coping mechanisms that can be made within the organizational structure of schools

that will lessen work-related stress. Understanding why teachers respond the way they do to stress can allow for adaptive strategies to be used in order to help teachers address and cope with stress. This literature explains in detail the most common coping strategies used by teachers; however, this literature does not clarify why teachers choose particular coping strategies. There is a need to investigate the reasons as to why teachers choose particular coping strategies as a way of handling stress. Understanding why these strategies are used will provide teachers with the opportunity to better understand how to cope with stress and provide the tools and resources for effective stress management programs designed to alleviate attrition.

Chapter 3

Methodology: Introduction

This proposed study is an assessment of stress and coping behaviors among current primary school teachers. The researcher aims to explore how teachers define stress and what the major causes of stress are for these teachers. The researcher also intends to investigate the strategies, both positive and negative, that these teachers implement as they attempt to cope with the identified stressors. In order to learn about these important issues entrenched within the teaching profession, the researcher proposes to use a mixed-method design using a convenience, non-random sample.

Mixed Method Design

A mixed method design will be used for this research project. One method alone will not provide a complete answer to the research questions. The research will be a qualitatively driven project, with a qualitative foundation, and a quantitative sequential element (Richards & Morse, 2002). The qualitative foundation will focus on understanding the meaning of teacher stress through the perspectives of current primary school teachers at one specific school in rural North Carolina. The quantitative element will be a pilot sample implemented to measure the responses and coping strategies that teachers employ when stress is present in the workplace.

Qualitative research designs are utilized to discover the meaning individuals attribute to a social problem (Creswell, 2007). In this study, a qualitative design, specifically focus groups, will be used to explore which events current primary school teachers perceive as being stressful, why they believe these events elicit a response of stress, and what coping mechanisms teachers use to deal with their stress. Quantitative research designs generate statistics through the use of

survey research. In this study, a supplemental quantitative design will be used to measure the most frequent reactions and coping strategies employed by teachers after an episode of stress.

Some qualitative research studies that focus on teacher stress have been conducted, however most of these studies focus on middle and high school teachers. There is a growing need to investigate stress and which events current primary school teachers perceive as being the most stressful in their discipline. The researcher hopes to discover the many facets of participants' occurrences of stress including causes, reactions, and coping strategies. The researcher also hopes to gain insight into the participants' feelings and opinions about the growing epidemic of teacher stress. In order for participants to share their experiences, a focus group will be created. In this focus group, participants will be asked in-depth, open-ended questions that will elicit a complex, detailed understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2007).

Quantitative findings will add to the qualitative foundation and triangulate data by providing a statistical explanation of the many reactions and coping strategies primary school teachers exhibit when presented with stress (Richards & Morse, 2002). To benefit primary school teachers, there is a need to measure the most common responses to stress and the behaviors in which teachers use to cope. The researcher hopes that by helping teachers to recognize what reactions and strategies are used most often will help teachers to more effectively handle the array of stressors that are present within the school environment. In order to measure the reactions and coping strategies, an existing survey instrument will be modified specifically for teachers from the responses gathered during the focus group. This instrument will provide a statistical analysis of the stress reactions and positive and negative coping strategies employed by teachers when stress is present in the workplace.

A mixed method design will help better understand the needs of the target population. A qualitative approach will be emphasized in this study to reflect the voices of the participants and to extend the literature in order to suggest ways in which to alleviate stress for primary school teachers (Creswell, 2007). Focus groups, consistent with qualitative approach, will provide themes and ideas to modify an existing stress and coping instrument to measure participants' responses, which is consistent with a quantitative approach (Richards & Morse, 2002). Using a qualitative driven approach with a quantitative sequential element will provide rich and thick descriptions of teacher stress and confirmatory data so that the research questions of this study can be completely answered.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Cognitive Theory will serve as the theoretical framework that guides this proposed study. The basic concept of this model is referred to as reciprocal determinism, an idea that emphasizes that a behavior develops from constant interaction of people and their environments, and that the ensuing behaviors affect these people and their environments (Hodges & Videto, 2005). The Social Cognitive Theory will help guide this study in developing a plan that affects people, environments, and behaviors.

The Social Cognitive Theory has many valuable concepts that include self-efficacy, expectations, behavior capability, reinforcement, and observational learning (Hodges & Videto, 2005). Self-efficacy is thought to be the most significant personal characteristic for influencing behavior. Behavior capability can be shaped by providing knowledge about the recommended behavior and the skills necessary to continue it. Discovering positive role models and recognizing positive changes in others helps in discussing observational learning. Outcome expectations involve strategies that express information about the possible results of engaging in

the behavior and positive reinforcement can help provide continuation of the recommended behavior (Hodges & Videto, 2005).

The basic concepts of teacher stress include causes, responses, and coping strategies; all of which affect how a teacher handles stress. The objective of this proposed study is to find out how teacher stress affects primary school teachers and their environment in which they work in. The researcher also hopes to learn more about how self-efficacy and stress are connected as well as to investigate how a teacher's behavior capability and expectations affect how they cope with stress in the workplace.

Measures to Address Validity

A mixed methods research study is used to understand settings in which the target population addresses a problem or issue. This approach can lead to further exploring the problem or issue as well as identifying variables that can be measured quantitatively (Creswell, 2007). To accomplish this objective, it is critical that the researcher follows guidelines to ensure the study has validity. Validity refers to the value or accuracy of the study findings. This involves the researcher spending a great deal of time in the field, providing thick detailed description of the findings, and becoming familiar with the study participants (Creswell, 2007). Strategies such as triangulation, member checking, and administering a valid and reliable instrument will provide validity to this proposed study.

Triangulation

Triangulation measures validity by using multiple sources that support one another and directly address each other's findings (Richards & Morse, 2007). To provide supporting evidence from multiple sources, this proposed study will compare previous literature published about teacher stress and implement qualitative and quantitative methodology. Reviewing and

comparing existing literature can help develop specific questions, methods, environments, and data that can be used to study primary school teachers to see if the results are similar (Richards & Morse, 2007). The material for this proposed study can then be compared to published results in order to confirm the results of this study. Triangulation will also be implemented through the creation of two focus groups. The focus groups will have similar discussions about causes, responses, and coping strategies involved with teacher stress. These discussions will provide the researcher with supporting evidence found within the data to produce the underlying themes of the study (Creswell, 2007), and guide the modification of the quantitative stress and coping instrument.

Member Checking

In member checking, the researcher requests participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). To judge the accuracy and credibility of the findings, this proposed study will take data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can provide alternate language, critical observations, or alternate interpretations if needed. This method will allow the participants to reflect on the accuracy of the account.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

When determining if an instrument is valid and reliable, it is important to take into account Cronbach's alpha, face validity, and content validity (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). Cronbach's alpha is used to determine if items in a scale are interrelated. Cronbach's alpha has a range of 0 to 1 and a score of .70 or higher is sufficient evidence of reliability (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006).

In this proposed study, an instrument entitled “Stress, Depression, and Coping Scale” (Chaney, Burke, & Rager, n.d) will be used. This instrument was developed by Chaney, Burke, and Rager (in review) to measure general stress, depression, and coping among Latino migrant seasonal farm workers. The instrument is made up of 90 items that are a combination of Likert scale questions, open-ended questions, and check-all-that-apply questions. This instrument will be modified for this proposed study specifically for teachers to measure causes of stress, responses to stress, and coping strategies. The Reliability measures are reported to be all above the acceptable .70 alpha coefficient for this instrument (Burke, Rager, & Wallen, 2008).

This instrument also has face and content validity. Face validity is concerned with how an instrument appears and whether or not it appears to measure the construct of interest (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). The “Stress, Depression, and Coping Scale” has face validity because it has specific subscales that are relevant to teacher stress (Chaney, Burke, & Rager, n.d). Content validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument represents all elements of the construct of interest (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). This instrument will demonstrate content validity by measuring causes, responses, and coping strategies, all of which are essential aspects of the teacher stress phenomenon.

Researcher’s Qualifications

The primary researcher in this proposed study is Jeff Sprenger. He will be in close contact with his faculty advisor, Dr. Sloane Burke, throughout the process of this study. Jeff Sprenger is a graduate student in the Health Education and Promotion Department at East Carolina University. Jeff Sprenger is also a primary school Physical Education teacher in Richlands, North Carolina. Being a primary school teacher allows the researcher to possess firsthand knowledge of how stress affects teachers. Completing graduate level qualitative and

quantitative research methods courses provides the researcher with valuable insights that will be beneficial to a study of this nature. Jeff Sprenger will oversee all research study activities: selecting participants, obtaining informed consent, developing focus group scripts, facilitating focus groups, modifying the survey instrument, transcribing data, analyzing results, and reporting findings.

Protection of Participants

A major priority throughout the process of this research study is protecting the involved participants. All participants will be fully made aware that their involvement is strictly voluntary and that their contributions to the study will remain confidential. Once participants are made aware of the voluntary and confidential nature of this study, they will be given details about the purpose of the study, associated risks of participation, and benefits of participation. Clear communication between the researcher and participants will allow for the participants to make informed decisions about their choice to participate in this study.

Before any data are collected, the researcher will obtain an official informed consent document signed by all participants (Appendix C). Before signing this document, the researcher will thoroughly explain the document with all participants and will allow time for questions to be asked about the literature contained in the document. During this time, all participants will once again be made aware of the fact that their participation is completely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

A pseudonym or letter will be assigned to each participant in order to ensure confidentiality in this study. Participants' names or any other information will never appear on any data collected. The researcher will have exclusive access to this material and will keep it stored on a password protected computer.

Selecting Participants

For this proposed study, a purposeful convenience sample of current primary school teachers will be selected. A purposeful sample will allow the researcher to select participants who are familiar with the required information, are willing to reflect on the topic of interest, have the time, and are willing to participate (Richards & Morse, 2007). Participants will be selected from Richlands Primary School because of a large staff made up of teachers who have varying years of experience in the K-2 environment.

The researcher proposes to hold two separate focus groups. One focus group will involve teachers with greater than five years of teaching experience and the second focus group will involve teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. This format will allow the researcher to see a range of issues related to teacher stress. Each focus group will have 6 to 12 participants in order to investigate multiple perspectives and experiences, while also allowing for in-depth discussion. Focus group responses will then be used to modify a quantitative teacher stress survey. This instrument will be used to measure a larger sample of primary school teachers other than the focus groups on topics such as causes of stress, stress responses, and coping strategies utilized.

The researcher will select potential participants using two different strategies. In order to form the focus groups, the researcher will advertise via flyer through the school email system. This advertisement will provide potential participants with the purpose, importance, and objectives of the proposed study. The researcher will again use the school email system to select potential qualitative survey participants. All participants who respond to the email will then be given the instrument to complete in privacy.

Potential participants will be selected if they are willing to participate, are a current primary school teacher, and have at least one full year of teaching experience in the K-2 environment. Participation will be completely voluntary and participants will not be offered any incentives for participating or be penalized for not participating. With a purposeful sample chosen of teachers who currently work at Richlands Primary School, all teachers on staff will be eligible for this study.

Data Analysis

This proposed study will attempt to analyze stress and coping behaviors among primary school teachers. The independent variable in this case would be coping behaviors and the dependent variable would be stress. In order to analyze these two variables, a quantitative survey will be administered to a target population of primary school teachers at one specific school in rural North Carolina. The survey will be available online for participants to complete during a three week time frame. The target population will consist of 40 current primary school teachers. Demographic information such as gender, race, age, years experience in K-2 setting, and type of degree held will be included in the quantitative survey. The sample population is made up of 38 females and 2 male teachers. Of those, 38 are Caucasian, 1 is African American, and 1 is Hispanic. The target population age range is 23 – 57 years old, and the years experience ranges from 1 year to 31 years. Of the 40 teachers included, 27 hold a Bachelors degree and 13 hold a Masters degree.

Data analysis will begin during the two focus group sessions. A research assistant will serve as the moderator by asking questions and stimulating discussion using an outline prepared by the researcher. The researcher will serve as the observer by taking notes on non-verbal

responses such as hand gestures, facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. During each focus group, an audiotape will record participants' verbal responses.

Data transcription will occur immediately following the focus group sessions so that the material is new in the researcher's thoughts. These written transcriptions will consist of the material from the group discussions so that the researcher is able to interpret the verbal responses in order to discover the trends, recommendations, opinions, and feelings of the focus groups (Hodges & Videto, 2005). Using an audiotape to record the focus group discussions will help organize the participants' responses, allows the researcher to review the transcription to ensure accuracy, and will allow the researcher to transcribe the information accurately, which will provide written evidence of participants' words.

The researcher will read over the written transcripts in their entirety several times in order to submerge himself into the data. This will allow the researcher to get a sense of the interviews as a whole before breaking them into smaller parts (Creswell, 2007). As the researcher is reading the transcripts, he will write memos in the margins. Memos are short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that are important to the researcher (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher will move from reading to describing, classifying, and interpreting the transcripts. This process is referred to as coding. During the coding process, the researcher will describe in detail, develop themes, and provide an interpretation of the transcripts (Creswell, 2007). These codes will represent core concepts, central categories, or themes related to teacher stress (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). Every code used will be defined and kept in a codebook, which is a complete description of every code and how it relates to the research. Coding of the transcripts will provide the researcher with the information necessary to develop a quantitative survey instrument.

The data results from the quantitative survey will be analyzed using SPSS software, descriptive data, and chi-square tests. The SPSS software helps connect data to effective action by drawing reliable conclusions about current conditions and future events. Using predictive analytics, SPSS can be a helpful tool in recommending proper coping mechanisms for primary school teachers. Descriptive data will be used to evaluate how scores on variables such as the mean, median, standard deviation, range, and frequency are distributed (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). These variables can be helpful in showing which stressors have the biggest impact of stress on primary school teachers. Chi-square tests shows the significance of certain variables have on a target population (Crosby, DiClemente, & Salazar, 2006). In this proposed study, chi-square tests will show the significance stress has on primary school teachers and whether or not the teacher's age or the grade level they teach is a predictor of stress.

The data will be presented as a written discussion with accompaniment of figures resulting from the quantitative instrument. The data will be presented using themes, a textual description, and a structural description. Themes will result from the researcher taking important statements and grouping them into larger units. A textual description will explain what happened and includes actual experiences from study participants. A structural description explains how the experience happened and will include a reflection on the setting in which the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2007). Representing the data using themes and textual and structural descriptions will provide a complete description of the information and allow the real meaning of the teacher stress phenomenon to be discovered.

Chapter 4

Findings: Introduction

The researcher implemented a mixed-method design by conducting two qualitative focus group interviews with 12 participants and administering a quantitative pilot survey to 33 participants in an effort to address the following research questions: What are the causes of stress for primary school teachers? What strategies do these particular teachers use to cope with their identified stressors? All participants were current primary school teachers working at Richlands Primary School who had at least one year experience in the K-2 setting. Each focus group lasted approximately 20 minutes. The two focus group interviews were held in a private room at Richlands Primary School. One focus group purposively consisted of teachers with greater than five years teaching experience while the second focus group was purposively comprised of teachers with fewer than five years teaching experience.

The data collected from the focus group interviews provided in-depth information regarding what events cause stress and the strategies employed by the participants to cope with these stressors. The data provides a rich description of the meaning and lived experiences of primary teacher stress from the perspective of current primary school teachers at Richlands Primary School. The data collected from the focus group interviews also helped develop the “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” which was administered to 33 participants as a pilot assessment. All participants who completed the survey were also current primary school teachers working at Richlands Primary School who had at least one year experience in the K-2 setting. The “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” (Appendix E) is comprised of 77 items that includes demographic information, stress/anxiety, mental stress, life

satisfaction, task stress, supervisory support, peer support, illness symptoms, and coping with stress indicators.

Characteristics of the Focus Groups

The researcher recruited participants for both focus group interviews from Richlands Primary School. A flyer (Appendix B) was sent out through the school's email distribution list to all licensed staff at Richlands Primary School. The advertisement provided potential participants with the purpose, importance, and objectives of the proposed study and asked for volunteers to participate in the focus group interview in June 2010. One focus group consisted of current primary school teachers (N = 6) who had at least five years experience in the K-2 setting while the second focus group consisted of current primary school teachers (N = 6) who had less than five years experience in the K-2 setting.

The focus group interviews were comprised of 12 participants that ranged in age from 25 to 55 years old. All of the focus group participants were female, with 11 being Caucasian and one being African American. Four participants currently work in kindergarten, five currently work in first grade, one currently works in second grade while two work with K-2 students.

Focus Group One: Greater Than Five Years Teaching Experience

The researcher conducted the first focus group interview in June 2010, with six participants who had greater than five years teaching experience. The interview was held during a teacher workday, in a private room at the school, so that participants didn't have to make other arrangements. The participants and the researcher sat around a long table with the participants seated on either side of the table and the researcher seated at the head of the table. A recorder was placed in the center of the table. As participants entered the room, they signed the informed consent document which had been placed on the table by the researcher. The researcher initiated

the focus group by first asking participants to define the word “stress” in their own words (Appendix D). During the interview, all participants shared their perspective. Participants were in agreement that teaching as a profession was stressful. They expressed that pressure, control, and decision-making are a few words to describe what stress meant to them. They felt working with students who are attending school for the first time, an increase in undiagnosed behavioral issues, and nurturing roles are the most unique stressors to the primary school setting.

Focus Group Two: Less Than Five Years Teaching Experience

The researcher conducted the second focus group interview the following day in June 2010, with six participants who had less than five years teaching experience. The interview was held during a teacher workday, in a private room at the school, so that participants didn’t have to make other arrangements. The participants and the researcher sat around a long table with the participants seated on either side of the table and the researcher seated at the head of the table. A recorder was placed in the center of the table. All of the participants shared their perspective at some point and were open to discussing all topics that were initiated by the researcher. Participants talked in depth about the issues that make teaching a stressful profession and were all in agreement that teaching was stressful. Participants explained that teaching was stressful because they did not have enough time to complete tasks, and that the job wears on you both physically and mentally. They considered bathroom issues, nurturing roles, students not being able to do anything on their own, and tying shoes are the most unique stressors to the primary school setting.

Characteristics of the “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey”

The researcher recruited participants to complete the “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” by sending out a flyer through the Richlands Primary School email distribution

list in September 2010. The advertisement yielded a sample of 33 participants from the target population of 40 current teachers at Richlands Primary School. Participants who responded to the advertisement were provided with a link to complete the survey through Survey Monkey. Participants were able to complete the survey in privacy during a three week window in November 2010. Participants who completed the survey were between 24 to 56 years of age (Figure 1). Of the 33 participants, 93% were female, 93% were Caucasian, 67% held a Bachelor's degree, and 10% were lateral entry. Participants in the sample also ranged in number of years experience in K-2 setting from 1 to 28 (Figure 2) years and overall teaching experience ranged from 1 to 28 years. The "Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey" is made up of 77 items that are a combination of open-ended, multiple choice, check-all-that-apply, and Likert scale questions. The "Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey" addresses demographic information, stress/anxiety, mental stress, life satisfaction, task stress, supervisory support, peer support, illness symptoms, and coping with stress. The survey allowed the researcher to explore such items as what participants most associate with stress at work, what causes the most stress at work, and the level of stress participants have experienced at work over the past six months. The survey also provided insight into whether or not participants experience stress at work due to excessive paperwork or by a lack of consistency by school administration.

Thematic Findings: Causes of Stress

Analysis of the focus group interview data and the results from the "Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey" revealed three major themes related to participants' experiences of teacher stress in a primary school environment. These themes included unrealistic expectations, documentation, and administration. The following sections will examine findings associated with these themes, the participants' perceptions of unrealistic

expectations, documentation, and administration, and the influences that have affected these perceptions.

Unrealistic Expectations

The participants talked at length that teachers have unrealistic expectations placed upon them by school officials, administration, and parents. When asked if teaching as a profession was stressful, one participant answered “yes” because of “unrealistic expectations” which then caused another participant to exclaim, “Amen!” They cited job pressure, feeling underappreciated, and having to fulfill multiple roles as the roots of these unrealistic expectations which “cause more stress than other jobs”. The following provides more detail about each aspect of unrealistic expectations as explained by the participants.

Pressure

Participants in both focus group interviews mentioned that teachers are always under pressure. Today, teachers are constantly under pressure from the school district to have their students meet deadlines and benchmarks, and from parents who want their child to be successful. One participant explained that, “We put a lot of pressure on kids. We have put a lot of pressure on children, and that has taken the joy out of teaching.” Participants in one focus group talked about pressure as “not being able to do the job the way I want to,” or “not feeling like you’re in control,” or “having too much to do and not enough time to get it done.” One participant in particular said, “I can’t do the job how I want to because of all the other noise in the background.” Participants in the other focus group described pressure as “overwhelming,” and “I can’t get anything done because I am so frustrated with what I *have* to do.”

Feeling Underappreciated

Participants also shared that they felt teachers are not as appreciated and revered as much as they should be. One participant explained that, “I don’t think people really know how much work we do,” while another member said, “I don’t feel appreciated at all.” Participants also feel underappreciated because people do not realize how hard it is to teach a classroom full of young learners with today’s expectations. Some participants expressed concern for their students because they “felt that they couldn’t give enough to my students,” or that “I have no time for teaching. All I have time for is assessing.” Whether it is that teaching is a never-ending job, teachers having only a small amount of individual teaching time per student, or that there is an increase in student behavioral problems, teachers feel as if outsiders think teaching as a profession is easy. One participant stated that outsiders should “come be in our shoes.”

Fulfilling Multiple Roles

Teachers are expected to fulfill many roles for their students, and this is most evident in the primary school environment. Primary school teachers play nurse, nurture young children, tie shoes, teach students how to use the bathroom and how to walk in a line, and provide students with a basic foundation for the school setting. Participants expressed that with “so many multiple roles that we play as teachers, [it] adds to our stress,” and “how are we [teachers] suppose to provide that background while teaching at the same time?”

Documentation

It was evident in each focus group interview that the participants believe having to document everything is a major stressor for primary school teachers. Today, teachers are expected to write daily and weekly lesson plans, chart individual daily behaviors, host parent conferences, write report cards and progress reports, keep attendance rosters, produce and score

assessments in reading, writing, and math, implement and document individualized educational plans (IEP) and personalized educational plans (PEP), and track and keep records of student progress in yearly cumulative folders. All of this material is then re-written at the end of the year and placed into a student's "Blue Folder" which stays with them through elementary school. When asked about all this documentation, one participant said, "It drives me nuts!" Participants discussed redundancy, increased individualized attention, and teachers needing to show proof of assessment and growth as the foundations of increased documentation within the educational structure.

Redundancy

Participants in both focus group interviews revealed that teachers have to repeat everything for county office records. They are constantly asked to write down the exact same information on multiple documents. Major items that require duplication include attendance, whether or not a student is on grade level, and student reading levels. One participant asked, "How many times did I have to write that Johnny was on grade level, level three...500 times?" When asked why documentation is a major stressor, one participant explained that, "Whenever I do something, I want that to be it." Other participant feelings towards documentation included "it's redundant," "I do not like repeating things," "Doing the same thing on a million different copies makes no sense to me," and "Why do I have to write everything down on seven different documents?"

Increased Individualized Attention

With academic standards becoming more rigorous with each school year, teachers are continuously working to provide the most appropriate education possible for diverse learners. With this in mind, participants in both focus group interviews indicated that making sure each

student receives the individualized attention they need is an added a stressor. One participant explained that in today's education, "You have to be individualizing for everybody, whether it is class work or homework." Specifically, in a primary school, teaching a student one-on-one becomes a bigger challenge. One participant explained that, "They (students) can't do anything by themselves. I can't give the kids something to do and expect them to go do that while I help somebody do this. You have to be with them all the time." Participants also expressed concern about how difficult it is to provide individualized instruction with the increasing class sizes. One participant said, "I took one year and broke it down for my parents. I had like 45 minutes for reading and 23 students, so I have two minutes a day to teach your child how to read." Teachers have to plan how they are going to individualize their instruction, then document what they have done to reach the low learners and the high learners.

Teachers Needing to Document

Participants in both focus group interviews expressed that "nobody takes the teachers' word anymore." Participants felt an added stressor because they must prove everything. One participant said, "I save everything, just in case." When asked about teachers having to prove they are doing their jobs, one participant explained that, "I think a lot of that comes from being held accountable, on paper, being accountable. I'm not saying that teachers weren't being held accountable, but ten years ago there certainly wasn't the paper trail there is now." Another participant suggested that, "You have to be documenting all the time, they don't take the teachers' words anymore." On top of documenting student progress, teachers have to document their lesson plans, how they individualize instruction, and how they implement technology into their teaching.

Administration

An often brought up topic in both focus group interviews was the role school administration plays on teachers' stress levels. One participant simply stated, "How well they [administration] run things," can be an added stressor for teachers. Participants felt that administration can add to teachers' stress by not being consistent and constantly implementing new procedures.

Consistency

Participants in both focus group interviews felt that a lack of consistency by school administration can be a major stressor for all teachers. When asked what causes the most stress at school, one participant straightforwardly said, "Administration not being consistent." Another participant suggested that, "If a policy is going to be followed, it needs to be followed...for everybody." Another participant said, "I would like to know that if I go up and have a concern or whatever it is, that it's going to be handled in the same manner every time the same way, so that I know what to expect."

Participants also felt that consistency in behavior management is a big concern with school administration. One participant expressed that, "We [teachers] are seeing more and more severe behavior and truly don't feel like we are getting any support, they [students] are just in your room...too bad...so sad, handle it." When asked about taking students to administration for behavior issues, one participant said, "I tend to avoid [going to] administration," while another participant added, "I like my students to think I am the boss." Another participant related the impact behavior inconsistency can have on teachers' stress levels,

I'm at the point where I don't want to take anybody to administration anymore because I took one [student] for stealing something that costs about two hundred dollars from my

classroom and they didn't go to Cubs Care, they didn't get suspended. I mean, they got a talking to and if it happened again they would get in trouble. Well, then I see somebody else go and steal like a pencil and a lip gloss and they are suspended for three days, and it about drove me bonkers.

Some participants expressed concern that if a teacher takes a student to administration, it looks as if the teacher isn't doing their job, which then can add to the amount of stress placed upon a teacher.

Implementing New Procedures

Participants in both focus group interviews expressed that “constant change” and “unexpected decisions” by administration implementing new procedures and schedules can be a major stressor for teachers. One participant explained that, “Change is good, we all need to change, and we all need a little bit of evolution as far as that's concerned; but all at one time? Whenever you are expected to change everything, your whole scheme of things takes a step back.” One central issue within the focus group interviews seemed to be the scheduling of enrichment classes. With recent budget cuts within education, the number of students in each classroom that a teacher is in charge of has increased. With this increased class size, participants feel that there is not enough time to teach their students. One participant explained that, “I just feel I robbed my students.” At Richlands Primary School, all students take art, music, physical education (twice), computers, and character education classes on a weekly basis. Students also take story time, global education, library, and guidance on rotation. Add all these classes to daily recess and lunch times and it is easy to see how participants can be stressed out about the amount of time their students aren't getting core academic instruction. When asked about the schedule, one participant said, “There are too many enrichment classes.” Participants also expressed their

concern about not having any input in the decision making. One participant pleaded, “Listen to my concerns please!”

Thematic Findings: Coping with Stress

Analysis of the focus group interview data and the results from the “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” revealed three major themes related to how participants cope with stress in a primary school environment. These themes included negative, positive, and neutral coping strategies. The following sections will examine findings associated with these themes, the participants’ perceptions of negative, positive, and neutral coping strategies, and the influences that have affected these perceptions.

Negative Coping Strategies

The participants in both focus group interviews use negative coping strategies in order to deal with stress. Negative coping strategies may temporarily relieve stress, but may cause more damage in the long run. Some negative coping strategies utilized by participants include eating junk food, ignoring the stressful situation, procrastination, crying, and getting cranky with students. Participant responses included, “Sometimes I just leave the work for later, instead of getting started right away, you just walk away from it,” “I get emotional and cry,” and “I go from yelling to crying all at one time.” One participant in particular talked about how they cope with stress in a negative way even after leaving school. “And even at home, I’ll go home and I don’t want to walk the dog, or cook dinner, or do anything. I just want to sit on the couch, want to watch the TV, and I don’t want to talk to anybody until it’s time to go to bed.”

Positive Coping Strategies

The participants in both focus group interviews talked in depth about using positive coping strategies in order to deal with stress. Positive coping strategies allow a person to restore

emotional balance and help to solve the problem. Positive coping strategies employed by the participants include religion, exercise, gardening, seeing a massage therapist, student ah-ha moments, taking a nap, hobbies, and going to stress management workshops. One participant explained, "I've got to make myself rest, cut the internet off of Pro Teacher, and not get any more ideas, and make myself go to sleep." Another participant said, "I leave work stress at work, because when I walk out the door, I hook up with my friends or the people that make me feel good, you know, positive people." Some participants also suggested that organization and music helped them positively handle stress. One participant suggested that, "You have to create that [organization] or you're going to be lost in the shuffle." When asked about how music can be a positive way to handle stress, one participant stated, "The music in the school hallway, it's just awesome, that atmosphere is just totally different. I appreciate it a lot," while another participant said, "I listen to my worship music; that brings me down, puts things back into perspective." Other participants feel that getting to take an hour during the school day and leaving school to eat lunch helps them positively handle stress. "That time out, allowing us that hour out, where you bank it and use it for whatever, that has helped, I mean a lot."

Neutral Coping Strategies

Participants in both focus group interviews mentioned using neutral coping strategies. A coping strategy is neutral if it neither solves the problem nor makes it any worse (Gulwadi, 2006). One participant explained that teachers, "Do exactly what we need to do, we can't give more than 100% because that's how we're coping. You just have to survive and get through those times that you are having a rough go at it." Neutral coping strategies used by participants include staying to oneself, turning off the lights in the room, alone time, complete silence, and venting to friends, family, and colleagues. When asked about being alone, one participant said,

“Sometimes here you just have to walk out of the room for a minute. I’ll be back, I mean, you’ve just got to get away, and just regroup, regroup.” On the topic of silence, one participant explained, “I have to tell my own children on the way home, let’s not talk the whole way home, we are not talking. Give me ten minutes to digest and pull my shoulders down while I’m driving, and relax.”

The most often talked about neutral coping strategy among the participants was venting. Participant responses included, “I try to find somebody to talk to,” and “I feel like talking about it [stress] makes it a lot better.” One participant went into more detail and explained, “I walk in the door and he’s [husband] there. I say give me 30 minutes, let me vent. I don’t want your advice, I don’t want your questions, I don’t want, you know a solution. I just want you to listen to me.”

Quantitative Findings

Analysis of the “Primary School teacher Stress and Coping Survey” (Appendix F) revealed important demographic data about the participants who completed the survey. The majority of the respondents (61%) were in their 20’s or 30’s while also having less than 10 years teaching experience (52%) in a primary school setting. Twenty-four percent currently teach kindergarten, 21% currently teach first grade, 27% currently teach second grade, and 18% currently hold a teaching position in a specialized area (reading, speech, EC, art, music, physical education, etc.) (Figure 4). 52% of respondents both currently teach students labeled as ESL (English as a second language) and/or students labeled as EC (special needs). Seventy percent of the respondents have a part-time TA (teacher assistant) at their services, while 79% currently have between 22-24 students in their classroom (Figure 5).

A chi square test (Table 1) was performed to determine if age was a factor of teacher stress levels. The results of the test showed that teachers above the mean age (36.2 years) were more than twice as likely to label the teaching profession as “extremely” stressful as compared to teachers below the mean age.

Table 1: Chi Square of age and stress levels

	Do you think teaching as a profession is stressful?					Total
		Extremely Stressful	Very Stressful	Somewhat Stressful	Response	
Age	2	0	0	0	0	2
24	0	0	1	1	0	2
25	0	0	1	0	0	1
26	0	1	0	1	0	2
27	0	0	2	0	0	2
28	0	0	1	0	0	1
30	0	0	1	0	0	1
31	0	0	2	0	0	2
32	0	1	0	0	0	1
33	0	1	0	0	0	1
36	0	0	2	0	0	2
37	0	0	0	1	0	1
38	0	3	0	1	0	4
40	0	0	1	0	0	1
41	0	1	0	0	0	1
43	0	0	2	0	0	2
44	0	0	1	0	0	1
45	0	0	0	2	0	2
49	0	1	0	0	0	1
55	0	1	0	0	0	1
56	0	1	0	0	0	1
	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	10	14	6	1	33

Levels of Stress

When respondents were asked to describe their levels of stress in both work and personal settings, the results were much different. Fifty-eight percent have high/very high levels of stress at work compared to 39% in their personal life. Thirty percent describe work as causing moderate levels of stress while 15% said their personal life causes the same degree of stress. Three percent have low/very low levels of stress at work while 36% say their personal life causes the same level of stress.

Of the 33 respondents, 30% describe the teaching profession as “extremely stressful,” 42% describe it as “very stressful,” and 18% describe it as “somewhat stressful.” Seventy-six percent of these respondents labeled the teaching profession as stressful because they “had too much to do and not enough time to do it.” According to the respondents, levels of stress may increase due to work being too hard (67%), having a variety of tasks to complete (91%), working long hours (85%), being tired during work (79%), having too much to accomplish (88%), complying with federal, state, and school policies (76%), trying to keep up with changing professional standards (91%), salary (76%), economic problems (85%), trying to resolve conflicts between parents and the school (64%), students with behavioral issues (85%), or completing non-student responsibilities (82%).

A second chi square test (Table 2) was performed to determine if grade level taught was a factor of teacher stress levels. The results of the test revealed that teachers in all grade levels are just as likely to label the teaching profession as “extremely” stressful.

Table 2: Chi Square of grade level taught and stress levels	Do you think teaching as a profession is stressful?					Total
		Extremely Stressful	Very Stressful	Somewhat Stressful	Response	
What grade do you currently teach?	2	0	0	0	0	2
1	0	3	4	0	0	7
1 and 2	0	1	0	0	0	1
2	0	4	3	2	0	9
EC	0	0	1	0	0	1
K	0	2	4	2	0	8
K-2	0	0	2	2	0	4
	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	10	14	6	1	33

Stressors at Work

When respondents were asked what events cause the most stress at work, 14 events were labeled as being the reason for at least 10% of all stress at work. Paperwork (70%), administering assessments (61%), documentation (49%), and student behavior (49%) cause the most stress for the sample population. Other events such as not having enough time to implement new strategies (46%), class size (36%), policy changes (33%), parent conferences (30%), and dealing with parents (30%) also cause the respondents a great deal of stress. Unrealistic expectations (27%), unexpected administration decisions (24%), planning (21%), consistency from administration (21%), and a lack of organization (12%) still cause stress for respondents, but just not as much as other events.

Stressors Specific to Primary School

The primary school setting is unique in the fact that teachers are only interacting with students in grades kindergarten, first, and second. Students in primary school are just being exposed to the educational structure, and therefore have not formed any type of school routine. When respondents were asked what stressors are unique to a primary school, eight items were identified as being the root of at least a third of current primary school teachers' stress.

Bathroom training (79%), tying shoes (70%), students crying (61%), and students not knowing school procedures (52%) were labeled by the respondents as being the most unique stressors in a primary school. Similar items such as playing nurturing roles (49%), students not being able to do anything by themselves (46%), students having severe behavioral problems (46%), and students being at school for the first time (36%) are also distinctive stressors for teachers at the primary school level.

Coping with Stress

Respondents identified ten actions that they use to initially cope with stress. The two most widely used actions were venting to a colleague (79%) and venting to family members and friends (67%). Other actions taken by respondents include eating junk food (42%), turning the lights off in the room (21%), putting school work aside (18%), exercising (18%), napping (18%), going to a quiet place (15%), crying (12%), and going to administration (6%).

Respondents also identified several actions they take to try to prevent stress from becoming a problem. The five most used strategies included seeking support from friends (73%), getting adequate sleep (67%), seeking support from family (64%), seeking advice from co-workers (64%), and praying (55%). Others strategies used by the respondents include avoiding stressful people and situations (42%), work on time management (30%), take rest breaks (24%), participating in social groups or religious organizations (21%), exercising daily (18%), pursuing a hobby or activity of interest (15%), avoiding drinks containing caffeine (12%), and excessive alcohol consumption (6%).

Life Satisfaction

With stress being such a major factor in a teacher's life, it is important to see if current teachers are satisfied with their career path they chose. When respondents were asked about their

life satisfaction, 88% feel their life is very rewarding, 91% find their life to be enjoyable, 91% find their life to be hopeful, 39% feel their life is lonely, and 27% find their life to be boring.

Summary

During this study, several primary themes emerged from the data that relate to the participants' experience with stress at school. These themes included unrealistic expectations, documentation, and administration for causes of stress and negative, positive, and neutral coping strategies for coping with stress. This chapter explored themes and various subthemes to gain a more in-depth view of the participants' experiences of stress, and how stress affects teachers in a primary school setting.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Introduction

As the presence of stress among teachers continues to rise, there is a growing need to develop and implement effective educational programs that target primary school teachers, the stressors they encounter, and the coping mechanisms that they require. To do this, educators must have an understanding of the target population. Gaining insight into the perceptions and experiences of current primary school teachers is an important part of planning and developing these types of programs. The purpose of this mixed method study was to recognize and investigate the stressors that affect primary school teachers. This study also identified the coping behaviors that these primary school teachers use in response to these stressors.

To accomplish this, the researcher held two focus group interviews, which included 12 primary school teachers. The participants were residents of rural North Carolina who currently work at Richlands Primary School. Each focus group interview was approximately 45 minutes long and included ten open-ended questions. All participants had at least one year of teaching experience and were between the ages of 24 and 55.

The researcher also administered the “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” to 33 participants as a pilot assessment. The participants were also residents of rural North Carolina who currently work at Richlands Primary School. The “Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey” was made up of 77 open-ended, multiple choice, check-all-that-apply, and Likert Scale items. All participants who completed the survey had at least one year of teaching experience and were between the ages of 24 and 56.

The researcher used a mixed method design as the theoretical framework for this study. The primary philosophy behind this approach was that one method alone would not provide a

complete answer to the research questions. This mixed method study was qualitatively driven, had a qualitative foundation, and had a quantitative sequential element (Richards & Morse, 2002). The qualitative foundation allowed this study to focus on understanding the meaning of teacher stress through the perspectives of current primary school teachers, while the quantitative element was used to measure responses and coping strategies that teachers employ when stress is present in the workplace.

The use of a mixed method design in this research study provided insight into the many facets of participants' occurrences of stress, including causes, reactions, and coping strategies, while also providing a statistical explanation of the many reactions and coping strategies primary school teachers exhibit when presented with stress. This information may permit health educators to develop programs that will address these occurrences of stress. This information may also increase their knowledge regarding reactions and coping strategies as they relate to the experience of stress for primary school teachers.

Researchers, educators, health behaviorists, and more importantly current primary school teachers who are interested in discovering what factors may improve stressful situations at school can use the findings of this study to inform their efforts. The study provided suggestions for future research regarding stress among primary school teachers.

Discussion of Research Findings

During the course of the two focus group interviews, the participants shared their experiences with stress. This section of the chapter will revisit the main themes of the data: unrealistic expectations, documentation, administration, negative coping strategies, positive coping strategies, and neutral coping strategies. In this section the researcher will discuss the findings in the context of existing literature and the lens of a mixed method design.

Unrealistic Expectations

The participants in this study shared that one of the biggest stressors facing primary school teachers are unrealistic expectations. Unrealistic expectations can come from the government, school administration, and parents. This can lead teachers into feeling pressure, underappreciated, and obligated to fulfill multiple roles for their students. A study conducted by MacBeath (2008) discovered that demands placed on teachers have “increased beyond the capacity to meet them.” This study also found that teachers’ working weeks have increased due to changing school initiatives, and that 12 hour workdays and weekend related school work are not uncommon practices for teachers anymore.

In this study, participants did not talk about unrealistic expectations in terms of educational reform. Participants did talk about how unrealistic expectations have changed the way they teach and how these unrealistic expectations get in the way of teaching. Although, the participants in this study did not mention educational reforms as being a major stressor, Kyriacou and Chien (2004) found that is the case in Taiwan. That study found that a dominant source of stress for Taiwanese primary school teachers was heavy workloads and educational reforms (p. 89). Participants in this study were more concerned that the government made educational reforms without first thinking how it will affect the teachers, rather than if educational reform was passed or not.

The participants in this study talked openly that teachers are always under a lot of pressure. They cited the federal “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) law as the root of this pressure. The NCLB law mandates that all public schools bring all students up to grade level by 2014. According to the US Department of Education, teachers and administrators can potentially lose their jobs if these standards are not met (www.ed.gov). With the heightened pressure on

teachers due to the NCLB law, participants in this study communicated feeling overwhelmed and frustrated at having to teach to these standards.

The participants in this study also recognized that they more often than not felt underappreciated by the general public. This sentiment was confirmed in a study conducted by Mackenzie (2007) on teacher morale. That study found that a major factor to the low societal status of teachers is due to a lack of “understanding just what is involved in teaching” (p. 91). In order for the general public to truly see what is involved in teaching, participants in this study suggested that everybody spend a day in a teacher’s shoes. Participants also communicated that teaching is far more demanding a job than anyone can describe or prepare them for and that content knowledge alone will not lead to an enjoyable experience in the classroom.

In this study, participants stated that teachers are expected to fulfill multiple roles for their students. This view is supported in a study by Harden and Crosby (2000) on teacher roles. That study found that teaching is a demanding and complex profession, where teachers must fulfill six roles. The six roles that were identified included information provider, role model, facilitator, assessor, planner, and resource developer (p. 336). Participants in this study did not use these role terms specifically, however they did discuss how they are asked to teach to the curriculum while also fulfilling roles such as nurse and mother.

When asked about unrealistic expectations within the teaching profession, many interpreted the question as asking about the extra duties teachers are expected to perform other than teach the students. Unrealistic expectations were primarily viewed negatively by participants and were a major source of stress for all. Not one single participant communicated anything good about unrealistic expectations and all agreed that it made the teaching profession more difficult and that it took some of their individual style out of their teaching methods. This

reaction was also expressed in the same study by Mackenzie (2007) on teacher morale. That study found that teacher morale is on a steady decline due to poor status in the community, poor salaries (relative to other professions), excessive workloads, poor working conditions, and increasing government accountability measures (p. 90). The study reiterates the participants' view that the teaching profession is intellectually, emotionally, and physically demanding, as well as rigorous and unrelenting.

Documentation

The participants in this study discussed that having to document everything is a major stressor for primary school teachers. While talking about documentation, the most often referred to items were lesson plans, attendance rosters, assessment data, individualized education plans (IEP), and personalized education plans (PEP). A study conducted by Lambert et al. (2007) verified the participants' view about documentation. That study revealed that teachers are overly concerned with excessive paperwork requirements as well as an increased workload and time constraints (p. 111).

In this study, participants expressed that the paperwork teachers are required to do becomes redundant. Participants communicated that having to write the exact same information on multiple documents was very stressful and time consuming. Documentation redundancy within the teaching profession is a major issue and even came to light in a study of teachers working in London. Barmby (2006) found that the main reasons teachers consider leaving the profession were due to workload issues such as grading and paperwork (p. 11). In this study, one participant did admit they had thought about doing something else because they were tired of all the paperwork. However, participants explained that even though documentation was redundant and excessive, it was not a motivating factor in wanting to leave the teaching profession.

The participants in this study talked about individualizing instruction for all of their students can become very stressful. Valli and Buese (2007) found that differentiated instruction required teachers to engage in even more daily tasks such as assessment, curriculum implementation, student placement, individual and team planning, and data management and analysis (p. 533). The results of that study supported the participants' feelings that in today's education, you have to provide individualized instruction for every student.

Participants were also quick to state that this becomes even more stressful with larger class sizes. Participants were concerned that they did not have enough time to differentiate instruction with the number of students in their classroom increasing. A study on large class size conducted by Cuseo (2007) confirmed the participants' concerns. That study found that large class size leads to teachers to focus more on lecturing than discussion, reduces students' level of active involvement, reduces the frequency of teacher interaction and feedback, reduces students' depth of thinking, limits the extent of class assignments, and reduces student achievement and academic performance (p. 2-8). Participants in this study did not go into much detail about individualized instruction, however they did discuss that they have a limited time each day to meet each student's needs, and that time will only decrease as classes get larger.

In this study, participants also stated that having to prove everything was an added and unwanted stressor for teachers. In the same study on the changing roles of teachers, Valli and Buese (2007) discovered that teachers have to give increased attention to more classroom details as well as more time spent outside the classroom learning, planning, and justifying their actions to others (p. 523). As expressed by the participants in this study, teachers today have to show more than just their word.

Berryhill et al. (2009) found that eighty percent of teachers reported having either limited time to complete tasks related to accountability policies, or having so many accountability related tasks that it was difficult to complete them (p. 6-7). The results of that study went along with the current study's participants' feeling that nobody takes the teachers' word anymore, and that to show accountability, a teacher must document everything.

Administration

The participants in this study shared that the way in which school administration, namely the principal, handles the day-to-day operations can be an added stressor for teachers. One of the major issues participants had about administration is that new procedures are constantly being implemented. Valli and Buese (2007) discovered that if changes cause multiple and simultaneous demands on teachers, especially in a short period of time, the consequences can be quite different from the desired outcomes (p. 552). That study also found that too many policy demands coming too fast often resulted in teacher discouragement (p. 520). The findings in that study correlate with the participants' feelings that they can handle change over a period of time, but when multiple changes happen all at once, it can be a major source of stress for teachers.

Kyriacou (2001) found that being exposed to a large amount of change and having difficult or challenging relationships with colleagues and administration can increase the amount of stress for teachers (p. 31). In this study, participants openly discussed that they tend to avoid administration due to a lack of consistency in decision-making. This reflects the findings of that study to the point that the participants' relationship is so challenging with administration, that they would rather handle issues on their own. The participants' main source of stress in this situation is that policies are not followed the same for everybody so teachers do not know what to expect.

The participants in this study also expressed that not being part of the decision making process was stressful. Participants felt that decisions were made without first asking how it would affect both the teacher and their students. This same feeling of a lack of decision making power was seen in a study on teacher stress by Howard and Johnson (2004). That study found that teachers feel unwanted stress when the administration structure is very hierarchal and concentrated in the hands of few. The study also revealed that teachers also experience stress when the principal has an autocratic leadership style (p. 408). Although the participants in this study feel it is the principal's job to make leadership decisions, they feel not being included in the decision making process can be very stressful.

Negative Coping Strategies

The teachers in this study recognized that at times they do employ negative coping strategies in order to deal with a stressful situation. The teachers also mentioned that these behaviors are unhealthy, but at times it is the only way they can get through the situation. In a study on coping strategies associated with job stress in teachers, Griffith, Steptoe, and Cropley (1999) discovered that teachers tend to disengage when presented with stress (p.521). Disengagement refers to teachers giving up on their goals in which the stressor is interfering with. In this study, disengagement was the most widely used negative coping strategy by the participants. Participants discussed actions such as ignoring the stressor, putting schoolwork to the side, watching a lot of television, and focusing on things unrelated to school work. Although this type of behavior can lead to lowered self-esteem and feelings of helplessness (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999), participants felt that in certain situations, the only way to cope was to get their minds away from school.

Another common negative coping strategy utilized by the participants in this study was participating in unhealthy behaviors. Participants mentioned eating junk food, over eating, having random emotional breakdowns, and getting cranky with their students over little things as some of the unhealthy behaviors they engage in. Although the participants recognize that these behaviors may end up causing more stress in the long term, they mentioned these behaviors make them feel better, which distracts them from the stressor.

Positive Coping Strategies

In this study, participants recognized that the majority of their coping strategies used to deal with stress were positive. The participants mentioned the importance of using positive coping strategies so that the stressor would not surface again in the near future. Gulwadi (2006) found that the most common positive coping strategies used by teachers included exercise, social resources, reading, hobbies, movement, and meditation (p.505). That same study also discovered that strategies can be categorized as inward or outward. Inward strategies involve seeking stillness and focus, while outward strategies involve movement (p.512). Participants in this study mainly focused on outward strategies when coping with stress. Outward strategies used by the participants included exercise, gardening, participating in a hobby, listening to music, and taking lunch out away from school. Although the majority of strategies employed were outward, some participants mentioned using inward strategies as well. Inward strategies used by the participants included taking a nap, silence, and religion.

Participants in this study also discussed what Gulwadi (2006) refers to as restorative coping experiences. This refers to a teacher's ability to release stress in places away from the school environment (p.506). In this study, participants mentioned church, nature related outdoor

places, and their home as places they go to get away from school stress. Participants felt strongly that sometimes getting away from school is the most effective way to cope with stress.

Neutral Coping Strategies

In this study, participants utilized more neutral coping strategies than any other method. One major strategy used by the participants was the development of a social support system. This system included family, friends, and most importantly, fellow teachers. Griffith, Steptoe, and Cropley (1999) found that teachers who have more support within their personal lives tend to experience less stress in the workplace (p.523). More often than not, participants used their support system to vent. When discussing ways to cope with stress, venting to a colleague, friend, or family member was the predominant topic of discussion. Although social support is mostly used for receiving advice and understanding, participants said they used their support system just to say what was on their mind.

Quantitative Findings

Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) discovered that the impact of stress depends on social support, personality characteristics, and job satisfaction (p. 88-89). In this study, 47% of the participants responded that most of the time fellow faculty members are willing to listen to their problems. Of these respondents, 36% felt teaching was extremely stressful, 50% thought teaching was very stressful, and 14% described teaching as somewhat stressful. Secondly, in this study, 33% of the respondents rated the teaching profession as extremely stressful. Of these respondents, 90% were above the age of 32. Lastly, 33% of the respondents felt teaching was a rewarding profession as well as feeling happy with their life. Of these respondents, 40% felt teaching was extremely stressful, another 40% thought teaching was very stressful, and 20% said teaching was somewhat stressful. Unlike the results in the study conducted by Guglielmi and

Tatrow (1998), this study could not make any clear distinction between levels of stress and social support, personality characteristics, and job satisfaction.

Causes of Stress

Hepburn and Brown (2001) discovered that stress in teaching is driven by organizational factors such as time budgets, excessive paperwork, and unrealistic deadlines (p. 693). In this study, organizational issues were the major sources of stress for the participants. Participants in this study identified paperwork (70%) and documentation (49%) as two of the main sources of stress. Blasé (1986) also found that any circumstance that is depriving of time, and that interferes with instruction elicits a response of stress from teachers (p. 27). This is true in this study as participants identified administering assessments (61%), implementing new strategies (46%), class size (36%), policy changes (33%), parent conferences (30%), and dealing with parents (30%) as major sources of stress. From the results of the quantitative survey, it is easy to see that participants in this study felt strongly that organizational factors and issues that take up time and interfere with instruction are major sources of stress.

Hastings and Bham (2003) found that students are responsible for most of a teacher's stress (p.116). The study also showed that disrespect, lack of social ability, and lack of attentiveness are the main factors as to why student behavior causes so much stress in teachers. However, in this study, only 49% of the participants identified student behavior as a major source of stress. For this study, that was the fourth leading cause of stress behind paperwork, administering assessments, and documentation. Participants in this study felt more stressed over non-student issues rather than student related issues. Overall, only 10% of the survey respondents said that students cause them more stress than non-student related activities.

Griffith, Steptoe, and Cropley (1999) found that primary school teachers experience greater stress than other teachers because they are responsible for the same group of students all day long for an entire year (p.523). However, in this study, participants did not see this as a major source of stress. In fact, 45% of the survey respondents said this is not a stressor at all. Another 48% responded that having the same group of students all day long for an entire year is “a little” stressful, while the other 7% said that this issue was stressful “most of the time.” Though having the same group of students all day long for an entire year can be an added stressor for primary school teachers, it was not the case for participants in this study.

In his book “Crisis in Education,” Barry Farber (1991) found that teachers who do not get enough sleep on a nightly basis are more at risk to become stressed at work (p.70). Interestingly, in this study, of the 23% of the survey respondents who have trouble sleeping “most of the time,” 100% of them described teaching as either “extremely” or “very” stressful. From the results of the quantitative survey, it is easy to see that the amount of sleep and stress may be directly related for teachers.

Coping with Stress

The issue of how teachers cope with stress has been examined in studies by Blasé (1982), Sutton (1984), Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998), and Hepburn and Brown (2001). These studies found that teachers use confrontational strategies, develop changes in behavior, and exhibit emotional responses in order to cope with stress. Participants in this study identified using confrontational strategies such as seeking advice from colleagues (64%), working on their time management skills (30%), and sitting down with administration (6%). The changes in behavior that occurred most often in the participants included getting adequate sleep at night (67%), eating junk food (42%), and taking rest breaks at school (24%). Other behavior changes included

turning the lights off in the room (21%), putting school work off to the side (18%), exercising (18%), napping (18%), avoiding caffeinated drinks (12%), and drinking alcohol (6%). The most frequent emotional responses that occurred in participants included venting to colleagues (79%), praying (55%), and crying (12%). The results from the quantitative survey show that the literature is accurate to the fact that when presented with stress, most teachers will either confront the situation, change their behavior, or get emotional.

Limitations

This study had both strengths and weaknesses. The qualitative approach provided rich, detailed information about the target population. The data collected from the focus group interviews further defined stress and coping behaviors according to the participants, while also providing insight into the causes, reactions, and coping strategies participants associate with stress. The qualitative design used in this study included a purposeful sample of current primary school teachers. Therefore, the findings are not generalizable to all primary school teachers, but the findings may be transferrable to comparable people in similar positions.

The quantitative element provided statistics about the target population. The data collected from the survey research further measured stress and coping behaviors according to the participants, while also providing a numerical value to the causes, reactions, and coping strategies participants associate with stress. The quantitative element used in this study was administered to a purposeful sample of current primary school teachers. Therefore, the statistics are not reflective of all primary school teachers, but the data may be substituted to comparable people in similar positions.

One limitation of this study had to do with the demographics of the participants involved. In this study, 100% of the focus group participants were female and 94% of the survey

respondents were also female. Of the 12 focus group participants, 92% were Caucasian, while 94% of the survey respondents were also Caucasian. In his book on teacher stress and burnout, Farber (1991) discovered that a number of demographic variables have been linked to the occurrence of stress in teachers (p.48-49). The demographics with this study indicated that these participants are predominately Caucasian females, so they might not have represented the average causes, reactions, and coping strategies teachers associate with stress.

A second limitation of this study was the timing in which the focus group interviews were held as well as when the survey was administered. The focus group interviews were held at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The end of the school year is a stressful time for teachers as they wrap up required assessments and complete cumulative folders. The survey was administered near the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. The beginning of the school year is also a stressful time for teachers because they are getting acquainted with new students, implementing rules and procedures, and tracking progress made during the summer. The timing of this study could have formed a bias for the participants as stress was fresh on their minds.

The researcher's experience with stress and the fact that the researcher is a current teacher at the same school as the participants may have affected the participants and their responses. The researcher tried to avoid this bias by keeping reactions and comments neutral; however, the possibility for this bias still existed. Also, the researcher encouraged the participants to use their own language as they described their experiences. However, it is possible that the researcher used slang terminology, resulting in a change of the participants' vocabulary. Although the researcher bracketed his biases and assumptions, the findings of this study were within the context of the researcher's interpretation. Another researcher may have interpreted the data in a different manner.

Implications for Health Education and Promotion

Information found in this study can be useful to the field of health education and promotion. Participants in this study were members of a small demographic within public education that has been underrepresented in current literature. While many studies have evaluated worksite stress-reduction programs, few examine stress management specifically for teachers. These findings may provide direction in helping primary school teachers more effectively handle stress.

During the focus group interviews and through the “Primary School Teacher Stress Coping Survey” results, it was apparent that participants have identified the major sources of stress through their years as a teacher. It was also evident that participants did not know the best way to cope with the stress as many of them find the teaching profession to be very stressful. The participants recognize that unrealistic expectations, paperwork, and administration can be mostly associated with the root of their stress. With these issues not going away any time soon, researchers may consider programming targeted at stress management strategies appropriate for teachers. Stress management educational programs for primary school teachers should include stress awareness, physiological training, situational coping strategies, and cognitive coping strategies.

Stress awareness should build knowledge and awareness of stress. Awareness sessions should be conducted in a non-threatening environment and should provide teachers with current information on the nature, signs, causes, and symptoms of stress (Brown & Uehara, 1999). For example, a stress management program for teachers can focus on the definition of stress, causes of stress in school, frequency of stress, and the effects stress has on students and teachers (Farber, 1981).

After the primary awareness workshop, a more active and engaging piece should be offered to help participants determine, identify, and understand the beginnings of stress. During this time, participants can learn to recognize the stressor, become aware of the effects of these thoughts on their physiological and emotional responses, evaluate the consequences of stress producing events at work, and replace self-defeating thoughts that create stress (Brown & Uehara, 1999). After helping teachers identify primary stressors, school officials can make available training in counseling skills so that staff members are able to offer support to fellow teachers who are facing difficulties at work. School officials could also help teachers advocate for policy in support of reducing teachers' administrative expectations and responsibility levels such as teacher to student ratio. Addressing the already overworked teacher from a policy standpoint could be beneficial in terms of reducing the amount of stress on a day-to-day basis for all teachers.

Physiological training should provide training in muscle relaxation, focused meditation, breathing techniques, and aerobic activity. Muscle relaxation is a progressive body relaxation technique that puts the individual in a restful state and is controlled from within. Focused meditation is a mind-body technique that involves focusing on a single "mantra" (single word, phrase, or number), for about 15 to 20 minutes (Brown & Uehara, 1999). Breathing techniques involve learning how to breathe for relaxation purposes and includes exercises such as closing one's eyes, and counting backwards from ten to one. Aerobic activity describes any activity that raises a person's pulse such as jogging, swimming, or biking. When combined with other stress management techniques, physiological training has been found to be very effective (Cooley & Yovanoff, 1996).

Situational coping strategies allow individuals change the way they react to a specific stressor or alter their work environment. During this component, individuals will learn assertive techniques, tools to seek the help of others, and skills for changing a stressful situation (Brown & Uehara, 1999). Milstein and Golaszewski (1985) found an effective intervention for reducing stress. This included teachers and administrators clarifying specific stress related issues at school, cooperatively establishing specific goals, and developing and implementing strategies to alleviate or modify structures, processes, and behaviors (p. 394). When individuals learn to change the situation and their reactions to it, stress can be greatly minimized.

Cognitive coping strategies allow individuals to use their mind to control their emotions. These strategies are used in changing how an individual thinks about a stressful situation and are an important piece that leads to the prevention of stress. Training should focus on several mental techniques such as replacing self-defeating thoughts with more constructive ones, identifying barriers, improving time management and goal setting skills, using problem solving techniques, handling emotions, and dealing with life changes. Training should also include lessons in identifying irrational beliefs and distinguishing between things that can and cannot be changed (Brown & Uehara, 1999). Learning the skills for changing how an individual thinks about a situation can be very important in a stress management educational program.

Stress management educational programs for teachers should be conducted by specialized trainers and should include follow up, long term evaluation so that the impact can be maintained over an extended period of time (Brown & Uehara, 1999). If this is successfully done, participants can expect to see positive outcomes such as improved peer support, reduced levels of somatic complaints, enhanced feelings of personal accomplishment, decreased work pressure and role ambiguity, and improved job satisfaction.

Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings from this study, there is an opportunity to increase the existing literature on teacher stress and coping behaviors. While it seems that qualitative data is currently the main method used to study teacher stress and coping behaviors, researchers may consider using quantitative methods to investigate this topic in the future. By doing so, researchers can numerically measure teacher stress and coping behaviors to discover the most frequent causes of stress and coping behaviors used by teachers. Also, the literature is limited on stress within the teaching profession specifically. An opportunity exists to study this profession and to explore the major causes of stress and coping behaviors utilized by its primary employees. Finally, there is very little research at all on primary school teacher stress. The literature that does exist on teacher stress focuses on either elementary or secondary teachers. Primary school teachers need to be categorized into their own group due to the fact that they only cater to students in grades kindergarten through second. Research involving primary school teachers exclusively is necessary to learn more about this population group and their perceptions and experiences with stress.

The participants in this study felt strongly that non-teaching duties were more stressful than teaching duties. These duties included paperwork, administering assessments, and parent conferences. It may be beneficial for researchers to examine the amount of time teachers are actually performing these non-teaching duties throughout the school day in order to see why these duties are considered so stressful. Participants also agreed that documentation procedures were unreasonable. Participants explained that as a teacher, you have to re-write the same information about each student on multiple documents. Researchers may want to look into how much of a teachers' time is used documenting repeated information. It may be specifically

important to look into how much instruction time is lost because a teacher has to constantly record student information.

The participants in this study also reported that with students coming to school for the first time, as is the case at a primary school, teachers are often asked to perform multiple tasks that can become stressful. These tasks include tying shoes, repeating rules and procedures, lining students up, helping students use the restroom, and helping students during lunch. Researchers may find it valuable to explore the amount of time each school day that a teacher spends performing these tasks. Participants find these tasks stressful not because they are difficult, but for the fact that it takes time from instruction.

The most widely used coping strategy used by the participants in this study was venting to a colleague, family member, or friend. There is a need to explore this coping mechanism. The participants explained that they tend to “vent” to get things “off their chest” but many studies indicated that teachers vent in order to receive support and advice. It is important to understand the purpose of venting, the benefits it provides, and why teachers choose to employ this strategy after bouts of stress.

Most of the participants in this study were very religious, attended church regularly, and turned to their faith for guidance. Researchers may want to explore the relationship between religion and levels of stress. It may be beneficial to look into the effect stress has on teachers of strong faith compared to teachers who do not practice religion. Also, researchers may consider studying both the positive and negative effects that religion has on coping with stress.

This study was conducted at a single school in Richlands, North Carolina. Therefore, researchers may want to replicate this study on a larger scale. Researchers may want to consider studying primary school teachers’ perceptions of stress throughout an entire county, state, or

region. A larger target population would produce more generalizable results about primary school teacher stress and coping behaviors.

Summary

The teaching profession can be a stressful occupation. Most teachers would agree that daily interactions with students, parents, and co-workers and the constant demands of teaching often lead to overwhelming pressures and challenges, which ultimately elevates to stress. The participants recognize several causes of stress: unrealistic expectations, paperwork, and administration; however teachers feel that the rewards of student achievement outweigh the negative effects these causes have on them. Stress management techniques should be targeted at health education programming appropriate for primary school teachers. In order to provide suitable programs, it is important that researchers first understand the major causes of teacher stress. In addition, it is important to include follow up, long-term evaluation so that the impact can be maintained over an extended period of time.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building • 600 Moye Boulevard • Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 • Fax 252-744-2284 • www.ecu.edu/irb

TO: Jeff Sprenger, Master's Degree Candidate, College of Health Education & Promotion, ECU

FROM: UMCIRB *JS*

DATE: July 2, 2010

RE: Expedited Category Research Study

TITLE: "Stress and Coping Behaviors Among Primary School Teachers"

UMCIRB #10-0342

This research study has undergone review and approval using expedited review on 6.30.10. This research study is eligible for review under an expedited category number 6 & 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk** requiring a continuing review in **12 months**. Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The above referenced research study has been given approval for the period of **6.30.10 to 6.29.11**. The approval includes the following items:

- Internal Processing Form (dated 6.3.10)
- Survey
- Email from Principal, Richlands Primary School (6.4.10)
- Focus Group Questions
- Informed Consent Document
- Cover Letter
- Advertisement

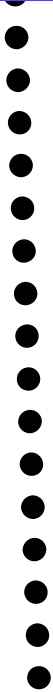
The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

The UMCIRB applies 45 CFR 46, Subparts A-D, to all research reviewed by the UMCIRB regardless of the funding source. 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56 are applied to all research studies under the Food and Drug Administration regulation. The UMCIRB follows applicable International Conference on Harmonisation Good Clinical Practice guidelines.

K-2 Teacher Focus Group



Needed!



Current K-2 teachers at RPS who have
been teaching more than 5 years.

When: June 14, 2010 at 3pm

Where: RPS Physical Education Office

Also Needed!

Current K-2 teachers at RPS who have
been teaching less than 5 years.

When: June 15, 2010 at 3pm

Where: RPS Physical Education Office



**Hosted by
Jeff Sprenger**

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Title: Stress and Coping Behaviors Among Primary School Teachers

Research Study Director:

Jeff Sprenger..... 704.277.0550 or
jls0305@ecu.edu

Research Advisor

Sloane Burke, Ph.D., CHES 252.737.1934 or
burkes@ecu.edu

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research study is to recognize and investigate the stressors that affect primary school teachers, and identify the coping behaviors that primary school teachers use in response to these stressors. In participating in this research, you will be asked to complete the “Stress and Coping Scale.” Some participants may also be asked to participate in one of two focus groups that will be conducted prior to the online survey. Participation in the focus group is completely voluntary and results will be kept confidential.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

The knowledge you contributed as a consequence of participating in this study may be of value in increasing understanding about the teacher stress phenomena. In addition, the information provided by you may provide effective programs that will assist teachers to handle stress more effectively through positive coping mechanisms.

SUBJECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained by the removal of your identity from all research documents. You will also be assigned a pseudonym (false name) or letter that will be linked with the data you provide and the findings associated with the project. What you have to say is very important to us. To make certain we don't miss any important points you make during the meeting, we would like to record the meeting with an audio tape recorder. It will help us to better tell the story of your concerns and issues. Only the study team members will hear the tapes; they will not be shared with anyone else. Audio recordings obtained during the two focus group sessions will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home office. The researcher will have sole access to the tapes, which will be kept for three years before being destroyed.

COSTS OF PARTICIPATION & COMPENSATION

By participating in this research study, you will incur the cost of only your personal time and effort. You will not receive any monetary compensation for your participation in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participating in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study after it has already started, you may stop at any time without losing benefits that you should normally receive. You may stop at any time you choose without penalty. You can stop answering questions any time

you want to. It is possible that you may become bored or not feel comfortable about some of the areas being discussed in the group meeting. You don't need to discuss any topic that you don't want to talk about. We will give you breaks during the meeting.

PERSONS TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

The investigator will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the investigator, Jeff Sprenger at phone numbers 910-324-3139 (M-F) or 704-277-0550 (nights and weekends). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Chair of the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board at phone number 252-744-2914 (days).

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

This study is not funded by any agency or institution. Neither the research site, nor Jeff Sprenger will receive any financial benefit based on the results of this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Title of research study: Stress and Coping Behaviors Among Primary School Teachers

If you are willing to be a part of this group meeting as a participant in this study, please state that you agree to participate in this study. By agreeing, you are also saying that you are at least 18 years old.

If you would like a copy of the summary of this group meeting mailed to you, please put your name and address on a separate form that a study team member will provide for you.

The above consent form was read and discussed with the participant in my presence. In my opinion, the person agreeing to the contents of said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge of its contents.

Participant's Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date	Time
-------------------------------------	------------------	-------------	-------------

PERSON ADMINISTERING CONSENT: I have conducted the consent process and orally reviewed the contents of the consent document. I believe the participant understands the research.

Person Obtaining consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date
---	------------------	-------------

Principal Investigator's (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Define what stress means to you.
2. What events cause you the most stress at school?
3. What are your typical first reactions to school based stressors?
4. How do you cope (both at home and at work) with school-based stress?
Probe: What behaviors do you engage or strategies do you implement (at home or at work) when stressed?
5. Do you feel teaching as a profession is stressful?
Probe: How so?
6. How would you describe "teacher stress" vs. general population stress?
7. What strategies have you learned over your years of teaching that better help you handle stress?
8. What stressors are unique to the primary (K-2) school setting?
9. What are the biggest contributors within a school structure that either add or lessen the amount of stress?
10. Do you perceive any negative effects from the stress you experience?
11. Is there anything further you would like to add or discuss?

APPENDIX E: SURVEY ITEMS

Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey (PSTSCS) Beta Version 2.0

Thank you for participating in our survey regarding how primary school teachers cope with stress and depression problems. Your answers to these items will help provide important information for developing programs to support positive coping behaviors and skills among the primary school teacher population, with the goal of reducing their health risks, improving their productivity inside and outside of the classroom, and enhancing their quality of life. Your responses will be kept completely confidential, and will be used for the purposes of this research project only. All data from this project will be in summary form only, with no personal names or other identifiers.

Instructions: *Please carefully answer each of the following questions by marking the appropriate box next to your choice or filling in your answer in the space provided.*

Demographic Information

1. Age: ____
2. Gender: Male (2) Female (1)
3. Race/Ethnicity: (Please check all that apply)
 - a. ____Hispanic/Latino (1)
 - b. ____White, Caucasian (2)
 - c. ____Black, African American (3)
 - d. ____American Indian or Alaska Native (4)
 - e. ____Asian/Pacific Islander (5)
 - f. ____Other: (6) _____
4. Type of degree held: Bachelor's (1) Master's (2)
5. Number of years experience in K-2 environment: _____
6. Total number of years teaching experience: _____
7. Are you lateral entry? Yes (1) No (2)

8. What grade do you currently teach? _____
9. How many students are in your class? _____
10. Do you have a Teacher Assistant? Yes, Full Time (1) Yes, Part Time (2) No (3)
11. Do you teach Exceptional Children? Yes (1) No (2)
12. Do you teach ESL students? Yes (1) No (2)

Stress/Anxiety

1. Do you think teaching as a profession is stressful?
 - Yes, extremely (1)
 - Yes, very (2)
 - Yes, somewhat (3)
 - No (4)

2. What do you most associate with stress at work?
 - Pressure (1)
 - Lack of control (2)
 - Not being able to get things done (3)
 - A decrease in physical and mental strength (4)
 - Having too much to do and not enough time to complete it (5)
 - Constant decision making (6)

3. How do you initially cope from your work stressors? (Check all that apply)
 - Vent to colleague (1)
 - Vent to family member or friend (2)
 - Eat junk food (3)
 - Go to administration (4)
 - Put school work aside (5)
 - Go to a quiet place (6)
 - Cry (7)
 - Exercise (8)
 - Turn lights off in room (9)
 - Take a nap (10)
 - Other (11)

4. What stressors do you feel are unique to the primary school setting? (Check all that apply)
 - Students having never been to school before (1)

- Severe behavioral problems (2)
- Nurturing roles (3)
- Bathroom training (4)
- Students not being able to do anything on their own (5)
- Shoe tying (6)
- Students not knowing school procedures (7)
- Students crying (8)
- Other (9)

5. Over the past six months, how would you describe your level of stress or anxiety related to your personal life?

- Very high (1)
- High (2)
- Moderate (3)
- Low (4)
- Very low (5)

6. Over the past six months, how would you describe your level of stress or anxiety related to your work life?

- Very high (1)
- High (2)
- Moderate (3)
- Low (4)
- Very low (5)

7. Over the past six months, how often have you had trouble coping with the stress or anxiety?

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- Frequently (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- All of the time (5)

8. Over the past six months, how often have you had trouble coping with the stress or anxiety related to your work life?

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- Frequently (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- All of the time (5)

9. What actions do you take to cope with or prevent your stress or anxiety? (Check all that apply)

I try to get adequate sleep (1)
I avoid consuming drinks or other products containing caffeine or other stimulants (2)
I exercise regularly (3)
I seek support from friends (4)
I seek support from family members (5)
I seek support from co-workers (6)
I participate in a support group (7)
I pursue a hobby or other personal interest activity (8)
I participate in a social group or religious organization (9)
I practice relaxation techniques (10)
I meditate or pray (11)
I take naps or rest breaks (12)
I work on time management (13)
I avoid situations or people that cause me stress/anxiety (14)
I engage in sexual activity to help me relax (15)
I drink alcohol to relax (16)
I smoke or use other tobacco products to relax (17)
I take recreational drugs to relax (18)
I eat lots of “comfort foods” (19)
I get on the internet for excessive periods of time (20)
I take some other action (21)
I take no action (22)

10. What events cause you the most stress at work? (Check all that apply)

Paperwork (1)
Unexpected administrative decisions (2)
Parents (3)
Class size (4)
Planning (5)
Conferences/meetings (6)
Administration not being consistent with policies (7)
Documentation (8)
Student behavior (9)
Lack of organization (10)
Assessments (11)
Unrealistic expectations (12)
Changes in policies or procedures (13)
Not having enough time to implement new teaching strategies (14)

11. What negative effects caused by stress do you experience? (Check all that apply)

Physical problems (1)

- Headaches (2)
- Distancing oneself from co-workers (3)
- Distancing oneself from friends or family (4)
- Ignoring the stressor (5)
- Easily irritated by students (6)
- Physiological problems (7)
- Financial problems (8)
- Bringing school problems home (9)

12. Have you ever felt stressed because your work is too hard?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

13. Have you ever felt stressed because of the variety of tasks at school?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

14. Have you ever felt stressed because you had to work long hours?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

15. Have you ever felt stressed because of how tired you feel during work?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

16. Have you ever felt stressed because of how tired you feel while at home?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)

- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

Mental Stress

1. Have you ever felt stressed because of having too much to accomplish at work?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

2. Have you ever felt stressed because of unfair treatment at work?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

3. Have you ever felt stressed because of pressure from administration?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

4. Have you ever felt stressed because of a lack of consistency from administration?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

5. Have you ever felt stressed because of your salary?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

6. Have you ever felt stressed because of economic problems in this country?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

7. Have you ever felt stressed because of juggling work and family responsibilities?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

8. Have you ever felt stressed because of house work after school?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

9. Have you ever felt stressed because of childcare duties?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

10. Have you ever felt stressed because of problems with your children?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

11. Have you ever felt stressed because of problems with your spouse?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

12. Have you ever felt stressed because of a lack of help with household chores?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

13. Have you ever felt stressed because of the time spent traveling to and from work?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

14. Have you ever felt stressed because your job requires you to do a lot of paperwork?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

15. Have you ever felt stressed because of student assessments?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

16. Have you ever felt stressed because of the planning required to do your job?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

17. Have you ever felt stressed because you have the same students all day for an entire year?

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

18. Have you ever felt more stressed with non-student than with student responsibilities?

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

19. Do students with behavioral issues cause you more stress than students without such issues?

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

Life Satisfaction

1. I currently find my life very rewarding

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

2. I currently find my life quite lonely

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

3. I currently find my life very enjoyable

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

4. I currently find my life quite boring

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

5. I life is currently very hopeful

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

Task Stress

1. Trying to complete reports and paperwork on time causes me a lot of stress

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

2. I find that dealing with student discipline problems puts a lot of stress on me

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

3. Complying with state, federal, and school rules and policies is very stressful

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

4. I experience a lot of stress trying to resolve conflicts between parents and the school

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

5. Trying to provide a good education in an atmosphere of decreasing financial support is stressful

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

6. There is a lot of stress just keeping up with changing professional standards

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

7. Trying to keep my work from being too routine and boring puts a lot of stress on me

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

8. Having to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours is stressful to me

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

9. I find that trying to be attentive to the problems and needs of fellow faculty is very stressful

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

Supervisory Support

1. When I really need to talk to my administrative head is willing to listen

Not at all (1)

Yes, a little (2)

Yes, sometimes (3)

Yes, a lot of the time (4)

Yes, most of the time (5)

2. My administrative head pays attention to what I am saying

Not at all (1)

- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

3. My administrative head stands up to outsiders for the people (s)he supervises

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

4. When I have conflicts with parents or students my administrative head gives me the kind of support I need

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

Peer Support

1. When I really need to talk to someone, my fellow faculty members are willing to listen

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

2. My fellow faculty members pay attention to what I am saying

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

3. My fellow faculty members stand up for each other to outsiders

- Not at all (1)
- Yes, a little (2)
- Yes, sometimes (3)
- Yes, a lot of the time (4)
- Yes, most of the time (5)

Illness Symptoms

1. I have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep

Not at all (1)
Yes, a little (2)
Yes, sometimes (3)
Yes, a lot of the time (4)
Yes, most of the time (5)

2. I worry a great deal about work

Not at all (1)
Yes, a little (2)
Yes, sometimes (3)
Yes, a lot of the time (4)
Yes, most of the time (5)

3. I am troubled by headaches at work

Not at all (1)
Yes, a little (2)
Yes, sometimes (3)
Yes, a lot of the time (4)
Yes, most of the time (5)

4. I experience stomach aches

Not at all (1)
Yes, a little (2)
Yes, sometimes (3)
Yes, a lot of the time (4)
Yes, most of the time (5)

Coping with Stress

1. How would you describe your level of stress in your personal life?

Very low (1)
Low (2)
Moderate (3)
High (4)
Very high (5)

2. How often have you had trouble coping with stress in your personal life?

Never (1)

Seldom (2)

Frequently (3)

Most of the time (4)

All of the time (5)

3. How would you describe your level of stress in your work life?

Very low (1)

Low (2)

Moderate (3)

High (4)

Very high (5)

4. How often have you had trouble coping with stress in your work life?

Never (1)

Seldom (2)

Frequently (3)

Most of the time (4)

All of the time (5)

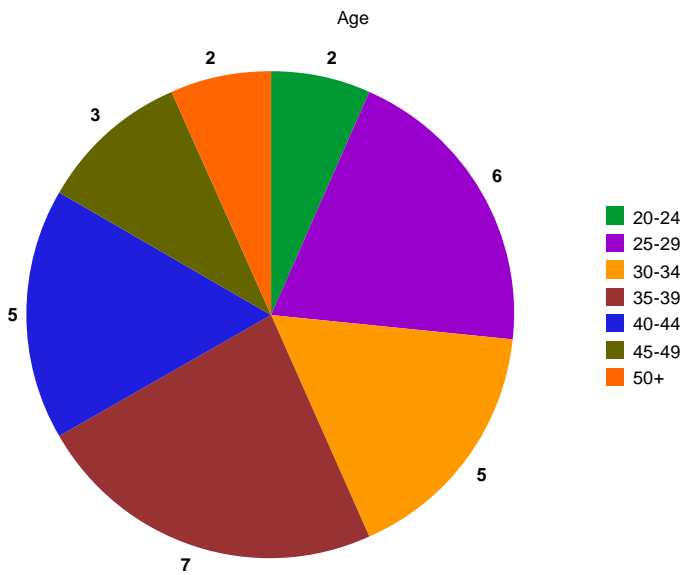
APPENDIX F: SURVEY RESULTS



Primary School Teacher Stress and Coping Survey (PSTSCS)



1. I have read the above consent to participate and agree to participate in this study			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #4f81bd; border: 1px solid #000;"></div>	100.0%	32
No		0.0%	0
answered question			32
skipped question			0



2. Age			
			Response Count
			30
answered question			30
skipped question			2

Figure 1: Participants' age



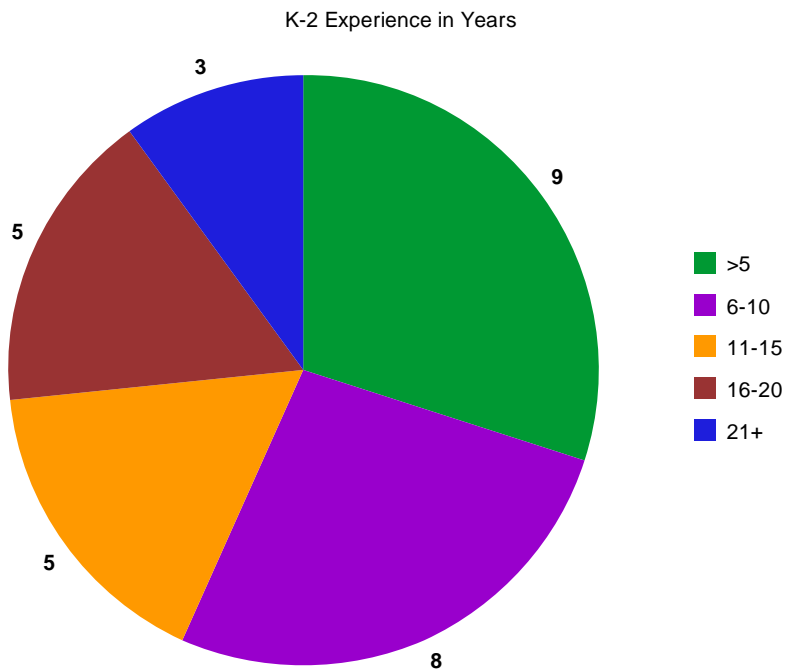
3. Gender			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Female		86.7%	26
Male		13.3%	4
answered question			30
skipped question			2

4. Race/Ethnicity			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Hispanic/Latino		0.0%	0
White/Caucasian		96.7%	29
Black/African American		0.0%	0
American Indian/Alaska Native		0.0%	0
Asian/Pacific Islander		3.3%	1
Other		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

5. Type of Degree Held			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Bachelors		66.7%	20
Masters		33.3%	10
answered question			30
skipped question			2

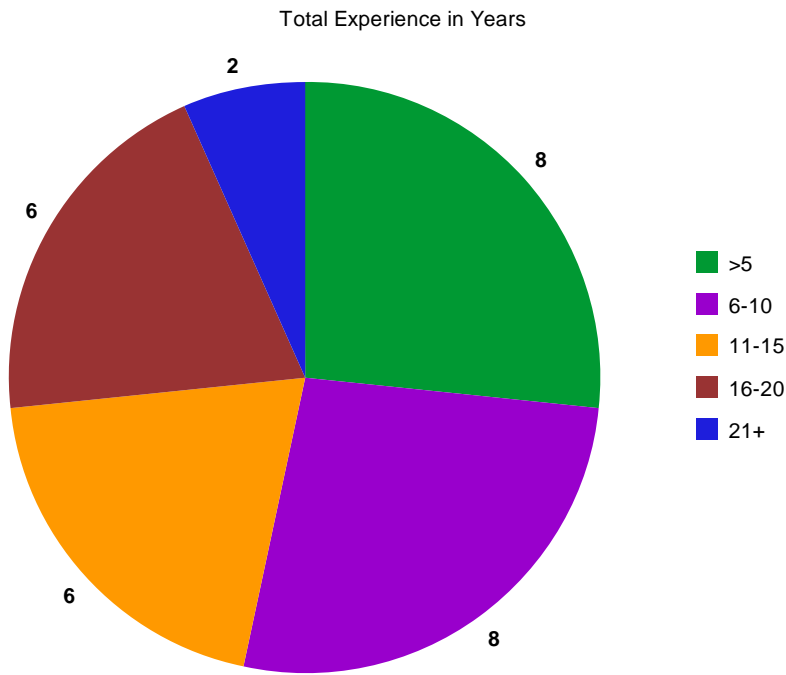
6. Number of years experience in K-2 environment	
	Response Count
	30
answered question	30
skipped question	2

Figure 2: Years teaching experience (K-2)



7. Total number of years teaching experience	
	Response Count
	30
	answered question 30
	skipped question 2

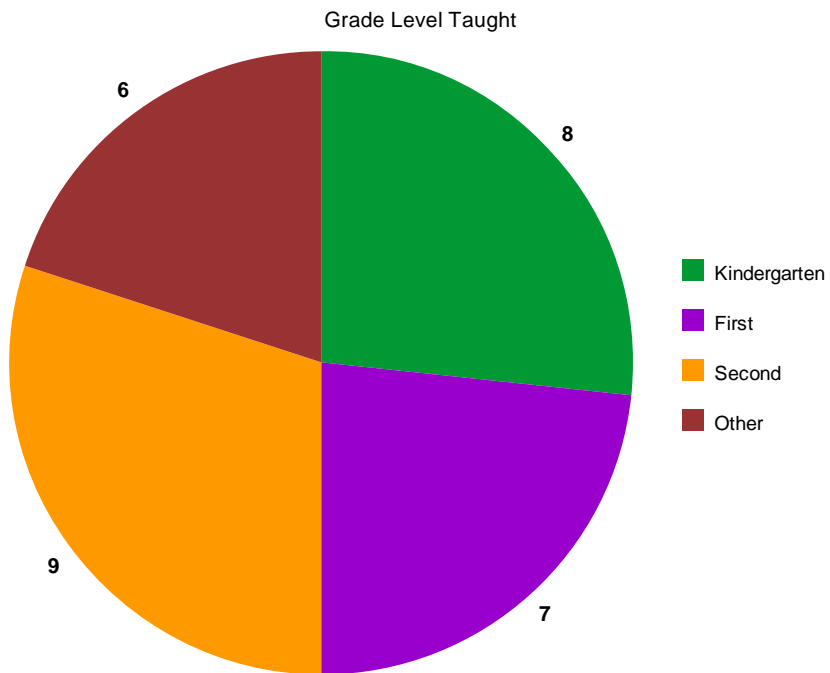
Figure 3: Total years teaching experience



8. Are you Lateral Entry?		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	10.0%	3
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	90.0%	27
		answered question	30
		skipped question	2

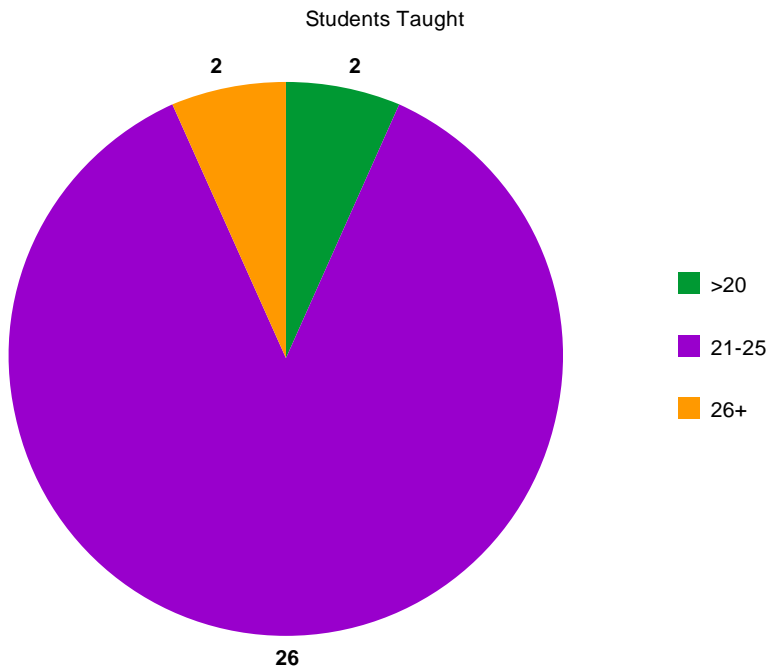
9. What grade do you currently teach?	
	Response Count
	30
	answered question 30
	skipped question 2

Figure 4: Grade level taught





10. How many students are in your class?	
	Response Count
	30
	answered question 30
	skipped question 2



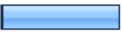
Figure 5: Number of students in class



11. Do you have a Teacher Assistant?			Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, Full Time			10.0%	3
Yes, Part Time			76.7%	23
No			13.3%	4
answered question				30
skipped question				2

12. Do you teach Exceptional Children?			Response Percent	Response Count
Yes			56.7%	17
No			43.3%	13
answered question				30
skipped question				2












13. Do you teach ESL students?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		56.7%	17
No		43.3%	13
		answered question	30
		skipped question	2








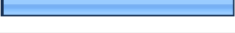

14. Do you think teaching as a profession is stressful?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, Extremely stressful		33.3%	10
Yes, Very stressful		46.7%	14
Yes, Somewhat stressful		20.0%	6
No, Not at all stressful		0.0%	0
		answered question	30
		skipped question	2






15. What do you most associate with stress at work?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Pressure		0.0%	0
Lack of control	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.3%	1
Not being able to get things done	<input type="checkbox"/>	10.0%	3
A decrease in physical and mental strength		0.0%	0
Having too much to do and not enough time to complete it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	83.3%	25
Constant decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.3%	1
		answered question	30
		skipped question	2





16. How do you initially cope from your work stressors? (Check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Vent to colleague		86.7%	26
Vent to family member of friend		73.3%	22
Eat "junk food"		46.7%	14
Go to administration		6.7%	2
Put school work aside		20.0%	6
Go to a quiet place		16.7%	5
Cry		13.3%	4
Exercise		20.0%	6
Turn lights off in room		23.3%	7
Take a nap		20.0%	6
Other		13.3%	4
		answered question	30
		skipped question	2



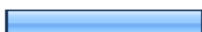

17. What stressors do you feel are unique to the primary (K-2) school setting? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Students having never been to school before		66.7%	20
Severe behavioral problems		56.7%	17
Nuturing roles (nurse, babysitter)		53.3%	16
Bathroom training		20.0%	6
Students not being able to do anything on their own		56.7%	17
Shoe tying		30.0%	9
Students not knowing school procedures		50.0%	15
Students crying		40.0%	12
Other		13.3%	4
answered question			30
skipped question			2

18. Over the past six months, how would you describe your level of stress or anxiety related to your personal life?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Very high		26.7%	8
High		16.7%	5
Moderate		16.7%	5
Low		33.3%	10
Very low		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2






19. Over the past six months, how would you describe your level of stress or anxiety related to your work life?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Very high		36.7%	11
High		26.7%	8
Moderate		33.3%	10
Low		3.3%	1
Very low		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2









20. Over the past six months, how often have you had trouble coping with the stress or anxiety?












		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		6.7%	2
Seldom		50.0%	15
Frequently		33.3%	10
Most of the time		10.0%	3
All of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2















21. Over the past six months, how often have you had trouble coping with the stress or anxiety related to your work life?









		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		3.4%	1
Seldom		41.4%	12
Frequently		34.5%	10
Most of the time		13.8%	4
All of the time		6.9%	2
answered question			29
skipped question			3






22. What actions do you take to cope with or prevent your stress or anxiety? (Check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
I try to get adequate sleep		73.3%	22
I avoid consuming drinks or other products containing caffeine or other stimulants		13.3%	4
I exercise regularly		20.0%	6
I seek support from friends		80.0%	24
I seek support from family members		70.0%	21
I seek support from co-workers		70.0%	21
I participate in a support group		0.0%	0
I pursue a hobby or other personal interest activity		16.7%	5
i participate in a social group or religious organization		23.3%	7

I practice relaxation techniques		3.3%	1
i meditate or pray		60.0%	18
I take naps or rest breaks		26.7%	8
I work on my time management		33.3%	10
I avoid situations or people that cause me stress/anxiety		46.7%	14
I engage in sexual activity to help me relax		3.3%	1
I drink alcohol to relax		6.7%	2
I smoke or use other tobacco products to relax		0.0%	0
I take recreational drugs to relax		0.0%	0
I eat lots of "comfort foods"		26.7%	8
I get on the internet for excessive periods of time		10.0%	3
I take some other action		6.7%	2
I take no action		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

23. What events cause you the most stress at work? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Paperwork		76.7%	23
Unexpected administrative decisions		26.7%	8
Parents		33.3%	10
Class size		40.0%	12
Planning		23.3%	7
Conferences/Meetings		33.3%	10
Administration not being consistent with policies		23.3%	7
Documentation		53.3%	16
Student behavior		53.3%	16
Lack of organization		13.3%	4
Assessments		66.7%	20
Unrealistic Expectations		30.0%	9
Changes in policies or procedures		36.7%	11
Not having enough time to implement new teaching strategies		50.0%	15
answered question			30
skipped question			2

24. What negative effects caused by stress do you experience? (Check all that apply)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Physical problems		33.3%	10
Headaches		80.0%	24
Distancing oneself from co-workers		23.3%	7
Distancing oneself from friends or family		20.0%	6
Ignoring the stressor		6.7%	2
Easily irritated by students		40.0%	12
Physiological problems		0.0%	0
financial problems (having to buy classroom resources)		6.7%	2
Bringing school problems home		50.0%	15
answered question			30
skipped question			2

25. Have you ever felt stressed because your work is too hard?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all		26.7%	8
Yes, a little		36.7%	11
Yes, sometimes		30.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		3.3%	1
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

26. Have you ever felt stressed because of the variety of tasks at school?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		0.0%	0
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		36.7%	11
Yes, a lot of the time		36.7%	11
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2

27. Have you ever felt stressed because you had to work long hours?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		6.7%	2
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		40.0%	12
Yes, a lot of the time		30.0%	9
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

28. Have you ever felt stressed because of how tired you feel during work?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.6%	1
Yes, a little		28.6%	8
Yes, sometimes		46.4%	13
Yes, a lot of the time		21.4%	6
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			28
skipped question			4

29. Have you ever felt stressed because of how tired you feel while at home?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		10.3%	3
Yes, a little		20.7%	6
Yes, sometimes		27.6%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		34.5%	10
Yes, most of the time		6.9%	2
answered question			29
skipped question			3

30. Have you ever felt stressed because of having too much to accomplish at work?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		6.7%	2
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		43.3%	13
Yes, most of the time		20.0%	6
answered question			30
skipped question			2

31. Have you ever felt stressed because of unfair treatment at work?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		44.8%	13
Yes, a little		24.1%	7
Yes, sometimes		20.7%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		6.9%	2
Yes, most of the time		3.4%	1
answered question			29
skipped question			3






32. Have you ever felt stressed because of pressure from administration?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		23.3%	7
Yes, a little		46.7%	14
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		0.0%	0
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

33. Have you ever felt stressed because of a lack of consistency from administration?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		17.2%	5
Yes, a little		37.9%	11
Yes, sometimes		31.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		13.8%	4
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			29
skipped question			3






34. Have you ever felt stressed because of your salary?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		16.7%	5
Yes, a little		16.7%	5
Yes, sometimes		36.7%	11
Yes, a lot of the time		10.0%	3
Yes, most of the time		20.0%	6
answered question			30
skipped question			2

35. Have you ever felt stressed because of economic problems in this country?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		20.0%	6
Yes, a little		40.0%	12
Yes, sometimes		20.0%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		10.0%	3
Yes, most of the time		10.0%	3
answered question			30
skipped question			2

36. Have you ever felt stressed because of juggling work and family responsibilities?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.4%	1
Yes, a little		13.8%	4
Yes, sometimes		37.9%	11
Yes, a lot of the time		20.7%	6
Yes, most of the time		24.1%	7
answered question			29
skipped question			3

37. Have you ever felt stressed because of house work after school?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		16.7%	5
Yes, a little		16.7%	5
Yes, sometimes		30.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		16.7%	5
Yes, most of the time		20.0%	6
answered question			30
skipped question			2

38. Have you ever felt stressed because of childcare duties?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		41.4%	12
Yes, a little		20.7%	6
Yes, sometimes		20.7%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		6.9%	2
Yes, most of the time		10.3%	3
answered question			29
skipped question			3






39. Have you ever felt stressed because of problems with your children?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		40.0%	12
Yes, a little		16.7%	5
Yes, sometimes		30.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		6.7%	2
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2




40. Have you ever felt stressed because of problems with your spouse?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		63.3%	19
Yes, a little		16.7%	5
Yes, sometimes		13.3%	4
Yes, a lot of the time		6.7%	2
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

41. Have you ever felt stressed because of a lack of help with household chores?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		33.3%	10
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		10.0%	3
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2






42. Have you ever felt stressed because of the time spent traveling to and from work?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		80.0%	24
Yes, a little		16.7%	5
Yes, sometimes		3.3%	1
Yes, a lot of the time		0.0%	0
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

43. Have you ever felt stressed because your job requires you to do a lot of paperwork?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		6.7%	2
Yes, a little		6.7%	2
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		33.3%	10
Yes, most of the time		26.7%	8
answered question			30
skipped question			2






44. Have you ever felt stressed because of student assessments?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		13.3%	4
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		33.3%	10
Yes, most of the time		16.7%	5
answered question			30
skipped question			2

45. Have you ever felt stressed because of the planning required to do your job?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		43.3%	13
Yes, a lot of the time		16.7%	5
Yes, most of the time		13.3%	4
answered question			30
skipped question			2

46. Have you ever felt stressed because you have the same students all day long for an entire year?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		44.8%	13
Yes, a little		17.2%	5
Yes, sometimes		31.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		3.4%	1
Yes, most of the time		3.4%	1
answered question			29
skipped question			3

47. Have you ever felt more stressed with non-student responsibilities than with student responsibilities?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		10.0%	3
Yes, a little		33.3%	10
Yes, sometimes		30.0%	9
Yes, a lot of the time		20.0%	6
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2

48. Do students with behavioral issues cause you more stress than students without such issues?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		6.7%	2
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		16.7%	5
Yes, most of the time		33.3%	10
answered question			30
skipped question			2

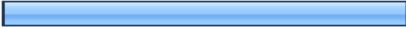


49. I currently find my life very rewarding

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		0.0%	0
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		40.0%	12
Yes, most of the time		33.3%	10
answered question			30
skipped question			2





50. I currently find my life quite lonely			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		55.2%	16
Yes, a little		17.2%	5
Yes, sometimes		20.7%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		6.9%	2
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			29
skipped question			3






51. I currently find my life very enjoyable			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		20.0%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		30.0%	9
Yes, most of the time		36.7%	11
answered question			30
skipped question			2




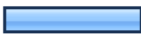

52. I currently find my life quite boring






		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		70.0%	21
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		10.0%	3
Yes, a lot of the time		0.0%	0
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2




53. My life is currently very hopeful

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		0.0%	0
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		10.0%	3
Yes, most of the time		53.3%	16
answered question			30
skipped question			2

54. Trying to complete reports and paperwork on time causes me a lot of stress			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		16.7%	5
Yes, a lot of the time		33.3%	10
Yes, most of the time		26.7%	8
answered question			30
skipped question			2

55. I find that dealing with student discipline problems puts a lot of stress on me			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		13.3%	4
Yes, sometimes		43.3%	13
Yes, a lot of the time		23.3%	7
Yes, most of the time		16.7%	5
answered question			30
skipped question			2

56. Complying with state, federal, and school rules and policies is very stressful			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		16.7%	5
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		43.3%	13
Yes, a lot of the time		13.3%	4
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

57. I experience a lot of stress trying to resolve conflicts between parents and the school			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		30.0%	9
Yes, a little		40.0%	12
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		3.3%	1
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

58. Trying to provide a good education in an atmosphere of decreasing financial support is very stressful

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		6.7%	2
Yes, a little		40.0%	12
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		13.3%	4
Yes, most of the time		13.3%	4
answered question			30
skipped question			2

59. There is a lot of stress just keeping up with changing professional standards

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		0.0%	0
Yes, a little		33.3%	10
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		26.7%	8
Yes, most of the time		16.7%	5
answered question			30
skipped question			2

60. Trying to keep my work from being too routine and boring puts a lot of stress on me			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		46.7%	14
Yes, a little		20.0%	6
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		10.0%	3
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

61. Having to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours is very stressful to me			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		23.3%	7
Yes, a little		43.3%	13
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		3.3%	1
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2

62. I find that trying to be attentive to the problems and needs of fellow faculty is very stressful			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		50.0%	15
Yes, a little		33.3%	10
Yes, sometimes		10.0%	3
Yes, a lot of the time		6.7%	2
Yes, most of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

63. When I really need to talk to my administrative head (s)he is willing to listen			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		13.3%	4
Yes, sometimes		20.0%	6
Yes, a lot of the time		36.7%	11
Yes, most of the time		26.7%	8
answered question			30
skipped question			2

64. My administrative head pays attention to what I am saying			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		6.7%	2
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		23.3%	7
Yes, a lot of the time		30.0%	9
Yes, most of the time		16.7%	5
answered question			30
skipped question			2

65. My administrative head stands up to outsiders for the people (s)he supervises			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		16.7%	5
Yes, a lot of the time		46.7%	14
Yes, most of the time		23.3%	7
answered question			30
skipped question			2

66. When I have conflicts with parents or students my administrative head gives me the kind of support I need			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		13.3%	4
Yes, sometimes		10.0%	3
Yes, a lot of the time		43.3%	13
Yes, most of the time		30.0%	9
answered question			30
skipped question			2






67. When I really need to talk to someone, my fellow faculty members are willing to listen			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		0.0%	0
Yes, a little		3.3%	1
Yes, sometimes		16.7%	5
Yes, a lot of the time		33.3%	10
Yes, most of the time		46.7%	14
answered question			30
skipped question			2


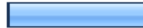
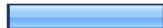


68. My fellow faculty members pay attention to what I am saying			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		3.3%	1
Yes, sometimes		16.7%	5
Yes, a lot of the time		33.3%	10
Yes, most of the time		43.3%	13
answered question			30
skipped question			2

69. My fellow faculty members stand up for each other to outsiders			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		3.3%	1
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		26.7%	8
Yes, most of the time		33.3%	10
answered question			30
skipped question			2

70. I have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		30.0%	9
Yes, a little		10.0%	3
Yes, sometimes		16.7%	5
Yes, a lot of the time		20.0%	6
Yes, most of the time		23.3%	7
answered question			30
skipped question			2

71. I worry a great deal about work			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		10.0%	3
Yes, a little		13.3%	4
Yes, sometimes		40.0%	12
Yes, a lot of the time		16.7%	5
Yes, most of the time		20.0%	6
answered question			30
skipped question			2

72. I am troubled by headaches at work			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		20.0%	6
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		36.7%	11
Yes, a lot of the time		16.7%	5
Yes, most of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2





73. I experience stomach aches			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No, Not at all		36.7%	11
Yes, a little		23.3%	7
Yes, sometimes		26.7%	8
Yes, a lot of the time		6.7%	2
Yes, most of the time		6.7%	2
answered question			30
skipped question			2





74. How would you describe your level of stress in your personal life?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Very low		16.7%	5
Low		33.3%	10
Moderate		30.0%	9
High		10.0%	3
Very high		10.0%	3
answered question			30
skipped question			2

75. How often have you had trouble coping with stress in your personal life?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		6.7%	2
Seldom		60.0%	18
Frequently		23.3%	7
Most of the time		10.0%	3
All of the time		0.0%	0
answered question			30
skipped question			2

76. How would you describe your level of stress in your work life?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Very low		0.0%	0
Low		10.0%	3
Moderate		46.7%	14
High		26.7%	8
Very high		16.7%	5
answered question			30
skipped question			2

77. How often have you had trouble coping with stress in your work life?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		0.0%	0
Seldom		50.0%	15
Frequently		23.3%	7
Most of the time		23.3%	7
All of the time		3.3%	1
answered question			30
skipped question			2

