Teacher Resilience in Central Virginia: How Veteran Teachers Become Resilient

Lee Brantley Shields

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Carol A. Mullen, Chair

Carol S. Cash

John R. Gratto

H. Alan Seibert

March 12, 2020

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: resilience, teacher retention, adversity, veteran teacher
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ABSTRACT

The development of teacher resilience is important in improving teacher retention. This study identified reasons veteran teachers have remained in the classroom; individual and contextual factors of resilience; significant challenges the teachers have encountered; and strategies the teachers used for dealing with the challenging situations. This was a qualitative study that included interviews with 15 teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. Data analysis occurred through deductive coding of the transcribed interviews using qualitative data analysis software. The findings for this study identified seven factors that veteran teachers indicated were important in their decision to remain in the classroom. The study also identified 22 individual factors of resilience and 10 contextual factors presented through the experiences of the veteran teachers. The veteran teachers described four challenges that they have faced in their school division and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges. The study concludes with the discussion, implication, and conclusion of the findings.
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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The development of teacher resilience is important in improving teacher retention. This study identified reasons veteran teachers have remained in the classroom; individual and contextual factors of resilience; the most significant challenges the teachers have encountered; and strategies the teachers used for dealing with those challenging situations. This was a qualitative study that included interviews with 15 teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The findings for this study provide practitioners with a framework to develop a resilient culture within their schools.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my grandparents: Keenon and Elizabeth Meetze and Cecil and Lucy Shields. Their work ethic and determination served as an inspiration for me throughout my life. The foundation for my faith and perseverance began with them. For my three children, Regan, Callan, and Jaxon, and my 14 nieces and nephews: I hope this work serves as an example that anything can be achieved you are willing to work for. You have witnessed first-hand the sacrifice and effort that this endeavor has required, and I dedicate this work to you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to begin by giving honor and glory to my source of wisdom, strength, and joy, Jesus Christ. I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Sammy and Carol Shields, who have supported and encouraged me to achieve every goal I have aspired to pursue. My desire to attain this worthy goal would not have been possible without the unconditional love and support of my wife, Beth, and our three children, Regan, Callan, and Jaxon. To them I am eternally grateful. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Carol Mullen, for her guidance, words of wisdom, and support throughout this program. Her patience and encouragement motivated me to complete this study. To Dr. Cash, Dr. Gratto, and Dr. Seibert, I wish to thank them for their willingness to serve on my committee and for providing valuable feedback throughout this process. I wish to thank those within my cohort who provided support and encouragement over the course of this three-year program. Finally, I would like to thank my administrative team at Rustburg High School, Dr. Amy Hale, William Cartwright, and Barry Godsey. Their continued support throughout this process was a source of motivation and encouragement.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of the Study

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose was to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences.

A qualitative design was used in this study because it enabled me, the researcher, to best understand the personal experiences of these veteran teachers, how the teachers interpreted their experiences, how they constructed their classroom, and the meaning they attributed to their experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that qualitative researchers are interested in “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 24). The data collected from the teachers in this study was done through a demographic questionnaire and individual interviews (n = 15). Data analysis was completed through deductive coding using the research questions as the initial concepts. The technique of in vivo coding was used to draw out the themes from the experiences of these teachers.

This dissertation has been organized into five chapters. Chapter One contains an overview of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose and justification of the study, and the conceptual framework. Chapter Two is a review of the literature that examines the recent research related to the research questions. Chapter Three contains the methodology used to conduct the study and analyze the data. Chapter Four provides
an overview of the findings from the demographic questionnaire and teacher interviews. Chapter Five includes discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, and conclusions.

**Statement of the Problem**

Teachers are the backbone of our communities. In school divisions across the United States, they guide and instruct our children every day. They have a tremendous personal impact on our young people during the most formative years of their life. However, the current reality of the profession is bleak. Young teachers are leaving in droves and teacher education programs are not producing enough graduates to replace them (Qarni & Pianta, 2018). We are amid a teacher retention crisis, and our schools and communities are suffering because of it (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Harris & Sass, 2011).

The current research on teacher retention indicates a major problem. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, 22% of teachers do not return to their school after year one and 50% do not return after year four (Qarni & Pianta, 2018). In low-income, low-performing school divisions, these numbers can be even greater (Katz, 2018).

Retaining teachers in rural communities, schools with high minority populations, and areas of low socioeconomic status can be difficult (Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008; Waddell, 2010). Waddell (2010) and Perrachione et al. (2008) have indicated that these demographic factors have a significant impact on a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom. To improve teacher retention in school divisions that face these demographic hurdles, school divisions have increased salaries, created induction programs, incorporated professional development, and added performance incentives to lure and retain teachers (Garcia, Slate, & Delgado, 2009; Waterman & He, 2011).
The current reactive culture to the teacher retention crisis is not a solution to the problem. School divisions have directed a significant amount of financial and instructional resources towards recruiting, hiring and training new teachers. Losing these new teachers is costly, and replacing them is very difficult (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, Wyckoff, & National Bureau of Economic Research, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Research into the phenomenon of resilience is in its infancy when compared to other research in teacher retention (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). Exploration into the reasons veteran teachers remain in the classroom, their resilience, and their experiences is significant. These experiences could assist school leaders with understanding the factors that sustain teachers in a position where they can make a significant contribution (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). Very little attention gets paid to teachers in their later years of service, despite many of them holding positions of responsibility. Veteran teachers have also experienced several policy and social changes (Day & Gu, 2009). In addition, they are more likely to have their effectiveness refined by more adverse situations. The more experience teachers’ gain in the classroom, the more likely they are to remain in the profession (Inman & Marlowe, 2004).

Teacher experience has been shown to increase and improve teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2002; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Novice teachers are 1.5 times more likely to leave the teaching profession when compared with experienced teachers (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). It could take a novice teacher up to five years of experience to become effective at improving student performance and develop the self-efficacy required to be proficient in the classroom (Rivkin et al., 2005). As teachers mature and grow in
the classroom through their experiences, they develop resilience (Politore, 2004; Taylor, 2013). These experiences also play a pivotal role in improving student performance and in developing a teacher’s self-efficacy in the classroom (Rivkin et al., 2005). Teachers that develop resilience and persevere 10 or more years in the classroom are less likely to leave the profession (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Identifying resilience through the experiences of veteran teachers will be key in developing effective induction programs and professional development to improve teacher retention (Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, & Savoie-Zajc, 2012; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Williams, 2003; Yonezaw, Jones, & Singer, 2011). This study examines the experiences of veteran teachers in Central Virginia. As human beings, we often learn best from the experiences of others (Taylor, 2013). The motivation and experiences of adversity from these veteran teachers inform the educational community and guide practices in reforming induction programs and professional development.

**Purpose and Justification of the Study**

Research examining the factors that impact teachers who leave the classroom is extensive. Poor working conditions, lack of administrative support, non-competitive compensation, and poorly executed induction programs have been found to contribute to teachers leaving the classroom (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Curtis, 2012; Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Fontaine et al., 2012; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012). This study took a different approach, examining the experiences of veteran teachers and why they have continued to teach in a rural school division located in Central Virginia. The main purpose identifies factors that influence resilience and explores the
dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of the veteran teachers. An additional purpose broadly addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences. To effectively improve teacher retention through practices of induction programs and professional development, this study examines why some teachers have stayed, despite many challenges.

**Conceptual Framework**

For the purpose of this study, resilience is defined as a process of adaptation where teachers employ strategies to overcome the adversity they face within their environments (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016). This definition of resilience is important to this study because it indicates that the development of resilience is a “process” by which teachers “adapt” to overcome adversity. This adaptation takes place within their environments through their personal experiences (Aguilar, 2018; Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016; Polidore, 2004; Taylor, 2013; Toktas, 2019).

Through a review of literature, individual and contextual factors that influence the development of this adaptation process within the individual teacher were identified. Individual factors are personal resources that are available within the individual teacher (Ainsworth, & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016). Contextual factors are factors that occur outside of the individual teacher (Ainsworth, & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016). Table 1.1. highlights the individual and contextual factors that have been identified during the review of literature. Each factor is listed with the number of sources in the literature review that mention the factor.
Table 1.1.

**Individual and Contextual Factors Influencing Teacher Resilience (Shields, 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Factors</th>
<th>Contextual Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Positive Relationships</td>
<td>Meaningful Participation in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for Their Career</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>School Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Work Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Competitive Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>Reduced Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persevere Through Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunity to Build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Professional Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Locus of Control</td>
<td>Sound Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Autonomy</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Difference</td>
<td>Behavioral Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solvers</td>
<td>Motivated Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Bounce Back</td>
<td>Small Class Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Viewed as Important</td>
<td>Parental Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling to Teach</td>
<td>Financial Support for Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Skills</td>
<td>Clear Administrative Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Autonomy Within Their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love for Children</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Mentoring Programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a significant amount of research investigating the individual and contextual factors associated with resilience internationally. However, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge at the time this study was conducted, there appeared to be no research conducted in the United States that investigated the process of adaptation that occurs in veteran teachers within a rural school division. This study addressed a gap in the literature addressing why veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom.
The conceptual framework for this study was developed through an in-depth review of the literature on teacher retention and resilience. The framework developed by Mansfield et al. (2012) was utilized during the development of the conceptual framework being used for this study. Mansfield et al. identifies 23 aspects of resilience which were used to develop four dimensions of resilience. The framework addresses the individual factors associated with the development of resilience. The researchers examined this through the lens of graduating and early career teacher perceptions of a resilient teacher. Within the framework, Mansfield et al. identified four themes that represent the dynamic and multifaceted nature of resilience.

- **Profession-Related** – Involves the factors that are affiliated with the practice of teaching. These include committed students; organization and preparation; effective teaching skills; adaptability; and reflection.

- **Social** – These factors relate to social interactions within the work environment including strong interpersonal and communication skills; solves problems; builds support and relationships; and seeks help and advice.

- **Motivational** – Factors related to motivation such as optimism; persistence; focus on improvement; self-efficacy; sets realistic goals and expectations; maintains motivation and enthusiasm; and enjoys challenges.

- **Emotional** – Incorporates the emotional responses that teachers experience; how they manage those emotions; and how they cope with stress. The factors associated with the emotional dimension include sense of humor; does not take things personally; manages emotions; enjoys change; bounces back; copes with job demands; and cares for own well-being.
As the primary researcher for this study, I collected data from the literature review and
developed a conceptual framework using the four dimensions from Mansfield et al. (2012). In
this framework, I allocated the individual and contextual factors that were identified through
my review of literature into one of the four dimensions. The dimension descriptions from the
bullets above were used as the criteria in determining where I placed each individual and
contextual factor. Mansfield et al. (2012) only identified individual factors within their
framework. This framework also incorporates the contextual factors that may influence
resilience associated with each dimension. Table 1.2. indicates each dimension and the factors
that fall under those dimensions.

Table 1.2.

*Individual and Contextual Factors Attributed to Mansfield et al. (2012) Dimensions of
Resilience (Shields, 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession Related</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Motivational</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Autonomy</td>
<td>Develops Positive Relationships</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Problem Solvers</td>
<td>Education Viewed as Important</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Locus of Control</td>
<td>Opportunity to Build Professional Relationships</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Skills</td>
<td>Meaningful Participation in Decision Making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Persevere through Challenges</td>
<td>Love for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Class Size</td>
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<td>Competitive Compensation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parental Support</td>
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</table>
Developing resilience is a complex process. The conceptual framework developed by Mansfield et al. (2012) examined the factors of resilience from the perspective of graduating and early career teachers. Guided by the conceptual framework developed from the review of literature, this study explores the factors of resilience from the perspective of veteran teachers using interviews as the mode of data collection. This research expands on the resources of this framework, adding a new framework from the perspective of veteran teachers. Implications for induction programs and professional development for school leaders are also addressed.
Chapter 2: A Review of Literature

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose was to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose broadly addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences.

In this review of the literature, I investigate the current research on the individual and contextual factors that have an impact on a teacher’s development of resilience. This literature review identifies the current practices that have supported teachers in their development of resilience. The individual and contextual factors examined in this literature review can be reviewed in Table 1.1. Mansfield et al. (2012) identified four dimensions within a conceptual framework for teacher resilience. These dimensions include professional-related, social, motivational, and emotional factors. Implications for developing good practices to support teacher retention is also reviewed. The result of this literature review establishes the groundwork for research of teacher resilience and the practices that improve teacher retention through induction programs and professional development.

Search Processes and Criteria

This review of literature provides a synthesis of the literature found in databases utilizing the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University online library. The search process took place from July 2018 through August 2019. *Ebscohost* was found to be the most useful search database and I utilized key terms to search the database for relevant research. The key terms listed below were entered into the database and produced the following results: teacher retention...
(9,064), teacher attrition (3,122), teacher commitment (7,131), teacher shortage (21,623), teacher resiliency (861), teacher passion (2,230), teacher hope (6,032), why teachers stay (147), teacher grit (100), veteran teacher resilience (5), experienced teacher resilience (5).

The inclusion criteria were established based on my interest in why veteran teachers choose to remain in the classroom and the factors that impact resilience. Literature was gathered from a global perspective with a focus on the United States and US teachers. Parameters were set at the onset of the literature review process. The parameters utilized to identify sources included research that was peer reviewed from journals, reports, dissertations, and books. Peer reviewed research was chosen because it provides the most comprehensive and credible information available. Full text within the search database was utilized as criteria to expedite the search process. The most recent and relevant research were collected using research between 2000-2019.

When these parameters were included in the research database search, the following results were produced: teacher retention (2,842), teacher attrition (1,353), teacher shortage (2,395), teacher commitment (2,285), teacher resiliency (219), teacher passion (302), teacher hope (909), why teachers stay (15), teacher grit (10), veteran teacher resilience (0), experienced teacher resilience (0).

Research was reviewed looking for trends in factors that contributed to veteran teachers remaining in the classroom. Articles were excluded that were not relevant to K-12 education and factors that did not influence teacher retention. Abstracts were read to determine potential significance. If an article was deemed significant, the article was read, and references were noted to review for additional sources. A table (Appendix A) was then created using the research that was found to be the most relevant to the topic. The author, year, research title, results, themes,
school leadership implications, and methods were included in the chart for each study. Studies that did not meet the inclusion or exclusion criteria but were found to have potentially useful data were collected and added to a reference database. Research was downloaded, printed, and in some instances saved to a Google Drive account for future use.

Synthesis of the Literature Review

Resilient teachers can have a positive effect in schools struggling with teacher retention throughout the United States (Allensworth et al., 2009; Billingsley, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Perrachione et al., 2008; Waddell, 2010). The word resilience in and of itself can take on different meanings based on who is involved in the conversation. It can mean overriding optimism, bouncing back from adversity, or acting to better oneself through life’s difficult challenges (Perkins-Gough, 2013). For the purpose of this study, resilience is a process of adaptation where teachers employ strategies to overcome the adversity they face within their environments (Aguilar, 2018; Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016; Polidore, 2004; Taylor, 2013; Toktas, 2019). The research has indicated several individual and contextual factors that impact the development of resilience within a teacher (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019).

Individual Factors

Individual factors are personal resources that are available within the individual teacher (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016). Several studies have attempted to characterize the themes or aspects of the resilient teacher. Polidore (2004) conducted a study to identify the individual factors of resilience within three African American female teachers that had faced significant adversity throughout their long careers. The researcher developed a resilience theory which included eight themes of resilience: moral/spiritual support,
flexible locus of control, can control events, education important, positive relationships, bias for optimism, enjoys change, and deeply committed. These themes of the resilient teacher were supported by the research of Taylor (2013). Taylor found similar themes in a study of four African American teachers, with a combined total of 134 years of experience, in a rural school system. Taylor’s research added one additional theme, self-efficacy, due to the professional competence and self-confidence the teachers displayed.

Similar themes developed from the research of Gu and Day (2013). In a study that examined the importance of resilience in teachers, the themes of self-efficacy, commitment, positive relationships, and a calling to teach emerged from the data. The researchers found that a teacher’s ability to become resilient fluctuated based on the personal, relational, and organizational settings in which he/she worked. Hong (2012) also identified self-efficacy, beliefs, emotions, and positive student relationships as themes that describe the resilient teacher. This study examined the differences between teachers that leave and stay. Teachers that left the classroom displayed a weaker self-efficacy when compared with teachers that stayed. Teachers that left also received less support from school leaders. This finding supports the research of Gu and Day (2013) demonstrating that the ability to become resilient may fluctuate based on personal, relational, and organizational settings.

Perrachione et al. (2008) conducted research to identify individual and contextual factors that influence teacher job satisfaction and retention. The researchers found that the individual factors of working with students, job satisfaction, and personal teaching efficacy have an influence in teacher job satisfaction. Yost (2006) examined the components of confidence and personal self-efficacy in a study examining major obstacles successful novice teachers face during their first year of teaching. The researcher looked at how those obstacles shaped their
current views and if they used critical reflection as a problem-solving tool. The research yielded that successful field and student teaching experiences that are connected to coursework in teacher education programs, positively impacted teachers’ confidence and self-efficacy. This confidence led to a higher level of competence in the first year of teaching.

Tait (2008) conducted research that supported Yost (2006) which found that building resilience through experiences can boost a teacher’s confidence and self-efficacy. Tait sought to see if relationships among resilience, personal efficacy, and emotional competence have an impact on a first-year teacher’s sense of success, confidence, and commitment to the profession. The results of the study indicated that novice teachers that demonstrated high levels of resilience, personal efficacy, and emotional intelligence shared similar skills. They had the capacity to “demonstrate social competence; take advantage of opportunities to develop personal efficacy; use problem solving strategies; display the ability to rebound after a difficult experience; learn from experience and set goals for the future; take care of oneself; and maintain a sense of optimism” (Tait, 2008, p. 69).

Bennett, Brown, Kirby-Smith, and Severson (2013) examined factors that influence teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching. The researchers found that teachers who stuck with teaching had a passion for their career. They stated that they felt their job was a calling and noted origination on a personal and spiritual level. The challenges of teaching, especially in school divisions where there are a significant number of contextual factors present, make identifying and developing individual qualities associated with resilience important. Martin (2016) sought to identify how passion and perseverance for long-term goals may impact the retention of special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities. Research has indicated that special education teachers have a lower retention rate than general education teachers (Billingsly,
Finding and retaining teachers in the field of special education is very difficult. In Martin’s study, the teachers that displayed passion and perseverance, and remained as special education teachers, were observed to have developed positive relationships; persevered through obstacles and roadblocks; were hard workers; and had a love for the job. Measuring these qualities in a teacher can be difficult.

Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014) identified why some novice teachers may outperform their colleagues and remain in the classroom. Utilizing Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly’s (2007) grit scale, Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014) examined novice teachers’ level of grit. Grit is defined by Duckworth et al. as passion and perseverance for long-term goals. Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth studied the intrinsic qualities of passion and perseverance towards long-term goals in novice teachers. The results indicated that novice teachers who displayed more grit outperformed their colleagues with less grit and stayed longer in their schools. A teacher’s passion and perseverance towards long-term goals was an indicator as to why some novice teachers outperform their colleagues and remain in the classroom.

In research that supports Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014), Chiong, Menzies, and Parameshwaran (2017) conducted more recent research and analyzed the motivations of experienced teachers in England. The researchers sought to give understanding of the positive reasons why long serving teachers stay in the profession and how the reasons change over time. The researchers found that passion for students and perceived mastery of skills were reasons for teachers both entering and staying in the profession.

Levine (2013) examined teacher perspectives on the role that hope plays as a sustaining influence for teachers. The researcher concluded that teachers who stay in the classroom feel they are making a difference through advocacy, have a faith-based call to teach, and have
attained professional autonomy and respect. Towers (2017) explored how long-serving teachers account for why they choose to stay in teaching in challenging London primary schools. The study found several themes that fall in line with other research: making a difference in children’s lives; the bonds and dynamic relationships formed with colleagues; and love for the children and people at their school. The teachers talked about being comfortable and confident in their abilities, displaying self-efficacy in their job.

In earlier research, Walker (2004) sought to determine why teachers chose to stay in an urban school setting. In the study, three factors were found to be statistically significant including: a feeling they have been effective in working with urban children; the establishment of good collegial relationships within the district; and a gained sense of self-satisfaction from working in the school district. Cultivating resilience must take on a multi-dimensional approach due to its complexity. Mansfield et al. (2012) identified four dimensions of teacher resilience that were developed from the perceptions of graduating and early career teachers. The dimensions included professional, emotional, social, and motivational factors associated with resilient teachers.

The motivational component within the framework of Mansfield et al. (2012) plays a critical role in a teacher’s ability to persevere in the classroom, effectiveness, and improvement (Good & Brophy, 1994). The students’ ability to learn and their performance is linked to the motivation of their teacher (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). A teacher’s motivation activates and guides his/her work; facilitates the development of high achievement; and maintains his/her behavior (Green, 2002; Gagne; 2004). This drive to perform can come from within the teacher or the external environment (Covington, 2000; Woolfolk, 2001).
Woolfolk (2001) defines intrinsic motivation as an individual’s internal, personal factors such as his/her needs, interests, curiosity, and enjoyment. Factors that impact an individual’s motivation from an external source, such as incentives or consequences, are considered extrinsic motivators (Covington, 2000). Herzberg, Mausner, & Synderman (1959) developed an extensive two-factor theory that differentiated between individual and contextual motivational aspects in job conditions. The researchers referred to the individual factors as content or motivators, and they included achievement, advancement, work, responsibility, and recognition. The contextual factors from their study were referred to as hygenies and included company policy and administration, technical supervision, working conditions, salary, and interpersonal supervision. The individual and contextual motivational factors operated independent of each other and impacted worker motivation.

**Contextual Factors**

Examining the contextual factors that influence and improve resilience can help improve the practices that govern work conditions and build a resilient culture within a school. Factors such as school leadership, school culture, and teacher workload have been identified as significant interventions that school leaders can focus on to improve teacher resilience (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). Perrachione et al. (2008) identified contextual factors that impact working conditions for teachers such as highly motivated students, peer support, positive school environment, and small class size. Ainsworth and Oldfield (2019) concluded from their research that contextual factors were just as significant as individual factors.

The contextual factors associated with work conditions show up as themes in other research studies. In a study that examined factors that encouraged or hindered teachers that left the profession, Kersaint et al. (2007) found that administrative support, financial support,
paperwork, and stress were factors that led to teachers leaving the profession. Kukla-Acevedo (2009) had similar results in a study examining the role of work conditions on teacher mobility. The researcher found that workplace conditions, behavioral climate, and administrative support had a definitive impact on first-year teachers. The factors influenced the decision to leave or change schools when compared with more experienced teachers.

Dupriez, et al. (2016) studied teacher turnover and the reasons beginning teachers leave the profession. Job conditions and teacher qualifications were predictive variables for a teacher that may leave the profession. They found that teachers who did not have the qualifications were more likely to leave their positions and were not prepared to handle the job conditions associated with teaching. However, the research also indicated that teachers who achieved additional qualifications such as graduate degrees, were also likely to leave due to the negative contextual factors associated with teaching.

A positive and supportive school environment is important. Malloy and Allen (2007) demonstrated this through their research into whether school culture and practice can have an impact on teacher resilience. They conducted research at a rural elementary school that historically had a high teacher retention rate. Their study indicated that a supportive and caring environment, setting high expectations, providing clear administrative goals, and allowing for meaningful participation in decision-making, played a significant role in teachers developing resilience and remaining in their school (Malloy & Allen, 2007). The supportive and caring environment was built around teachers developing supportive collaborative relationships where teachers could learn from each other and build a family-like atmosphere. Malloy and Allen (2007) stated, “An ideal recruitment and retention strategy for rural schools would be used to
emphasize the benefits derived from genuine personal relationships and a high degree of involvement in the decision-making process” (p. 24).

Developing resilience and perseverance in teachers through a strong community of practice, constant attention, love and respect, and sound professional development was supported by the research of Nieto (2003). To develop resilience in teachers, these characteristics must exist, and should be centered around the why, not just the how and when. Nieto’s research was supported by the research of Whipp and Salin (2018). Several of the factors listed as important by Nieto were referenced by satisfied physical education teachers in Australia. The teachers said the reasons they decided to remain in teaching included having an opportunity to implement their ideas collaboratively and have participation in decision-making; professional development and interaction; control of their classrooms; and satisfaction and motivation from their proficiency in their subject area. Based on the research, building a supportive and caring school culture is important when developing resilience in teachers (Malloy & Allen, 2007; Nieto, 2003; Tait, 2008; Whipp & Salin, 2018; Yost, 2006).

Relationships have been shown to be significant in the development of resilience (Mansfield et al., 2016). Le Cornu (2013) also demonstrated that relationships are critical in the growth of teacher resilience. The researcher suggests that school leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate through professional learning communities, leaders should empower teachers through opportunities for collaboration, and leadership should be a focal point for school leaders.

Support from school leaders is an important factor that influences a teacher. This argument is supported by the research of Nydoye, Imig, and Parker (2010). They examined the relationships among teacher empowerment, school leadership, and intentions to stay or leave the
profession within North Carolina Charter Schools. The research indicated that school leadership is a strong predictor of charter schoolteachers’ intentions to stay in or leave their current school. Teachers need to feel a support system is in place so that they can solve problems with a collective approach using identifiable steps. Nydoye et al. also demonstrated that empowerment is a critical component in the administrative support of teachers and plays a role in whether a teacher remains in the classroom.

Boyd et al. (2011) found that empowering teachers and implementing a collective approach is significant in developing a culture that is conducive to retaining teachers. The researchers found that teachers who felt they had influence over school policy, effectiveness of school administration, staff relations, student behavior, facilities, and safety were less likely to leave. In the study, Boyd et al. sought to identify the types of teachers that are more likely to leave the profession, the demographic characteristics of student bodies that may lead to high teacher turnover, and contextual factors that may lead to teachers leaving the profession. Teachers that felt they had a direct impact were much more likely to remain in the classroom.

Glazer (2018) had similar findings in the study of certified, experienced teachers who left teaching after making significant contributions throughout their career. Glazer found that teachers who had little control over curriculum and test results were more likely to leave the classroom. When teachers feel they have no voice in their school, they often leave (Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012). Teacher autonomy and influence within their school is important to the development of a supportive culture (Brezicha, Ikoma, Park, & LeTendre, 2019; Boyd et. al, 2011; Glazer, 2018; Nydoye et. al, 2010; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012). Sedivy-Benton and Boden-McGill found that teachers who had a perception of influence and believed they had some control in their schools were more likely to remain in their schools. The
factors that could not be controlled by the teachers were found to be statistically significant, indicating that working conditions and administrative support do have an impact on teacher retention.

Teacher compensation has been shown to have a significant impact on working conditions and teacher morale. Compensation is also a significant indicator of whether a teacher will stay or leave the classroom. Sedivy-Benton and Boden-McGill (2012) found that 80% of the teachers in the sample of their study responded that they would stay in the profession until either retirement or they are no longer able. The more the teachers were paid, the more likely they were to remain in the field.

Research has indicated that compensation plays an important role in the decision-making process of teachers that chose to leave the classroom or transfer to another school district (Garcia et al., 2009; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012; Steele, Murnane, & Willett, 2010). Research from Garcia et al. and Steele et al. both indicated that compensation and financial incentives have an impact on retaining teachers. Garcia et al. established a connection between teacher turnover and teacher salaries in their study on the impact of teacher salaries on teacher turnover in Texas. The more a school division paid its teachers, the lower the teacher turnover rate was for that school district. Financial incentives to improve compensation for teachers have also been studied to determine if they would improve retention (Steele et al., 2010).

Steele et al. (2010) examined whether financial incentives provided to highly qualified teachers could help low-performing schools attract and retain teachers in California. In this study, significance was found in the recruitment process of teachers when an incentive was used to attract teachers to the school division. Teachers were more likely to stay in their schools if they received the incentive. The research indicated that the probability of teachers choosing to
teach in a low-performing school because of the incentive increased by 28 percentage points. The research points to the significance of compensation on retaining teachers. In creating a supportive culture within schools, school leaders should advocate for better compensation packages for their teachers (Garcia et al., 2009; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012; Steele et al., 2010).

**Teacher Stress and Burnout**

Developing resilience could be critical to improving instruction and reducing the effects of role stress and burnout in teachers. This is true especially in areas that face significant recruiting and retention challenges. According to research by Fitchett, McCarthy, Lambert, and Boyle (2018), approximately 25% of new teachers suffer burnout symptoms during their first year of teaching. Grayson and Alvarez (2008) found that emotional exhaustion was the strongest contributor to teacher burnout. Depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment were next in influence within their study.

Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, and Graber (2016) tested a conceptual framework to explain the ability of resilience to decrease role stress and burnout in teachers. In the study, the research indicated that “teachers who develop higher levels of resilience feel less emotionally drained, derive a greater sense of satisfaction from their work, and can interact positively with others” (p. 530). In similar research, Pretsch, Flunger, and Schmitt (2012) sought to demonstrate that resilience could predict well-being in teachers above and beyond a vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity. Among teachers in the study, resilience contributed more to the prediction of general health perception than did vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity. Resilience could predict job satisfaction in teachers. The research of Pretsch et al. emphasizes the
importance of developing the intrinsic factors in helping to reduce perceived teacher stress and feelings of burnout.

When morale and culture are negative in a school building, it can create adversarial experiences for teachers. This adversity can have a direct impact on a teacher’s development of resilience and his/her decision to remain in the classroom (Allensworth et al., 2009; Grissom, 2011; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Ladd, 2011). Addressing the adversity that teachers face is critical in developing their resilience and improving their sustainability.

Throughout life, we experience events that are stressful and potentially traumatic because of our environment. These events can have a tremendous impact on the development of the individual person (Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, & Byers, 2006; Thieman, Marx, & Kitchel, 2014). These experiences for teachers can include situations where they have overcome extreme hardships such as excessive workload, lack of administrative support, or poor compensation (Bandura, 1997; Boyd, et. al. 2011; Dupriez et al., 2016; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill 2012; Waterman & He 2011). When teachers overcome these situations of adversity, they will develop the resilient skills necessary to excel in the classroom (Bandura, 1997).

A significant number of teachers are impacted by these contextual experiences daily (Williams, 2003). Some teachers choose to stay while others choose to leave. The teachers that choose to persevere through these experiences exhibit the phenomenon known as resilience (Masten, 2001). Masten defines resilience as “good outcomes despite serious threats to adaptation or development” (p. 228). Research in teacher resilience “aims to understand the processes that account for these good outcomes” (p. 228). Gu and Day (2007) describe two trends in defining resilience. The two trends include a psychological construct and a
multidimensional and complex process that is “dynamic within a social system of interrelationships” (p. 1305). The psychological construct is the study of individual factors that are believed to assist teachers when faced with adversity. The multidimensional and complex process includes a series of protective factors that minimize the impact of adverse situations. To minimize the impact of adverse situations such as minimal resources and challenging working conditions, resilient teachers develop a variety of approaches to achieve stability and success (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010).

**Strategies that Cultivate Resilience**

Preparing teachers for the rigors of teaching and building upon the individual and contextual factors that influence them could be important in developing solutions for the teacher retention crisis (Curtis, 2012). Empowering teachers with the skills needed to cope with the challenges that they encounter in their first few years of teaching is critical. Some of these skills include providing opportunities to think critically and reflect on challenges; providing teachers with strong mentors to guide them through those challenges (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Tait, 2008; Yost, 2006).

Castro et al. (2010) identified help-seeking, problem-solving, managing difficult relationships, and seeking rejuvenation as resilience strategies for new teachers. These strategies were shown to assist novice teachers in their development of resilience in urban and rural contexts. However, teachers received very little support in securing these resources. To effectively support these strategies, teachers need peer support groups; an atmosphere that novice teachers feel safe; and professional development to assist teachers with problem solving.

Resilience is built on the interplay of individual and supportive contexts through professional development. It occurs through the provision of professional development that
incorporates knowledge and skills beyond technical expertise. Professional development should incorporate opportunities to participate in professional learning communities and opportunities for leadership within the school (Yonezaw et al., 2011). Professional development should be provided for teachers that meet the individual needs of each teacher (Bozkus & Bayrak, 2019; Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004).

Four additional strategies used by urban teachers to build their personal resilience include acting from a set of values that guides professional decision-making; seeking and appreciating professional development; a willingness to mentor others; and a focus on student learning (Patterson et al., 2004). Teachers that take initiative to develop their skills and to improve the culture within their school demonstrate resilience. Steps should be taken to identify teachers that embody these characteristics during teacher education, interviews, and induction. School leaders should seek out individuals who value social justice, are problem solvers, and take initiative (Patterson et al., 2004).

Curtis (2012) investigated middle school and high school teachers’ reasons for entering the classroom and then compared those reasons with the reasons for leaving the classroom. Most of the teachers in the study went into teaching because of their desire to work with young people, love of mathematics, and reasons of personal fulfillment or making a difference. Family or role models also influenced many of them. However, the illusion of what teaching entails is often drastically different from what teachers experience when they step into the classroom. Lack of preparation for the contextual factors of poor working conditions, lack of administrative support, and low compensation can drastically reduce a teacher’s self-efficacy and lead to low morale. Teacher education programs are not preparing potential teachers for this current reality in education (Curtis, 2012).
Fontaine et al. (2012) supported the research of Curtis (2012) in their study. They investigated beginning teachers’ perspectives on teaching as a long-term career, their preparation, the links between preparation, early career experience, and their intentions to continue with teaching. Fontaine et al. found that participants had confidence in their abilities at the time of graduation from their teacher education programs. However, after their first year of teaching, participants indicated on a survey and through interviews, that they felt underprepared in dealing with the workload and other contextual factors associated with teaching. The research indicates that teacher education programs are not effectively preparing future teachers for the realities of teaching. The research suggests that despite the attainment of the proper credentials, teachers were still not prepared for the workload and conditions required for the job.

Teacher preparation for the workload that is required can have an impact on whether a teacher continues to teach. Fontaine et al. (2012) also found that a teacher’s ability to handle work conditions and stress was directly impacted by his/her education level or qualification status. In other words, the more education a teacher had, the more adept he/she was at handling the contextual factors that can often lead to low self-efficacy in novice teachers.

Le Cornu (2009) examined the roles that professional experiences play in building resilience in teacher education programs. The research focused on a learning community’s model of professional experience with its emphasis on relationships and its attention to the complex and dynamic interactions between individuals and their student teaching contexts. The research identified supports that develop courage, teach skills and attitudes, provide peer supports, and provide specific roles for pre-service teachers and mentors. Mansfield et al. (2016) also addressed the relationships component in their proposed framework for building resilience in teacher education as shown in Table 2. They incorporated five themes including understanding
resilience, relationships, well-being, motivation, and emotions. The framework was informed by individual and contextual factors and the strategies that contribute to resilient outcomes in teachers. The framework may be utilized in the development of face-to-face, online, or blended cohorts for the development of resilience in teacher education.

Table 2

*Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) (Mansfield et al., 2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Informed by the Literature</th>
<th>Example of Teacher Education Topics</th>
<th>Examples of Teaching and Learning Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Resilience</td>
<td>Resilience as a dynamic, multifaceted process where individuals mobilize individual and contextual resources and use coping strategies to enable resilience outcomes.</td>
<td>What is resilience? Why is resilience important for teachers?</td>
<td>1. Reflecting and discussing with peers, mentors, and teachers. 2. Examining case studies and videos illustrating professional challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Relationships       | Social competence (for building relationships, support networks and working collaboratively), setting boundaries, and communication. | *Understanding relationships and resilience.  
*Building relationships in schools.  
*Working in a professional team.  
*Building personal and professional support networks.  
*Using social media support networks.  
*Communicating effectively. | 1. Engaging with problem solving activities related to authentic scenarios. 2. Analyzing videos of teachers talking about how to address challenges. 3. Identifying and practicing adaptive coping strategies. |

**Policy and Governance Issues**

School culture and leadership matter (Boyd et al., 2011; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Nydoye et al., 2010; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012; Towers, 2017). School leaders can impact retention through “motivating teachers and students; identifying and articulating a vision and goals; developing high performance expectations; fostering communication; allocating resources; and developing organizational
structures to support instruction and learning” (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 328). Additionally, Bennett et al. (2013) found that school leaders must find a way to support teachers with mentors, strong leadership, and autonomy. Schools can potentially reduce teachers leaving the profession by allowing them maximum involvement in school decisions as well as provide some control over classrooms and curriculum. Research has demonstrated that teachers who have remained in the classroom view the profession as a calling or their mission (Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016; Taylor, 2013). School leaders must provide autonomy that demonstrates a school culture, respecting the teachers’ ideas and leadership abilities. The focus should be on providing teachers with the support they need to be successful (Bennett et al., 2011).

As students enter teacher education programs, school leaders should advocate for enhanced experiences in the areas of assessment, classroom management, and workload (Dupriez et al., 2016). When trying to reduce attrition, policy makers should not reduce the very qualities in teachers that are vital for effective practice. School leaders should place more emphasis on classroom learning and less emphasis on administrative duties and activities outside the classroom. They should provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate, share ideas, promote teacher accomplishments, and provide supports as needed (Malloy & Allen, 2007; Nieto, 2003; Tait, 2008; Whipp & Salin, 2018; Yost, 2006). Time should be allowed to build teacher resilience by providing opportunities for professional development; scheduling to reduce teacher workload; necessary resources; positive professional relationships; high expectations; and collaborative decision making (Boyd et al., 2011; Glazer, 2018). Therefore, in order to reduce teacher stress and burnout, school leaders should develop practices that will develop teacher resilience (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Richards et al., 2016).
School leaders should make every effort to target potential groups of teachers that may be susceptible to leaving due to family, administrative, or financial factors (Curtis, 2012; Dupriez et al., 2016). Developing practices that support the individual and contextual factors associated with increased job satisfaction should be a priority, as well as reducing those factors negatively associated with poor job satisfaction (Bennett et al., 2013; Chiong et al., 2017). Increasing teacher salaries and benefits to a competitive level with other professional occupations would attract and retain more qualified teachers (Garcia et al., 2009). By increasing teacher salaries and benefits, it would naturally add more respect to the profession, making it more attractive for young people as they enter college programs (Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012). Practices that impact the decisions on recruitment and development may need to include strategies to identify teacher resilience. Attention should be paid to the attitudes and perceptions of teacher work environments, perceived roles, influence and control, and support during the interview process. Within teacher education programs, supports should be provided for those aspiring teachers that exhibit a vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity (Mansfield et al., 2016).

**Chapter Summary**

Teachers that choose to remain in the classroom demonstrate several characteristics of resilience (Gu & Day, 2013; Taylor, 2013; Tokta, 2019). These characteristics and the individual and contextual factors that influence them have been shown to improve teacher retention (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016). The research indicates that school leaders can improve teacher retention by developing practices that improve teacher resilience (Boyd et al., 2011; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Ingersoll, 2002; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Nydoye et al., 2010; Schaefer et al., 2012; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012; Towers, 2017). This review of literature has provided a
synthesis of the literature on the individual and contextual factors that impact teacher resilience, impacts of resilience on teacher stress and burnout, and strategies that develop a culture of resilience.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose was to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose broadly addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences.

The methodology for this study was designed to investigate the experiences of veteran teachers in Central Virginia. The research questions were designed to extract the individual and contextual factors that have impacted these teachers and the strategies they have used to persevere in the classroom. The procedures for preparing and conducting the research design, selection of participants and setting, limitations and delimitations, data collection, instrument design and validation, confidentiality and ethical treatment of data, data analysis, and chapter summary are included in this chapter.

Primary Research Question

What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teachers’ desire to continue teaching?

Research Sub Questions

1. What contextual factors play a role in those experiences?
2. What individual factors of resilience are revealed through their experiences?
3. What strategies have the teachers used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching?
Research Design

Qualitative research is an interpretation of phenomena with the study of people, places, or events in their natural settings. This type of research is most appropriate when the phenomenon under study has no clear, single set of outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research was chosen as the methodology for this study because it yielded a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the veteran teachers participating in the study. Very little is known about the factors associated with veteran teachers that continue teaching beyond 10 years and their experiences. To best understand the phenomena behind these teacher experiences, the approach must be exploratory, in-depth, and descriptive (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This qualitative study builds upon the existing knowledge of why teachers remain in the classroom through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. In the context of this study, interviews were used to allow the personal stories of these teachers to be heard. The interview questions probed the reasons why these teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom and the role of motivation and adversity in their experiences. The procedures for preparing and conducting interviews for this study were those suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) as follows:

- Determine the research questions that will be answered by interviews.
- Identify the interviewees who can best answer these questions based on a purposeful sampling procedure.
- Distinguish the type of interview by determining what mode is practical and what interactions will net the most useful information to answer research questions.
- Collect one-on-one interview data using adequate recording procedures.
- Design and use an interview protocol or interview guide.
• Locate a distraction-free place for conducting interviews.

• Obtain consent from the selected interviewees who agree to participate in the study.

• Participants complete a consent form approved by the human relations review board.

• As an interviewer, follow good interview procedures.

• Decide transcription logistics ahead of time (p. 165).

The researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis for this study. As the primary instrument of data collection, I selected the setting and participants for the study, conducted all interviews with participants, and analyzed the collected data. Through the data collection procedures, I gained a better understanding of why the teacher participants have remained in the classroom, what motivated them to teach, and the strategies they have used to overcome adversity.

Selection of Setting and Participants

Proposed Study Setting

This study took place in a rural school division in Central Virginia. A rural school division was selected because research has indicated that characteristics of rural schools may make teacher recruitment and retention more challenging (Cowen, Butler, Fowles, Streams, & Toma, 2012; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Monk, 2007). Written permission to conduct the study was requested and obtained from the Superintendent of the school district in which the study was conducted (Appendix B). The school division has four schools; a primary school grades K to 2, an elementary school grades 3 to 5, a middle school grades 6 to 8, and a high school grades 9 to 12. For the fall membership of 2017-2018, the school division enrolled 2,270

Interviews with participants were conducted at the teacher’s school in a private location, either in the teacher’s classroom or work area, so that a digital sound recorder could be used to record the interviews.

**Selection of the Participants**

Participants were selected for interviews using purposeful sampling because it could “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158). Participants were chosen based on demographic criteria established by the researcher as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Demographic Selection Criteria for Participation in the Study (Shields, 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Criteria for Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of teaching experience</td>
<td>Teachers must have a minimum of 10 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade level</td>
<td>Teachers from secondary, middle, and elementary schools are eligible for participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Race will be considered in representing a diverse sample to the extent possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male and female teachers to the extent possible will be selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>Teachers with degrees (bachelor, master, or doctorate degrees) will be represented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selection was made so that 12 to 20 participants with a variety of experiences and backgrounds were represented by the sample. This number of participants was determined to provide three to five participants from each school location, providing a diverse range of experiences within the school division and to achieve data saturation.

School principals within the division were contacted through email (Appendix C) to arrange for the distribution of the demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). An introductory email (Appendix E) for teacher participants including the demographic questionnaire was then sent to principals, who forwarded the email to veteran teachers within their building. The introductory email forwarded to the teachers included a brief greeting, purpose of the study, and a link to the demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information from the veteran teachers to aide in the selection of participants. Twenty veteran teachers (Table 4.1.) completed and returned the demographic questionnaire. An email (Appendix F) was then sent to the veteran teachers requesting their participation in the interview portion of the study. Fifteen teachers agreed to take part in the individual interviews. Correspondence through email was used to schedule the interview date and time with the interviewees.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The limitations to this study are comprehensive. The data collected can only be generalized to veteran teachers in the rural school division selected for this study. The results cannot be generalized to veteran teachers who do not face the environmental factors the teachers from this study have faced. Another limitation to this study was a small sample size. While the interviews provided an in-depth perspective from the participating teachers, the study only included 15 participants, limiting the generalizability of the study. The research
does not include the perspective of the principals, support staff, students, or school board, but only the experiences of the veteran teachers. The interview protocol aims to include an all-inclusive list of questions to gain a comprehensive sample of experiences from the veteran teachers interviewed. Future studies should include a larger sample size and comparison groups.

Concerning delimitations, this study only includes teachers from one rural school division located in Central Virginia. The individual and contextual factors of resilience presented from the experiences of these veteran teachers add to the research on teacher resilience. They address a gap in the research addressing the motivation, experiences, and strategies teachers have used to overcome adversity. However, they are not generalizable to all teachers or school divisions.

This study also did not include the experiences of teachers from urban or suburban school divisions, so it is not generalizable to those populations. The teachers in this study actively taught in the selected rural school division and had ten or more years of experience. This study did not incorporate all teachers from Central Virginia; therefore, results of this study cannot be generalized to all teachers in Central Virginia.

**Data Collection**

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) (Appendix G) through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB training was completed on July 11, 2018 (Appendix H) and a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course on ethical standards in research was completed on February 23, 2019 (Appendix I). The data collection and analysis procedures used in this study were those suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018):
• Data collection.
• Manage and organize the data.
• Read and memo emergent ideas.
• Describe and classify codes into themes.
• Develop and assess interpretations.
• Represent and visualize the data.
• Account of findings (p. 186).

Data collection occurred through the collection of demographic data on participants from the returned questionnaires and one-on-one interviews with each teacher participant.

A demographic questionnaire from an electronic survey tool was sent to potential participants as a hyperlink embedded in an introductory email. The demographic questionnaire requested the veteran teacher’s years of experience, grade levels taught, race, gender, education level, name, email address, and consent to participate in the interview. Review of the provided demographic criteria for each teacher allowed me, the researcher, to purposefully select a group of participants from a variety of grade levels and backgrounds.

When a teacher completed the demographic questionnaire, the electronic survey tool provided notification to me of a completed questionnaire through email. If the veteran teacher responded to question eight on the questionnaire, he/she was sent an email requesting participation in a 45-minute interview at the participant’s respective school. Consent for participation in the interview was obtained from the participant prior to any data collection. Data from the interviews was gathered through a semi-structured format of questioning. Besides the audio recording, handwritten notes during the interviews were taken to track key words, statements, and expressions from the teacher participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
Instrument Design and Validation

The first step in preparing the interview protocol (Appendix J) was identifying the interviewees who could best respond to them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In developing the interview protocol, I researched several qualitative dissertations and studies from 2010 to 2019 that included interviews with teachers and why they have remained in the classroom. The interview protocol used by Teodori (2015) was selected and modified to explore the research questions for this study. This protocol was validated and verified through the research of teachers who persist in urban K-12 Christian education. Initial questions were open-ended and follow-up questions developed as the interview was conducted and the interviewee provided responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Questions one through three were designed to “invite the interviewee to open up and talk” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 164) and to “gain a sense of the participant’s personality, background, and dispositions about education” (Teodori, 2015, p. 85). Questions four through eight were designed to investigate the individual and contextual factors that have impacted the teachers and the motivation that keeps them going every day. These questions were designed to answer research sub questions one and two. Questions nine through 14 aimed to explore the adverse experiences the teacher participants may have faced while teaching. The questions probed these experiences and searched for characteristics of resilience and the strategies that the teachers have used to develop those characteristics. Research sub question three was answered with these questions.
Protocol for Interview Questions

1. Was K-12 education important in your family? What kind of student were you?
   Teachers that grew up in families where education is important often demonstrate resilience (Taylor, 2013).

2. Did you have any positive or negative experiences in K-12 education with a teacher or administrator?
   Teachers can have a lasting impact, both positive and negative, with their students (Morrow, 1991).

3. Did you have any experiences K-12 where you were able to pursue a passion and persevere through a challenging situation? (Athletics, band, drama, etc.)
   Passion and perseverance are often developed through the experience of overcoming obstacles (Duckworth et al., 2007).

4. Do you have an experience that led you to choose teaching as a career? Is there an experience(s) from college or postgraduate school that prepared you for the rigors of teaching?
   Experiences in teacher education programs are important in the development of the skills necessary to be successful in the classroom (Curtis, 2012).

5. How would you describe the experiences that bring you the greatest satisfaction as a teacher?
   Long-serving teachers develop self-efficacy in their job from satisfying experiences (Towers, 2017).

6. How would you describe the experiences/factors influencing your motivation for teaching?
   How have these motivational experiences/factors fostered perseverance?
Motivation is an internal state that activates, guides, maintains behavior, and facilitates the development of high achievement (Green, 2002; Gagne; 2004).

7. How would you describe what you consider to be essential supports to your motivation for teaching?

Supports in the areas of achievement, advancement, workload, responsibility, recognition, company policy, technical supervision, working conditions, salary, and interpersonal supervision are impactful to motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959).

8. How would you describe the job conditions with which you work each day as a teacher?

Job satisfaction impacts teacher retention (Perrachione et al., 2008).

9. How would you describe the experiences that yield the greatest dissatisfaction for you as a teacher?

Negative experiences of teachers including work overload, low compensation, lack of parental support, lack of administrative support, and overloaded classes can impact teacher retention (Perrachione et al., 2008).

10. How would you describe the adversity you have faced as a teacher? Can you describe one very serious incident in which you faced adversity more than at any other time? How did you overcome the adversity you faced in that incident?

Stressful and potentially traumatic experiences in life can have a tremendous impact on the development of an individual person (Ahern et al., 2006; Thieman et al., 2014).

11. What would you identify as the characteristics/qualities of a resilient teacher? How would you describe these resilient characteristics/qualities in action?
Defining key components of resilience and building those components into teacher preparation and mentoring programs may be an important step to improve teacher retention (Williams, 2003).

“Teachers who develop higher levels of resilience feel less emotionally drained, derive a greater sense of satisfaction from their work, and can interact positively with others” (Richards et al., 2016, p. 530).

12. What would you describe as essential supports for fostering resilience in teachers?

Determining the supports that foster resilience could predict teacher job satisfaction and improve teacher retention (Pretsch et al., 2012).

13. Why have you chosen to remain in the classroom as a professional teacher?

Identifying individual and contextual factors of resilience in teachers that have remained in the classroom is important in developing policies and practices for retaining teachers (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Bennett et al., 2013).

14. Do you have any other experiences or comments that you feel would be important to add to this study?

Confidentiality and Ethical Treatment of the Data

The names and demographic information of the teachers participating in this study were kept private using pseudonyms to protect the participant’s identity. Any information containing participant names or other possible forms of identification were stored on the researcher’s password protected computer. Data from interviews was stored on an audio recorder and downloaded into NVivo data analysis software for transcription. Transcribed interviews and memos from the research were stored on the NVivo data analysis software for a period of 90
days. This software is password protected and only the primary and co-investigator in this study had access.

Transcribed files were uploaded to MAXQDA data analysis software for coding purposes. These files were saved for 14 days and then deleted. Transcription files and other collected data were saved on a password protected computer that could be accessed by the primary and co-investigator. The password protected computer and all other data from the study were collected and stored in a locked office for the duration of the study. After three years, all files from the questionnaires, interviews, and consent forms will be deleted from the computer database. All hard copy files will be shredded and destroyed. Only the primary and co-investigator will have access to any identifiable information of the teacher participants.

**Data Analysis**

Data from the demographic information was inserted into an excel spreadsheet with each respondent receiving a pseudonym. Review of the demographic data provided an objective method to purposefully select teacher participants based on their background and experience. Interviews with participants were transcribed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software was used to deductively code the transcribed interviews. The qualitative data analysis software allowed me, the researcher, to deductively code the data by graphically displaying the codes and categories using the veteran teachers own words. It allowed me to analyze, manage, and shape the qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Step one in data analysis began with in vivo coding, which identified specific words or phrases used by the teachers in the individual interviews. In vivo coding preserved the verbatim statements of the veteran teachers and allowed the teacher experiences to be expressed in their
own words (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Codes were then matched with concepts that were developed using the research questions. The concepts that were developed included: educational background; individual and contextual factors; impactful supports from teacher education; impactful supports from induction; and impactful supports from professional development. Identifying the codes for each concept produced a conceptual profile for the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Step two began with utilizing the code frequency and data matrix spreadsheets in MAXQDA to analyze the codes and develop themes by analyzing the conceptual profiles for each interview looking for patterns that resonated throughout the interviews. These patterns were examined and themes were developed. The themes were added into a matrix display, which allowed me as the researcher to organize the material into a format for quick reflection, verification, and other analysis. The coding process and results were verified by a retired school administrator and two teachers who had experience in analyzing qualitative data.

Step three included comparison of the themes that were developed and their relationship with each research question. This step resulted in the triangulation of the data. A visual representation of the data (Figure 1) was developed to assist the reader in making connections from the text (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Chapter Summary

The interview methodology used for this study incorporated interviews as the primary source of data collection. The interviews provided participants the opportunity to share their motivation and experiences of adversity and resilience. The research questions for this study allowed me to investigate the motivation and experiences of these teachers to identify characteristics of resilience that will improve practices for retaining teachers. A two-part data
collection methodology was used to address the primary research question and sub questions.

Part one included collecting demographic data to aid in purposefully selecting teacher participants. Teacher participants were selected, and semi-structured interviews were conducted during part two. Interviews with participants were transcribed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Interview transcriptions were coded and themes from the interviews were examined for each teacher participant. Conclusions were drawn and verified leading to the implications for policy, research, and practice.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Overview

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose was to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose broadly addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences.

Purpose of the Study

There is not a significant amount of research investigating the impact teacher resilience may have on teacher retention (Mansfield et al., 2016). This research aimed to investigate the reasons veteran teachers remain in the classroom, their resilience, and their experiences. The experiences from these teachers will add to the literature on teacher resilience. The results from this study will provide school leaders with data that can be used to develop and sustain teachers in a position where they can make a significant contribution (Schaefer et al., 2012). By identifying factors of resilience through the experiences of these veteran teachers, school leaders will be able to develop effective induction programs and professional development to improve teacher retention (Fontaine et al., 2012; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Williams, 2003; Yonezaw et al., 2011).

Primary Research Question

What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teachers’ desire to continue teaching?
Research Sub Questions

1. What contextual factors play a role in those experiences?
2. What individual factors of resilience are revealed through their experiences?
3. What strategies have the teachers used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching?

Participants

An introductory email was sent to principals at each school within the selected rural school division. The email contained a brief introduction and a hyperlink to a demographic questionnaire. The principals then forwarded the email to the veteran teachers within their building. A demographic questionnaire was completed by 20 teachers with 10 or more years of experience in teaching. The results from the demographic questionnaires are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

Participant Information based on Completed Demographic Questionnaires (Shields, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<th>Years of Experience</th>
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**Participant Information**

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<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<td>Special Ed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a participant that was selected and participated in an interview.

Of the 20 teachers that completed the demographic questionnaire, 15 agreed to participate in an individual interview. Individual interviews were conducted at each participant’s school and were audio recorded. As demonstrated in Table 4.1., the participants had a wide range in experience, age, subjects taught, education level, and grade level. The participants who agreed to participate in an individual interview included four men and 11 women.

In the interviews, participants indicated that education was important in their family and they had parental support during their K-12 education. Five of the teachers indicated that they had always wanted to be a teacher, while 10 indicated that they did not initially want to become a teacher. Thirteen teachers indicated that they felt unprepared for teaching upon graduation from their teacher preparation program. A summary of each participant’s background is listed alphabetically by pseudonym below. Participant information has been minimized to maintain anonymity. Participant quotes have been edited to take out repeated words, words that do not impact the context of the interview, or conversational spacers such as um, like, and ah to improve readability.

**Ally – Veteran Teacher #1**

Ally was the first-born child in her family and education was very important growing up. Neither of her parents graduated from high school and they wanted her to get a better education than they had. She is identified as someone who was very critical of herself and was motivated to do the best she could. She said, “If I dropped my grades a little bit, my dad would kind of get on me when I needed to keep the grades up, but I motivated myself a lot too, just to do the best I
could do.” Ally indicated that she had mostly positive experiences during her K-12 schooling. Her love of sports provided her with some resilience skills. You could see the love and passion she had for athletics as she spoke about her passion for sports; “I love sports! There’s always an opportunity to learn how to get back up from a loss or disappointments.” She described how her relationships with coaches, specifically her basketball coaches, challenged her to be at her very best.

Ally did not plan on becoming a teacher until well into her upper 20’s. She had witnessed some of the struggles that teachers go through and did not think she could handle those experiences. However, that all changed after an experience as a fitness trainer, and she felt a calling to teach:

I really felt like I was called to teach. It was kind of some random thing. Because I love being physically active, when I thought about being physically active and being able to teach, those two just kind of came together. My passion just started from there.

She attributed her passion for middle school students to a professor she had in college. Ally described how the professor set extremely high expectations for all her students. She had an opportunity to work in a variety of school settings. During this process, she was able to work in a middle school:

She gave us lots of opportunities to teach and gave us lots of opportunities to be in different school systems with different age kids. It really made me personally feel like I was ready to teach my level. That’s where I fell in love with middle school aged kids.

Ally displayed a lot of joy and enthusiasm as she spoke about her school and her students. She attributed much of her success as a teacher to her upbringing and overcoming obstacles as a child.
Amy – Veteran Teacher #2

Education was important in Amy’s family growing up, as neither of her parents graduated from high school. Although education was viewed as important, she had positive experiences with her teachers and administrators and valued the relationships that were built during that time. In high school, she became very interested in the arts and described a positive experience in pursuing her passion of ceramics and painting. “We had ceramics, painting, oils, and waters and like every different type of artistic outlet that you wanted to do. That was very helpful for me because those were the classes that I really thrived in.” Amy knew from a very young age that she wanted to be a teacher and credited a former English teacher for pointing her in the direction of teaching English as a career.

Brandi – Veteran Teacher #3

Brandi described herself as a good student in school because it was a priority in her home. She described how her dad would help her with homework in math and science, and her mom would emphasize reading. Her parents would expose her to a variety of educational experiences by taking trips. She said, “I considered it a normal childhood, but now I see that isn’t going on in homes now.”

Her positive personal environment at home was supported with positive experiences at school. However, she described instances where she felt some favoritism may have been present in her classes. She was very active and enjoyed playing sports. She described herself as self-motivated and would find things to get involved in that she was passionate about such as volleyball, tennis, and yearbook. She did not decide to become a teacher until she began providing tennis lessons to children during her first year of college:
When I first went to college, I didn’t know what I was going to do. So, when I applied, I just applied under business just like a general business major. But, right after my senior year (high school) that summer, I can’t remember how it got lined up, but myself and another tennis player on the boy’s team-taught tennis lessons and did like a whole clinic through the rec department. And, I think it was a parent who said you should really think about being a teacher. I had always dealt with kids whether it was church Bible school, babysitting, and stuff like that, but it was really the first time where I taught…I got to thinking and I…I’d declared my major so I couldn’t change at that time, but second semester of college is when I got into the program (education).

Brandi felt that experience is an important factor in preparing teachers for the classroom. She said, “I mean nothing really prepares you for the first day of school…it’s crazy to be here the first day of school… the first week of school because they’re, you know, they don’t know what to do.” Brandi felt that student teaching helped develop some of her teaching skills but described substitute teaching as a better preparation tool. She said, “Student teaching, you’ve always got somebody there in the room with you. Well, for the most part, when you sub, you’re just stepping into the teacher’s shoes and you go with it…so subbing did help because you were really the one responsible for the kids and everything.” Brandi put a strong emphasis on the opportunities she had to refine her skills as a coach, Sunday School teacher, substitute teacher, and counselor.

**Brenda – Veteran Teacher #4**

Brenda grew up in a home where both parents worked. She described herself as someone who loved school and was self-motivated to do well. She said the school division that she attended (K-12) provided students with a lot of options, which allowed her to pursue goals that
She was passionate about. She described herself as someone who was not necessarily motivated by grades, but that she was simply an imaginative, curious person. She described her experiences with her teachers as positive, and that she had opportunities to pursue her passions in school.

Brenda participated in a fashion merchandising class that would lead to her first job:

I also had, well, it was basically a fashion merchandizing class, so I went into fashion design when I came out of college. That was my first career and I was encouraged by my instructors in that area...we were encouraged to follow that path.

She did not initially want to pursue a career in teaching. She pursued her passion in fashion until she lost her job. At that point, she found a career switcher teacher education program and completed courses at a community college. She felt that although her courses were instructionally sound, she could have really benefited from more experience in the classroom prior to accepting her first teaching job.

Candy – Veteran Teacher #5

Candy grew up in a home where both of her parents and her grandmother were educators. Education was viewed as important in her family and she was very interested in school. She described a passion for reading and getting good grades. She said, “I was a kid who would actually cry if I got bad grades.” Her parents expected her to do her best and were more concerned with her effort than actual grades.

She described positive experiences with teachers and valued the relationships that she was able to develop. She described positive experiences with teachers who would show up to her sporting events or spent extra time tutoring. She pursued various passions in school such as sports and journalism. Candy always wanted to be a teacher and had experience working with children before entering the classroom. She said, “I’ve always worked with kids in some way,
shape, or form. I worked at a preschool, a group home, I worked with athletics…I’ve never
thought of myself as doing anything different.” Candy described how her parents were also a
motivating factor in her decision to be a teacher. She said, “My dad legit looked at me and said
you’re a teacher. You’re a God given teacher, don’t mess with it, just go with it.” The support
from her parents and previous experience working with students were strong motivators for
Candy to enter and remain in the classroom.

Dana – Veteran Teacher #6

Dana grew up in a home where education was important, but it was not pushed. She
described how her parents were there to support her, especially when her dad would help with
math or work on the computer. Although her parents were supportive, Dana felt that she put
more pressure on herself to perform well. She had positive relationships and felt that one teacher
helped her learn to be more organized, something that she has carried with her. She also had
situations in athletics and in math where she had to persevere through some difficult situations.
She conveyed that teaching was not something she always pictured herself doing:

I never wanted to be a teacher. I was very adamant to my dad that I did not want to teach.

However, I did not know what I wanted to do. Once I graduated college, one of the

professors said they needed an emergency sub at the college. So, I went back and filled in

and I loved it. So that’s what ended up making me change my mind.

Dana described how her passion has grown in teaching because of the support from her

colleagues. She credited her parental and collegial support as important factors in her decision to

remain in the classroom.
Jake – Veteran Teacher #7

Jake’s parents were always pushing him to do his best. They were never concerned about him getting straight A’s, but they wanted him to do the best that he could. Because of his parents’ support, he increasingly became a more diligent student.

He described having positive experiences with his teachers, noting one teacher that had a significant impact on his teaching career. He credited his US History teacher with having a significant influence on his views of history and his teaching. He said that his teacher’s, “Enthusiasm for the subject and his ability to get people to think deeper about it…being sort of an activist in a sense…think about how it impacts your life from what you know and what you can do with it…” Jake began to develop a passion for the social sciences and described a difficult situation where he had to work in a mock presidential election. He described the situation as “the most challenging thing I had to do.” The mock election required Jake to “realize that, in whatever field I was going to go into, being able to complete a task to the best of my ability, even if I wasn’t necessarily enthusiastic about it, was an important skill to learn how to do.”

Jake knew he wanted to work in the field of social sciences but started working in a museum and as a park ranger. As he was working as a park ranger, he went back to school and started taking some education classes. As he took the classes, he found that he really enjoyed breaking down the information and was drawn to the concept of teaching. He credited his experience working with the parks service and serving as a park ranger in developing his skills for the classroom.

Janice – Veteran Teacher #8

Janice described herself as a quiet student who made good grades. Education was important in her family, but she described herself as someone who did what she needed to do to
get things done. She described positive experiences with her teachers, citing an experience from her fifth-grade teacher. “I really liked my fifth-grade teacher…she made me feel important…feel special. She would call on me to do special things or have me help her with activities…be her little teacher’s helper.” Janice said she always wanted to be a teacher and would go home in the afternoons and play teacher. She said she would “mimic what my teachers were doing in school” and was really inspired by her sixth-grade teacher. She described herself as never seeing herself do any other job.

**Jill – Veteran Teacher #9**

Jill’s mother was a teacher and stressed the importance of academics. Jill was an honor student and very active with sports and extracurricular activities. She described how her parents actively took a role in her education. She said, “We got home, we sat down, it was homework time. They made sure our schoolwork was done, they helped us study.” Her parents also planned vacations that were educational where they visited historical or educational parks. She said her grandparents also lived in the home and would support her education as well. They would sit and read with her or help her do math facts. Her family would even play educational games while they were riding in the car.

Jill’s positive educational experiences extended into the classroom. She had mostly positive experiences with her teachers in school. She described how she learned to push through adversity while playing sports. She faced several challenges while playing softball and track and was able to persevere through those challenges.

She described teaching as something she always wanted to do. She described how she would play school with her brother. She said, “My mom said from the time I was old enough to walk that she knew I was gonna be a teacher.” Her parents would buy her little desks or other
school items and bring them home so she could play school. She described how she worked as a Sunday School teacher, in daycares, and as a babysitter. She said, “I love kids…I always knew I wanted to work with children.” Jill’s passion for working with children and her dream of teaching was a factor in her decision to enter and remain in the classroom.

**Jim – Veteran Teacher #10**

Jim’s parents were supportive and emphasized effort. Neither of his parents graduated from a four-year college, so they really stressed education. He spoke of his struggle with spelling at a young age and how his mother would call out the words and he would write the words. He said, “I showed the effort…I might not get a 100…I might get a 90…the deal was always how much effort I put into it.” He credited his parents’ focus on his effort as giving him the opportunity to try things and fail, as long as he was giving his best. Jim’s teachers also served as strong role models who set high expectations. He was very active in sports and extracurricular activities and credited his ability to work hard and overcome challenges to his parents and sports background. He spoke of being undecided about a career path until college.

Jim did not decide on a career path until college, but knew he wanted to do something in a service field. He considered becoming a pastor but had a strong passion for sports and working with kids. He had worked in daycares and felt a calling in that area. He said teaching was the perfect combination of his two passions, sports and preaching. Jim said, “You’re trying to be an example and trying to lead them…but you’re also able to be a physical education teacher…involved in sports…those two things kind of came together and it was like, that’s the perfect job for me to do.” Jim’s passion for helping others and athletics was clearly visible in his tone and facial expressions during the interview.
Kim – Veteran Teacher #11

Education was very important in Kim’s family. Her parents made sure she and her siblings did their work and encouraged them to not settle for just getting by. Her parents were very deliberate in their approach, emphasizing the importance of education. She described how they would model or coach her and her siblings on how things should be done. When completing homework or tasks, her parents would make them redo them if they were not done correctly and challenge her and her siblings to make them better. Her parents continuously pushed her and her siblings to achieve better and do more. She said, “We were never paid for our grades. We were never, you know, bargained or rewarded for our hard work in school. It was kind of an expectation. It was our job.” She credited her work ethic and attention to detail in teaching to the lessons she learned from her parents.

Kim also gave credit to her teachers elementary through high school teachers. She had a lot of positive experiences with her teachers in school and always looked up to and respected them. In high school, she developed a passion for serving on the yearbook staff. This allowed her to explore things she was interested in and do a lot of writing. Kim was valedictorian of her senior class in high school and graduated uncertain of what career she would pursue. She explored the possibility of a teaching career but was discouraged by a lot of teachers from doing so. They contended that the challenges and financial struggles that teachers face were too much. She said, “Knowing the challenges that were ahead…the struggles…the lack of financial provision…they challenged me to reach for things that might have more prestige or money.” However, she eventually felt a calling to teach. She said, “I felt like God had given me the gifts and abilities to teach.” She credited her work in church and other experiences outside of the classroom with revealing her teaching gifts.
Sarah – Veteran Teacher #12

Sarah grew up in a home where her parents supported education, but her father did not support women as educators. He did not finish high school and worked in a broom factory after being wounded during World War II. Her mother graduated third in her high school class and was very supportive of her education. Experiences with her elementary through high school teachers were very positive. After college, she began a career as a chemist, not seeing herself as someone who could teach. After working as a chemist for a few years, she decided to respond to a newspaper advertisement for a teaching position. She described her first experience in the classroom and how it molded her into the teacher she is now:

She was an excellent teacher and we worked out the lab where she set up the first lab and showed me where things were. I set up the second one and set up enough solutions for both of our classes and we alternated like that…she was definitely a real mentor. That’s the way I think they should do student teaching.

Sarah credited those first few years of teaching and her experience with her mentor teacher as critical in her development as a teacher. She described how that experience not only impacted her teaching, but also how she would mentor other teachers later in her career. Sarah had over 40 years of experience at the time of the interview, and still had a tremendous enthusiasm for the classroom.

Sue – Veteran Teacher #13

Sue came from a home that emphasized the importance of education. Her mother was a teacher, and so she spent a lot of evenings at the school. She had a lot of positive experiences with her teachers and described one experience that really impacted her love for reading:
I remember in kindergarten, having this house, it was made out of cardboard and it was the reading house. I’m not sure of the requirements for getting to read in the reading house, but everybody wanted to read in the reading house. So, you did anything, you tried so hard to get to read in that little reading house. The teacher let me read in that reading house a lot and it just created this love for books and love for reading.

Sue’s passion for reading was supplemented with a passion for helping others. She described how she always knew she wanted to enter a profession of service. She said her decision to enter the teaching profession was validated during student teaching, as she described her love for “little children.” During the interview, Sue wore her passion for her students and reading on her face. She spoke enthusiastically about her students and how she has helped them develop a love for reading.

**Tim – Veteran Teacher #14**

Tim described himself as an average student and someone who did what he needed to do to get to the next step. He said education was important in his family, with both of his parents being college graduates. Tim spoke of positive experiences with his teachers and recalled really enjoying school. He was active in sports and band, and described himself as someone who was self-motivated. While in college, Tim had no plans of becoming a teacher. He said he actually enrolled in a graduate program to become a community counselor. However, he got a call from a school division that needed a special education teacher and they offered him a provisional teaching license. Tim felt like he could do the teaching job and earn a full-time salary to help pay for his graduate school, so he accepted the position. After getting in the classroom, he said he enjoyed it and decided to make teaching his career. He completed some education courses to earn his teaching license and would go on to earn a master’s degree in administration and
supervision. He credited his desire to remain in the classroom to his love for the students and his desire to see them succeed.

**Tom – Veteran Teacher #15**

Tom grew up in a home where both parents had attained graduate degrees and emphasized the importance of education. However, he described a different set of priorities in the home. He said, “It [education] was always important. But, from a Christian standpoint, his parents did have a different set of priorities. Education wasn’t the most important thing.” His parents viewed their Christian principles as more important than formal education; so, he attended school in public, private, and home-school settings.

He described positive experiences with his teachers in each setting and how opportunities to pursue his interests in courses were a catalyst for developing self-confidence. He was allowed to participate in several electives that allowed him to choose a direction, pursue it, and problem solve to create or develop ideas. He found it very rewarding to “get to choose something and go for it…it felt rewarding and gave you confidence that you could create, come up with things.”

Tom credited his fourth-grade science teacher, shop teacher, and Bible teacher with inspiring him to become a teacher. His fourth-grade science teacher modeled that there was a “masculine side to teaching.” He credited his shop teacher and Bible teacher with his desire and ability to develop relationships with his students. He called the relationships with these two teachers as “constructive” and “encouraging,” which showed him that teachers do have the ability to disciple or help their students grow and become better people. He described how this was a strong motivator for him to enter the profession of teaching.
Themes for the Primary Research Question

The primary research question in this study was, “What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teachers’ desire to continue teaching?” This question also brought about three sub questions investigating (1) the contextual factors that play a role in those experiences, (2) the individual factors of resilience that are revealed through their experiences, and (3) the strategies the teachers have used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching. Findings from data analysis identified seven themes that impacted the teachers’ decision to remain in the classroom. The seven themes identified through data analysis are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Reasons 15 Veteran Teachers Have Remained in the Classroom in a Rural School Division in Central Virginia (Shields, 2020)
Find a Purpose in Teaching

The veteran teachers in this study indicated that they find their purpose in teaching. Ally described, “I wake up every day, knowing that this is my purpose in this world.” Many of the teachers described a sense of purpose and belief that they were a positive influence in the lives of others. Janice described a feeling of being valued and remembered. She said, “At the end of the time that they’re with me, I want them to leave and be able to say you’re a great teacher.” Jake talked about watching kids grow and an addictive feeling from seeing kids begin to grasp concepts that they have struggled with. He said, “But when you see them…you know, what they call the aha moment…when you see them into it and you see them talking about it, making connections. That’s what really drives me.”

Faith in God was also cited as a reason for finding purpose in teaching. Kim said, “I believe that it’s a way that I can be a positive influence in the lives of others…it’s a way I can show God’s love to them.” Kim described teaching as a way she could show love, kindness, and concern for others. Kim said, “The kids need me, and they need teachers like me.” The veteran teachers in this study felt that they were working for a purpose greater than their own cause.

Positive Relationships

The development of positive relationships was another theme that continued to be discussed by the teachers. Relationships with both students and colleagues were vital to the teachers’ ability to remain in teaching. Brenda stated in her interview, “It just makes your day. I love that I see different kids and different classes and you know, I like that I see everyone.” She felt that the opportunity to develop and build relationships, help to serve as motivating factors for her to come to work every day. Tim felt that the relationships that he has developed
with students are important to his success. He said, “The most academic part you do, if it’s gonna be effective, is still at its core relational. It’s still relationship. And I really like that part.” He would go on to say that those relationships that were developed, even in difficult situations, are a rewarding part of the job and one that keeps him coming back.

A positive relationship with colleagues was important to the veteran teachers. The teachers described these relationships as supportive and deeper than an acquaintanceship. Ally said, “I love the people I work with in the PE department. And, I love all the other teachers.” Jim described a time when his colleagues supported him through a personal situation he was going through. “A few years ago, I had tough situations going on in my life and the people I work with were the ones who helped me a lot. Jim said he enjoyed working with his colleagues; he was comfortable with them; and it was exciting to have the opportunity to be in a supportive community.

Teachers described their colleagues as extended family and attributed much of their success to their colleagues. Dana said, “A lot of my success has been with the community that I’ve built or has built up around me…I feel like if you don’t have that administrative support or even your neighboring colleagues’ support, it’s going to make for a rough road.” She described an environment where in order to improve and grow as a teacher, an individual has to reflect and take criticism. She said that because of the relationships that are developed in the building, this process can occur, and teachers improve without becoming dejected or frustrated.

**Passionate about Students**

The veteran teachers in this study expressed a passion and love for their students as motivation to remain in teaching. Sarah said, “You have to love the children, that’s the whole story.” Brenda had a similar passion when she said, “I love working with kids…I love seeing
the light bulbs.” When interviewing the teachers, their faces lit up when they spoke of their students. They had an enthusiastic tone in their voice and spoke of how much they appreciate their current students and former students. Sarah described her relationship with former students affectionately: “If I’m in need of a hug, I just need to go to Walmart and there will be someone I taught in Walmart…and I’ll get a hug.” Brenda also described how the trust and respect from students is a great part of the job.

Tom described his passion for students and seeing the small moments that kids experience success. He loves seeing his students grow and build confidence in the skills that they are developing. Jill’s motivation comes from helping kids from a variety of different backgrounds persevere through the challenges they face. She said, “I’m gonna do what I have to do to be here for them.” The veteran teachers in this study time and time again spoke of their love and passion for their students. The desire to see their students be successful is a motivating factor that continues to draw them back into the classroom.

A Supportive School Culture

The teachers that participated in the interviews gave many examples of how school culture has influenced their decision to remain in the classroom. Brenda said the teachers in her building are “all there for the kids.” She said that everyone works really hard, including the bus drivers and custodians. She described a team-like atmosphere where everyone pulls his or her weight and is also there to support others when needed. She said it is “a good place to work” and that it is important for her to “really like the people I work with and respect them.” She said if it was not a positive environment, she was not sure if she would remain in that building.

Jim shared that administrative support with student behavior had made a significant impact on his decision to remain in the classroom. He said, “I appreciate the administrations
we have had here…where…if you ask students to do something reasonable…they are expected to follow a reasonable request.” He also described how a culture of student respect and subordination is important in school culture. He said, “I really have a good situation, overall. This county has kids who are pretty respectful…most often they’re going to do what you ask if it is reasonable.” Jill added that colleagues who offer support on tough days are inspirational to her. She said, “If they see us walking down the hallway, it’s like, they can tell on our face, you know, I might not be having a good day, but hey, let’s cheer each other up and try to work harder.”

The teachers also indicated that support through the provision of resources is important. Candy indicated that being provided up-to-date technology really impacted her and demonstrated that her county was committed to helping her be successful. She said, “Instituting new, little things helped bring the classroom to life…my Promethean Board is amazing compared to just a chalkboard or a projector.”

Recognizing teacher successes is another characteristic of school culture that the teachers felt important. Kim said, “Recognizing the positives and accomplishments of teachers…the things teachers are doing…teaching is not like regular public or private professions where you do a good job and you get a raise or promotion.” Recognizing teachers and the work they do, and not just the success of their students, is important to teachers. Creating culture where teachers receive support with student behavior, support with the resources they need to be effective in the classroom, and recognition for their successes are strategies administrators can use to improve school culture.
Passion for the Content

The veteran teachers in this study had a passion for their content. Ally said, “I love sports. I think when I thought about being physically active and being able to teach…those two just really kind of came together and my passion started from there.” Jake had an unbridled enthusiasm as he spoke about history. He spoke about his passion for history and how it has greatly influenced the way he teaches. He described himself as a “history nerd” and someone who after 24 years of teaching, still finds history “fresh and interesting,” because “every time I go over it, every time I’m breaking it down, I’m finding new ways to look at it.” Sarah’s face lit up with excitement as she talked about science, specifically chemistry and environmental science. She spoke about her passion of developing a curriculum on the Chesapeake Bay. Brenda spoke about her passion for art and Brandi said reading has always been her passion. When talking about her passion for books and reading, Sue said, “I love it. There’s not a day that I think, I don’t want to do this today. I love doing this right now.” Jim spoke about his love for sports and passion for exercise. The veteran teachers in this study had an enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation for researching and teaching their content.

An Accommodating Schedule

The veteran teachers in this study talked about how their work schedule aligns with their family schedule. They noted how an accommodating schedule allowed them to spend time with their families and pursue other interests outside of the classroom. Kim talked about how her family and children need “consistency” in their schedule and this job allows for that. She said, “The scheduling of the school system works well for me and that honestly is a motivator.” Janice described how she appreciates snow days and holidays off to spend with her family. She also likes her summers off to spend time with her kids. She said, “You know, snow
days, holidays, things like that and being able to spend those times with my family.” Brandi also enjoyed being on the same schedule as her children and getting an occasional snow day. She said, “I enjoy the schedule…I enjoy a snow day, too…and it’s nice that we are on pretty close to the same schedule, even though not exactly.” The accommodating work schedule for teachers in this study was an important factor in their decision to remain in the classroom.

**No Other Opportunities Have Become Available**

Four of the teachers in this study indicated they have not moved out of the classroom because they have not looked or found other opportunities. Amy talked about the lack of respect teachers receive from other career fields. She felt that a teacher’s skill set is vastly underrated and under-appreciated. She said, “I looked for a different position last year, and our skill set is just misunderstood. It doesn’t transfer outside of education…we are project managers, HR, counselor…all of those things and I don’t think people understand that.”

The teachers spoke about having too many years of service to back out of the retirement system. Kim described how she has not ruled out leaving the classroom, but at this point, no opportunities have interested her. “Opportunities haven’t opened up for anything else…I haven’t had an opportunity that would take me out of the classroom yet. I’m not saying that I would not one day if an opportunity came along that suited me.”

Fourteen of the veteran teachers spoke with a tone during this portion of the interview where they sounded content to be where they are and enjoyed their current teaching role. Only Amy presented a tone of entrapment, where she felt there was nothing else she could do. It seemed as if she felt trapped, wanting to leave the profession, but could not find anything that matched her skill set.
The Role of Contextual Factors

Contextual factors were identified in the teachers’ experiences. These factors had an impact on the teachers’ decisions to remain in the classroom. The contextual factors identified during the teacher interviews are listed in Table 4.2. Each of the factors is accompanied by a sample of the in vivo codes that were identified from the experiences of the teachers. These codes provide context for the role that each factor played in the teachers’ decisions to remain in the classroom. All the in vivo codes are not provided to avoid repetition.

Table 4.2.

Contextual Factors and Participant Responses from the Teacher Interviews (Shields, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual Factors</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Sample Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring support</td>
<td>15/15</td>
<td>“a support system”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“if you are a new teacher you have a mentor for three years”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“put them (new teachers) in the right environment”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“having those mentors, having someone to talk to, someone to bounce ideas off of”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“they’re (new teachers) not losing heart, because the mentor teachers are pointing out mistakes, and also being forgiving”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>14/15</td>
<td>“my administrator is supportive”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“my administrators are amazing, they do everything in their power to support us”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“our administrators have made it clear from the get-go that what we do is very important”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“they come into the classroom to see what’s happening”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships with colleagues</td>
<td>13/15</td>
<td>“I love the people I work with in the PE department”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“my colleagues are supportive”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“having a good partner, a good co-teacher”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“you know my co-workers are all just fabulous”</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>“we just mesh really well; we are all like a family”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m blessed to be where I am”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I’m comfortable where I am”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I feel safe where I am”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“we have a positive work environment, so that helps”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodating schedule</td>
<td>7/15</td>
<td>“the scheduling of the school system works well for me and that is honestly a motivator”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I enjoy a snow day too”</td>
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</table>
“to not work weekends, having some time off”

| Provided resources | 7/15 | “we have updated technology”
| | | “instituted new little things that helped bring the classroom to life”
| | | “I have the materials I need”
| | | “if I ask for something, I get it”
| | | “being able to get the materials we need that match the reading program”
| | | “I can’t imagine being in a school system where I didn’t have the resources we have here”
| | | “we are definitely rich in resources and supported here”
| | | “they have supported me with buying lots (of modern technology)”

| Maintained facilities | 3/15 | “our building is really old, but we know it functions well and we know it is maintained well”
| | | “our school is really clean, and I think that makes a difference”

| Treated like professionals | 2/15 | “give them (teachers) opportunities to thrive”
| | | “give them (teachers) a little bit of freedom in their classroom”
| | | “let them (teachers) have some fun”
| | | “treat them (teachers) as professionals”

| Recognize teacher successes | 2/15 | “recognizing the positives and the accomplishments of teachers”
| | | “I would say encouraging teachers…hey, you are doing a great job”
| | | “we do a lot of special activities for each other, to recognize each other”

| Parental support | 2/15 | “I have students and parents that are concerned and will help out”
| | | “the parents in that case were supportive”

**Individual Factors of Resilience**

Individual factors of resilience were identified in the teachers’ experiences. Individual factors of resilience were identified in the conceptual framework and literature review. The individual factors of resilience that had an impact on the teachers’ decisions to remain in the classroom, identified during the teacher interviews, are listed in Table 4.3. Each of the factors is accompanied by a sample of the in vivo codes that were identified from the experiences of the
teachers. These codes provide context for the role that each factor played in the teachers’
decisions to remain in the classroom. All the in vivo codes are not provided to avoid repetition.

Table 4.3.

*Individual Factors and Participant Responses from the Teacher Interviews (Shields, 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Factors</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Sample Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Perseverance       | 14/15    | “it’s time consuming and daunting some days”  
|                    |          | “we have to put a lot of extra time in”  
|                    |          | “I persevered through those rough times there”  |
| Gratification in teaching | 14/15 | “it’s a very rewarding profession”  
|                      |          | “that’s what I thrive on”  
|                      |          | “it’s very satisfying, it really is”  |
| Self-motivated     | 13/15    | “I motivated myself a lot to just do the best I could do”  
|                    |          | “I was pretty driven…self-motivated”  
|                    |          | “if you don’t work hard at it, then don’t expect it to come”  
|                    |          | “choose something and go with it”  |
| Passion for students | 12/15 | “I love the kids”  
|                      |          | “just to see them succeed”  
|                      |          | “to see them believe in who they are”  
|                      |          | “I always enjoyed working with the kids”  |
| Enthusiasm for helping others | 11/15 | “you have such an influence on so many kids lives”  
|                      |          | “I enjoy helping them learn”  
|                      |          | “it’s been very satisfying to be in a helping role”  |
| Passion for the content | 7/15 | “I love sports”  
|                      |          | “I’m very interested in the environment…I like doing science”  
|                      |          | “that’s where I fell in love with middle school aged kids”  
|                      |          | “I love this age group”  |
| Bounces back from failure | 7/15 | “when you make a mistake, learn from it and move on”  
|                      |          | “you’re going to be able to bounce back”  
|                      |          | “and you have to be able to bounce back”  |
| Seeks personal growth | 6/15 | “I reached out and used every resource that was available to me”  
|                      |          | “I just seek that help that I need”  
|                      |          | “I learn from my mistakes”  |
| Balance work/personal life | 6/15 | “you have to have a life outside of the classroom”  
|                      |          | “make sure you put family first”  
|                      |          | “people who live, eat, sleep in their classroom burnout easily”  
|                      |          | “learn how to manage your time to avoid that burnout”  |
| Adaptable          | 6/15     | “going into it with an idea of adaptability”  
|                    |          | “you just have to learn to be adaptable”  |
| Focused on student growth | 6/15 | “I love to see growth”  |
## Called to teach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I really felt like I was just called to teach”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I felt like God had given me the gifts and abilities to teach...that’s my calling”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I look at coming to teach, well, specifically here, as my mission field”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“God has me here for a reason”</td>
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## Sees the big picture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I just kind of refocus on why I’m here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you can’t take it personal”</td>
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## Manages emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“you’ve got to set yourself up to have these little victories”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“if you are locked into what you are not able to do...you will never enjoy the small things”</td>
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</tbody>
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## Stays positive

<table>
<thead>
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<th>4/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“definitely positivity...being positive, energetic”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“you go into everyday with the idea that you are going to see something positive”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“you’ve got to focus your time on the positive things that are happening”</td>
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## Mindful of others

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<th>3/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“mindful of others...respectful...compassionate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you never know whether they had dinner...whether they got any sleep at night”</td>
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## Organized

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<th>3/15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I’m organized and on top of things”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I would also say time management”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you have to be consistent”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Advocate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“it was a positive experience because I got to see that people did listen to me when I wasn’t happy and when things weren’t right”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Empathetic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have empathy for people”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you always give people the benefit of the doubt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I also have a lot of empathy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Love for their school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I really love working here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“that’s why I really love coming here”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Sense of humor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“a sense of humor...you have to be able to laugh at yourself”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I spent a lot of time in prayer”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I asked for the support and prayer of others”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies used to Overcome Challenging Experiences

During the teacher interviews, teachers were given an opportunity to share challenging experiences. The themes from the interviews included four experiences that the teachers viewed as challenging. The four themes that were identified are parent behavior, student behavior, work-life balance, and early teaching years.
Table 4.4.

*Challenging Experiences Described by the Veteran Teachers (Shields, 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenging Experiences</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Parental Complaints</td>
<td>10/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Student Behaviors</td>
<td>9/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surviving the First Few Years in Teaching</td>
<td>9/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>6/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dealing with Parental Complaints**

Issues dealing was parents was the challenge these veteran teachers identified as most significant. Eight of the teachers described dealing with parents as the most challenging components of their job. Amy described a home-school disconnect during her interview. She felt like parents often do not hold their children accountable and place an unfair burden on teachers. She said, “There’s a disconnect there…their children don’t do anything wrong…I think that disconnect makes it difficult to be a teacher.” Sarah also felt that parents were her greatest challenge as a teacher. She discussed how she has learned to navigate parent expectations over the course of her 40 years in teaching. Her biggest challenge occurs when parents blame the teacher if their child does not do his or her work.

Sarah adapted and developed a strategy to be better organized and communicate more effectively with students and prevent this type of miscommunication. When she collects work from students, if they do not have the assigned work, she requires them to turn in a pink slip with the student’s name and signature, address, date the assignment was assigned, when it was due, and why the student did not turn it in. She collects a paper from every student, so that when
parents call about an assignment, if the assignment has not been turned in, she has that pink slip with the student’s signature to show parents.

Candy described a situation where she made a decision concerning student behavior and a group of parents were not happy with her decision. She described handling the situation by having a conversation with the parents, articulating how she handled the students, and apologized for the way it was handled, but emphasized that disruptions cannot happen in her classroom. Candy felt that she handled the situation with “grace and humility” and the situation was resolved effectively with the parents.

Sue described a situation where she had a parent upset over the way an after-school activity was handled. Sue oversaw an after-school club program and had an issue with a student. She called and spoke with the mom and asked that she come pick him up from the after-school program. The parent became upset and sent an email disagreeing with the way Sue handled the situation and accused her of bullying the student. Sue communicated with her principal, who supported her throughout the process and assisted her with emailing the parent back. The parent continued to complain, going all the way to the school board with the issue. Sue was discouraged by this situation, saying “stuff like that weighs heavy on me…I’m making these decisions the way I would treat my own children…I did lose sleep over that.” The veteran teachers in this study felt that parents often do not support teacher classroom management practices and often side with the student in discipline situations.

**Managing Student Behaviors**

Student behavior was identified by the teachers as a significant challenge. Kim described a year in which she had multiple issues in class. She recounted how despite her best efforts, she felt alone and responsible for the issues in her class:
I had a class with multiple student issues. The year did not start off that way. It seemed like a normal mix of students, but as the year progressed things happened within the students’ lives and it all came to a head in my classroom. I had students in intensive therapy, suspended, students going through special education testing, and I had one on homebound because of emotional issues. I had behavior issues, day treatment coming in and out. There were a lot of things going on in my room and it seemed like, although I knew I had the support of people, it felt like it was my fault, because it was all happening in my room. It just made it really hard. I did not have a team teacher that I was working closely with, so no one knew my students. No one else took my students at all during the day; I had them all day long and there was really nobody that could share the load of the problems and the issues they had. So, you kind of feel alone, although, people say we’re here for you. You really feel alone. You felt like it was your responsibility and especially felt really bad for the good kids that were trying in spite of what was going on. I spent a lot of time in prayer that year and asked for the support and prayer of others. I reached out and used every resource that was offered to me. I took every class, every training that was offered. Yes, I wanted to know and I was interested, but I also wanted to show that I was doing everything that I could to help my students. It wasn’t that I was letting it happen. I was trying to help them through this.

Kim’s struggle with managing students with trauma, disabilities, and mental health issues was a common thread coming from the teachers in this study.

Jake mentioned how this is a new issue that has arisen in the last few years. He described how students are now coming into his classroom with severe trauma. He spoke of how he felt
limited in his capacity to help his students. According to Jake, this is an issue that has just
developed within the last 10 years of his career.

Tom had similar challenges in dealing with student trauma in his classroom. He described
students who “are not scared of consequences because they know they have been hurt in their life
already a lot worse than anything that you can do to them.” While training has been provided to
the teachers in this school division on dealing with student trauma, the teachers in this study felt
it was a significant challenge moving forward.

Surviving the First Few Years in Teaching

The challenges of being a new teacher came up over and over among the veteran teachers
in this study. The first years of teaching presented challenges with classroom management,
managing time, relationships, and planning. The veteran teachers attributed good mentoring
programs, supportive administration, experience prior to teaching, and supportive colleagues, as
key to helping them persevere through their challenges. Sarah attributed her prior experience as a
Sunday School teacher as important to her perseverance as a new teacher, but said her mentor
was also key to her success.

The nun that I was paired with, she taught first period and I taught second. She said to
me, come sit in the back and watch me teach, because they knew I had never worked with
students. She said, I’ll teach the class, you teach the class. We’ll have lunch together and
we’ll talk about it. I worked with her like that for two or three years…this six weeks here
and six weeks there, I don’t think that makes a really good teacher. I was mentored over
the years, and I think it was just tremendous.

Sarah’s experience as an early teacher was unique to this study. The opportunity to work so
closely with a veteran teacher was something that she felt greatly enhanced her development as a
teacher. Tom also spoke of receiving support during his first years of teaching. He described a situation where he made a mistake early in his career, but his principal supported him with feedback.

Experience prior to entering the classroom was also important to the teachers’ ability to handle early adversity in their careers. They described their experience working with kids prior to teaching as integral to their successful transition into the classroom. They cited experiences working with daycares, church groups, camps, and athletics as arenas where they could gain experience working with young people.

Tim attributed his work with summer camps and daycares with his ability to handle some of the challenges first year teachers often struggle with. He felt that his experience working with children outside of the classroom prepared him to handle the personal aspects of the job like “managing the classroom, creating and demonstrating expected behaviors, reinforcing expectations, and building relationships.” He described those skills as being “second nature” once he got in the classroom.

Relationships and a sense of community aided Dana early in her teaching career. She said the support she received from her administration and colleagues early in her career was key to her perseverance through adverse situations. Challenges teachers face early in their career could be supported with strong mentoring programs and support from administration and colleagues.

Maintaining Work-Life Balance

The ability to manage personal life and work life was cited as a challenge by the veteran teachers in this study. The teachers indicated that developing and maintaining balance in their lives was important in their ability to remain in the classroom. Kim described the importance of having a life outside of the classroom. She said, “A lot of people who live, eat, sleep, and breathe
in their classroom…they seem to get burned out quick when things do not go their way.” She talked about teacher burnout and teachers that don’t have balance often burnout quickly. Kim said she maintains balance by finding things to enjoy outside of work and to maintain the right perspective on the job at hand.

Amy also said that balance was incredibly important in reducing teacher burnout. She said that she puts her family first and is able to walk away at the end of the day; “Those papers that need to be graded will still need to be graded tomorrow. It’s not a big deal, you need to spend that time away.”

Developing time management skills are essential in developing balance according to Candy. She sets boundaries concerning work, because “there’s always something to think about or change, to tweak, to grade, or to email a parent.” Candy works really hard Sunday night through Thursday night to get all her grading, lesson plans, and parent communication done. She gives herself a break Friday night through Sunday afternoon. She said, “I give myself a break, because…I need to be a parent, a wife; I need to have a life, because it can consume.”

Finding hobbies or activities outside of school such as yoga or exercise was mentioned by the teachers. Brenda described yoga as something that “keeps me sane…it helps me kind of meditate and keep things straight.” The veteran teachers in this study felt that maintaining balance between work and personal life was difficult, but necessary for reducing burnout in teachers.

Chapter Summary

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study includes a demographic questionnaire that was sent to four public schools in a rural school division in Central Virginia. Twenty teachers completed the
demographic questionnaire. Out of the 20 completed questionnaires, 15 participants were selected to participate in individual interviews. The interviews were conducted at the teachers’ school. Teacher background information, the primary research question, and three sub questions were addressed with a 14-question interview protocol. Teacher responses to the questions were audio recorded and saved to a laptop. Audio recordings were transcribed using NVivo transcription software. Codes and themes were developed using MAXQDA data analysis software.

This chapter began with a review of the purpose of the study and the research questions. Demographic data from the completed demographic questionnaires was presented along with a summary of each participant’s background. The findings and themes from the participant interviews were presented with each research question. The primary research question in this study was, “What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teachers’ desire to continue teaching?” This question also brought about three sub questions investigating the contextual factors that play a role in those experiences, the individual factors of resilience that are revealed through their experiences, and the strategies the teachers have used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching.

Findings from data analysis identified seven themes that impacted the teachers’ decision to remain in the classroom. The seven themes identified through data analysis were (1) find a purpose in teaching, (2) positive relationships, (3) passionate about students, (4) a supportive school culture, (5) passionate about content; (6) an accommodating schedule; and (7) no other opportunities have become available. These themes were discussed and samples from the teachers were included. The three sub questions were answered; ten contextual factors impacting the teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom were provided along with in vivo
codes. These codes provide the context for how these factors impacted the teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom. Twenty-two individual factors of resilience were then identified in the participants. The definitions of these factors were taken from previous research included in the conceptual profile. These factors are indicative of characteristics that the teachers’ felt were important in teachers who remain in the classroom. This chapter concludes with an examination of four challenging situations the teachers expressed in their interviews and samples of how the teachers have navigated those challenges.
Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Introduction

This research focuses on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose was to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose broadly addresses induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arose from the teacher experiences. This chapter begins with an introduction which includes the purpose of the study. A summary and discussion of the findings are then discussed. Implications for policy, research, and practice are addressed, followed by conclusions.

Summary of Findings

This research focused on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The study included a demographic questionnaire that was sent to four public schools within that school division. Twenty teachers completed the demographic questionnaire. Out of the 20 completed questionnaires, 15 participants were selected to participate in individual interviews. The interviews were conducted at the teachers’ school. Teacher background information, the primary research question, and three sub questions were addressed with a 14-question interview protocol. Teacher responses to the questions were audio recorded and saved to a laptop. Audio recordings were then transcribed using NVivo Transcription Software. Codes and themes were then developed using MAXQDA data analysis software.

Of the participants that completed the demographic questionnaire, 16 were female and four were male. The teachers taught at a range of grade levels, with nine of the teachers having
K-5 experience, four with 9-12 experience, three with 6-12 experience, two with 6-8 experience, one with K-8 experience, and one with K-12 experience. The participants also demonstrated a range of experience, with six teachers having 10-15 years, nine teachers with 16-20 years, four teachers with 21-25 years, and one teacher with 40+ years of experience. Out of the teachers that completed the questionnaire, 15 teachers were purposefully selected and agreed to take part in an individual interview.

In the interviews, all participants indicated that education was important in their families and they had parental support during their K-12 education. Five of the teachers indicated that they had always wanted to be a teacher, while 10 indicated that they did not initially want to become a teacher. None of the teachers indicated that they felt prepared for teaching upon graduation from their teacher preparation program. All teachers said that experience in the classroom, combined with effective mentorship, is the best way to master the craft of teaching.

The primary research question in this study was, “What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teachers’ desire to continue teaching?” This question also brought about three sub questions investigating the (1) the contextual factors that play a role in those experiences, (2) the individual factors of resilience that are revealed through their experiences, and (3) the strategies the teachers have used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching. Findings from data analysis identified seven themes that impacted the teachers’ decision to remain in the classroom. The seven themes identified through data analysis were (1) find a purpose in teaching, (2) positive relationships, (3) passionate about students, (4) a supportive school culture, (5) passionate about content; (6) an accommodating schedule; and (7) no other opportunities have become available.
Ten contextual factors impacting the teachers’ decision to remain in the classroom were then identified using the teachers’ own words. These codes provide the context for how these contextual factors impacted the teachers’ decision to remain in the classroom. Mentoring support, administrative support, and relationships with colleagues were the top three contextual factors that were indicated by the teachers.

Twenty-two individual factors of resilience were then identified in the participants. The definition of these factors was taken from previous research included in the conceptual profile. These individual factors were identified in the teachers’ based on their statements during the interview.

Four themes emerged from the teachers when asked about challenging situations they had faced in teaching. The four themes that emerged were (1) dealing with parental complaints, (2) managing student behaviors, (3) surviving the first few years in teaching, and (4) maintaining work-life balance. The teachers indicated that dealing with parents and parental behavior was their most difficult challenge. The teachers expressed that administrative support and collegial relationships are critical in support of dealing with parents and student behavior. The teachers indicated that teaching is a stressful profession and maintaining a healthy balance is important. Teachers stressed the importance of spending time with family and making time for personal hobbies and interests. Several teachers felt that their first few years of teaching were extremely stressful. They indicated that without the support of their colleagues and administration, they may not have survived in the profession.
Discussion of Findings

This section will discuss the findings in relation to the conceptual framework and literature review in Chapter 2.

Table 5.1.

*Findings, Supporting Data and Literature, and Implications (Shields, 2020).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Supporting Data for Finding</th>
<th>Supporting Literature for Finding</th>
<th>Implication for Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding 1: Resilient Teachers Display Individual Factors.</td>
<td>22 individual factors were identified in the veteran teachers.</td>
<td>Resilient teachers display individual factors (Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016)</td>
<td>More research needs to be conducted on the specific individual factors of resilience and how they are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 2: Resilient Teachers Believe Education is Important.</td>
<td>15 out of 15 teachers identified education as important.</td>
<td>Resilient teachers believe education is important (Polidore, 2004; Taylor, 2013)</td>
<td>Recruit and hire teachers that are self-motivated and view teaching as purposeful or “a calling.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 3: Resilient Teachers Find their Purpose in Teaching.</td>
<td>14 out of 15 teachers said they find purpose in teaching.</td>
<td>Resilient teachers find purpose in their teaching (Gu &amp; Day, 2013; Taylor, 2013)</td>
<td>Maintain an open-door policy for teachers. Provide teachers with strong mentors and opportunities to develop collegial relationships. Display empathy with the daily demands of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 4: Resilient Teachers are Passionate about their Students.</td>
<td>12 out of 15 teachers said they were passionate about their students.</td>
<td>Teachers that display passion for their students are more resilient than those that aren’t (Bennett et al., 2013; Perrachione et al., 2008; Robertson-Kraft &amp; Duckworth, 2014).</td>
<td>Recruit and hire teachers that are organized, reflective, and passionate about students and their content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 5: Resilient Teachers are</td>
<td>9 out of the 15 teachers said they were</td>
<td>A teacher’s passion for content serves as</td>
<td>Mentor teachers observe their mentee. They are then observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 6: Resilient Teachers display Perseverance.</td>
<td>15 out of 15 teachers said that bouncing back from failure and persevering through adverse situations is important.</td>
<td>Managing emotions and persevering through challenges are characteristics of a resilient teacher (Mansfield et al., 2012).</td>
<td>Seek out teachers who have displayed an ability to persevere through challenges or have demonstrated they can bounce back from failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 7: Contextual Factors Play a Role in the Development of Resilience</td>
<td>15 out of 15 teachers identified contextual factors that have impacted their development of resilience.</td>
<td>Contextual factors have an impact on a teacher’s development of resilience (Ainsworth &amp; Oldfield, 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Whipp &amp; Salin, 2018).</td>
<td>Support teachers with the resources they need to be effective in the classroom. Reduce the teacher’s workload by not overloading them with tasks that are not necessary or beneficial to student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 8: Positive Administrative Support Fosters Teacher Resilience.</td>
<td>14 out of 15 teachers said that the support of their administration was a factor in their decision to remain in the classroom.</td>
<td>Administrative support is an important contextual factor in developing teacher resilience and retaining teachers (Boyd et al., 2011; Nydoye et al., 2010)</td>
<td>1. Recognize teacher strengths and successes. Provide support with student discipline and parental concerns by establishing clear expectations. 2. Division or school wide professional development should take place to share information that everyone needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding 9: Positive Relationships Facilitate the</td>
<td>13 out of 15 teachers said that positive relationships with their colleagues was important in the development of</td>
<td>Positive relationships are important in the development of</td>
<td>1. More research is needed investigating the components of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Finding 10: Positive School Culture Grows Teacher Resilience.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Resilience</th>
<th>Important in their development as a teacher.</th>
<th>Teacher resilience (Le Cornu, 2013; Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016).</th>
<th>Effective collegial relationships.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Provide teachers time each day where they can communicate with their colleagues. Have social gatherings before or after school to provide opportunities to develop comradery.

3. As policymakers consider the timing and layout of instructional days, there should be a concerted effort to take teacher recommendations into consideration.

4. Mentor teachers need to communicate school culture, expectations, and procedures. They provide feedback on lesson plans, lesson delivery, and classroom management.

10 out of 15 teachers stated that the positive culture within their school was an important factor in their decision to remain in the classroom.

School culture is important in developing teacher resilience and improving teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Whipp & Salin, 2018).

1. Seek out teachers that enjoy working with others, are relational, and are good communicators.

2. Future research into this contextual factor should focus on how specific characteristics of school culture impact the development of teacher resilience.
<p>| Finding 11: Resilient Teachers See the Big Picture. | 11 out of 15 teachers commented on how during times of adversity they maintain balance and trust their support from colleagues and administration. They prioritize relationships and to avoid burnout. | Emotional exhaustion is a cause of teacher burnout (Grayson &amp; Alvarez, 2008). Protective factors and supportive colleagues can minimize the impact of adverse situations (Grissom, 2011; Gu &amp; Day, 2007; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011) | Policymakers should provide more funding for mentor teachers so that administrators can develop schedules where mentors and mentees have an opportunity to collaborate on a regular basis. Funds for additional personnel, stipends, and training should be provided so that mentor teachers do not burnout themselves. Mentoring should be a rewarding experience for both the mentor and mentee. For mentoring to occur, more personnel will be required to reduce the workload of all teachers. |
| Finding 12: Resilient Teachers Value Experience | 12 out of 15 teachers stated that experience in the classroom was their greatest teacher. | Professional experiences play a role in developing teacher resilience (Le Cornu, 2009). | Policymakers should reduce the initial requirements for teachers to obtain a teaching license. A change in this policy would allow teachers to complete the academic requirements needed to enter the classroom. An apprenticeship program could be developed where teachers who have just graduated from a teacher preparation program could be hired in schools and gain experience under the three-year induction program just |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding 13: Resilient Teachers Value Strong Mentors</th>
<th>15 out of 15 teachers said that a strong mentoring program would be beneficial for new teachers.</th>
<th>Providing teachers with strong mentors can help guide teachers through challenges (Tait, 2008; Yost, 2006).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. More research needs to be done by looking at the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and mentoring programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mentor teachers work to develop mentee strengths. They empower them to make decisions and then provide feedback. When challenges occur, they provide support and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Mentor teachers provide mentee teachers with support in communicating with parents. They advocate for new teachers who struggle with various aspects of the job. They help their mentee to bounce back from failure by providing support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding 14: Resilient Teachers Desire Relevant Professional Development</th>
<th>Five out of 15 teachers stated that professional development that is teacher driven is critical to their success.</th>
<th>Professional development should be provided for teachers that meet the individual needs of each teacher (Bozkus &amp; Bayrak, 2019;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Teachers should be allowed to attend or design professional development that is pertinent to them, so that they can focus on improving.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Professional development should be</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
implemented for mental health, strategies to handle adversity, communication with parents, dealing with difficult parents, and maintaining work-life balance.

The conceptual framework for this study utilized the four dimensions of resilience identified by Mansfield et al. (2012). In the study, Mansfield et al. (2012) examined the factors of resilience from the perspective of graduating and early career teachers. This study identified the individual and contextual factors associated with the veteran teachers experiences that participated in the individual interviews. The literature review synthesized empirical research with four headings associated with teacher retention. The four headings were (1) individual factors, (2) contextual factors, (3) teacher stress and burnout, and (4) strategies that cultivate resilience. The empirical research contained in the literature will be discussed in association with the findings of this study.

The following table places each of these factors from the veteran teachers in one of the four dimensions attributed to Mansfield et al. (2012).

Table 5.2.

*Individual and Contextual Factors of Veteran Teachers Attributed to Mansfield et al. (2012)*

*Dimensions of Resilience (Shields, 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession Related</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Motivational</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treated Like Professionals</td>
<td>Mentoring Support</td>
<td>Accommodating Schedule</td>
<td>Recognize Teacher Successes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided Resources</td>
<td>Relationships with Colleagues</td>
<td>Sees the Big Picture</td>
<td>Parental Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained Facilities</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>Seeks Personal Growth</td>
<td>Empathetic Sense of Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>Mindful of Others</td>
<td>Love for their School</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Environment Organized</td>
<td>Passion for Students</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Focus on Student Growth</td>
<td>Manages Emotions</td>
<td>Stays Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enthusiasm for Helping Others</td>
<td>Bounces Back from Failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passion for the Content</td>
<td>Gratification in Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Motivated</td>
<td>Called to Teach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The veteran teachers in this study presented individual and contextual factors that were in line with the conceptual framework. This finding suggests that the veteran teachers in this study demonstrated characteristics of resilience and identified contextual factors that played a role in their development of those characteristics. The individual and contextual factors identified in the veteran teachers will be discussed in the following sections.

**Finding 1 - Resilient Teachers Display Individual Factors**

Individual factors were derived from the teachers’ experiences recorded in this study. The 22 individual factors identified in this study corroborate with the empirical research reviewed in the literature review. While no new factors emerged from this study, the experiences and words of these teachers will add to the research on these individual factors. The evidence of these individual factors further strengthens the correlation between teacher resilience and teacher retention.
Finding 2 - Resilient Teachers Believe Education is Important

The interviewees in this study all identified that education was important in their families and that they had parental support during their K-12 years. The teachers discussed how this focus on education had driven them to be successful students. Twelve of the teachers discussed how they now emphasize education in their own families. This finding coincides with Taylor (2013) and Polidore (2004), who found that education was important to teachers who display resilience in the classroom.

Finding 3 - Resilient Teachers Find their Purpose in Teaching

It was evident in the interviewees, by their words and gestures, that education was something that they were passionate about. They described “a feeling of purpose” and how they felt “they could make a difference.” Five of the teachers felt this “calling to teach” began when they were young. They described how they would go home and “play school” at the end of each day. The phenomenon of a “calling” or “sense of purpose” is supported by the research of Gu and Day (2013). The teachers’ enthusiasm for helping others was intertwined with their gratification in their teaching. They called teaching a “rewarding profession” as they described the influence they have on the lives of the children.

Finding 4 - Resilient Teachers are Passionate about their Students

The enthusiasm and gratification the teachers displayed was also evident in the passion they had for students and their school. They described how they “love the kids” and just want to see them succeed. Perrachione et al. (2008) also found that the individual factor of working with students has a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction. Bennett et al. (2013) found that teachers who felt their job was a calling and who had a passion for working with students were more likely to remain in the classroom. Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth (2014) identified that
passion in teachers often leads to perseverance and that teachers are more likely to remain in their schools.

**Finding 5 - Resilient Teachers are Passionate about their Content**

The interviewees in this study also demonstrated a passion for their content. This passion for content falls in line with the teachers’ passion for teaching. The students and content serve as a motivational factor for the teachers. They described a love for sports, love for history, love for this age of children. The teachers described how their intrinsic desire to learn more about their content area to help their students continues to drive their growth as a teacher. This finding falls in line with the motivational component of Mansfield et al. (2012) dimensions of teacher resilience.

**Finding 6 - Resilient Teachers display Perseverance**

The teachers attributed their passion for students and content with their ability to persevere through challenging situations. They described how some days are daunting and there is a lot of work that comes with teaching, but that it is all worth it for the students. The interviewees described how being able to bounce back from adverse situations is critical to the perseverance of a teacher. They attributed their focus on remaining positive and on student growth as key to their ability to bounce back from failure. As identified in Mansfield et al. (2012), the teachers described an ability to manage their emotions and to be mindful of other individuals, always trying to see the big picture.

A significant finding from the literature review was the individual factor of self-efficacy (Gu & Day, 2013; Hong, 2012; Mansfield et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2016). The research indicated that teachers who remain in the classroom often display a confidence in their skills within the classroom. The teachers interviewed for this study did not demonstrate or describe
confidence in their abilities as a factor for them remaining in the classroom. The teachers described experience as important in their development as a teacher, but the teachers in this study presented an undertone in their comments; they needed support and were not always confident in what they were doing. They described a need for support and a reliance on their colleagues and administration for that support. The finding of self-efficacy in the classroom as a variable in a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom was not supported in this study. Despite their lack of confidence at times during their career, these teachers persisted when faced with challenges.

**Finding 7 - Contextual Factors Play a Role in the Development of Resilience**

Prior research in teacher resilience and retention found that contextual factors are influential in a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Dupriez, et al., 2016; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Malloy & Allen 2007; Perrachione et al., 2008; Whipp & Salin, 2018). This study identified 10 contextual factors (see Table 6) that were identified by the interviewees as important in their decision to remain in the classroom. The development of a school culture that includes a supportive administration, genuine relationships, and a strong mentoring program was very important to the veteran teachers interviewed for this study.

**Finding 8 - Positive Administrative Support Fosters Teacher Resilience**

The teachers’ description of administrative support was like the findings of Nydoye et al. (2010). The teachers described their administrators as “supportive” and “always having their back” when dealing with student or parent issues. When discussing how their administrators communicate expectations and policy, the teachers used the terms “good communicators” and “organized.” Boyd et al. (2011) found that empowering teachers and implementing a collective approach is significant in the retention of teachers. The interviewees in this study attributed their
administrators with providing them with autonomy in their classrooms, saying they “trusted them [teachers] as professionals.” They described their administrators as individuals who “go above and beyond what is required” when describing their approach to daily tasks and relationships.

**Finding 9 - Positive Relationships Facilitate the Development of Teacher Resilience**

Mansfield et al. (2016) and Le Cornu (2013) found that relationships are critical in the growth of teacher resilience. The teachers in this study described an atmosphere where relationships were a priority. The teachers used terms such as “family,” “supportive,” “blessed,” and “friendly” when describing their co-workers. They indicated that the strong bonds that have been built with other teachers are critical to their success. The ability to “have someone to bounce ideas off of” and “have someone to talk to” came up with the teachers consistently. They attributed these strong relationships as a motivating factor in their decision to remain in the classroom. In the development of these relationships, seven teachers indicated that the relationships were built early in their teaching career. These teachers were provided strong mentor teachers and developed relationships that were supportive and collaborative, so that the teachers could learn and ask questions.

**Finding 10 - A Positive School Culture Grows Teacher Resilience**

Like Whipp and Salin (2018), the teachers described support with school discipline, support with parents, the provision of autonomy, and a collaborative environment as key to the school culture. Several teachers also indicated that if the school culture was not supportive, they would not continue to teach. Teachers indicated that their ability to collaborate and be involved in decision making was important to them. This finding is supported by the research of Malloy and Allen (2007), who found that genuine personal relationships and involvement in decision making are important factors for teachers.
Boyd et al. (2011) found that facilities and maintenance can impact a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom. Three of the interviewees identified the condition of their building and the support of their custodial staff as reasons why they have remained in the classroom. Despite the age of the buildings, teachers described them as clean and well-maintained. The teachers also spoke of how they are provided the resources that they need. The teachers spoke of how they have been provided the financial resources to purchase what is needed for instruction. This finding is in line with Kersaint et al. (2007), who found that administrative and financial support were factors in teacher decisions to remain in the classroom.

Seven of the teachers described an accommodating schedule as a reason they have remained in the classroom. This is a new finding within the scope of this research. The teachers described the work schedule and days off as a motivating factor in their decision to remain in the classroom. Being on the same schedule and having summers off to spend time with family were identified as important. The teachers also described having an occasional holiday or snow day made the profession more enjoyable.

In the literature, compensation was presented as a significant contextual factor in a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom (Garcia et al., 2009; Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill, 2012; Steele et al., 2010). The interviewees in this study mentioned compensation as a challenge, but did not attribute compensation as a factor in their decision to remain in the classroom. The teachers in this study referenced compensation as a challenge that they were aware of before entering the profession, noting that they did not enter the profession to “make a lot of money.” The finding of compensation as a significant factor in determining a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom was not supported by this study.
Finding 11 - Resilient Teachers See the Big Picture

According to Fitchett et al. (2018), 25% of new teachers suffer burnout symptoms during their first year of teaching. Grayson and Alvarez (2008) identified emotional exhaustion as the strongest contributor to teacher burnout. The interviewees in this study cited that teaching requires a balance of work and personal time. They described making a life outside of the classroom and “putting family first” as critical to maintaining balance. They described individuals who “live, eat, sleep their classrooms” as those who burnout quickly.

School culture and administrative support also seemed to play a role in reducing the teachers’ stress and burnout in this study. The teachers’ description of supportive colleagues and administrators fell in line with previous research into teacher adversity (Allensworth et al., 2009; Grissom, 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011). The teachers described an administration that is flexible and allows them to leave school for family issues. Administrators were praised for their support in dealing with stressful parent issues and student discipline.

Thirteen of the teachers described experiences where they had faced adversity in their classroom. Eleven of them spoke of how they could overcome the adversity with the support of their administration and colleagues. They detailed how the adverse experiences made them stronger and were a learning experience. Two of the interviewees discussed experiences at a school outside of their current school division. They described how their administrators were not supportive and so they left that school division. Gu and Day (2007) found that protective factors can minimize the impact of adverse situations. Based on the testimony of the teachers in this study, the two important protective factors that are key to the development of teacher resilience are school culture and administrative support.
Finding 12 - Resilient Teachers Value Experience

Nine of the teachers in this study did not feel like they were prepared when they graduated from their teaching preparation program. Some of the teachers described feeling that they were prepared, but when looking back, were totally unprepared. Fontaine et al. (2012) had a similar finding that teachers left preparation programs with confidence, but that confidence waned after their first year of teaching. The teachers in this study described a lack of experience in the classroom and too much academic work as negative practices in teacher preparation programs. Teachers with experience working with children prior to entering the classroom displayed confidence in dealing with non-instructional components such as classroom management and developing positive relationships. Le Cornu (2009) found that professional experiences play a role in building teacher resilience. Communication with parents and students, time management, coping strategies, and the development of collegial relationships were skills the interviewees felt were important and lacking in teacher preparation programs.

Finding 13 - Resilient Teachers Value Strong Mentors

The teachers in this study attributed experience as the number one strategy to develop resilience in the classroom. They described situations where they had to learn and grow, despite their failure. The teachers stated a mentoring program is needed to develop a relationship between a veteran teacher and a novice teacher. This relationship should not be strictly about course content and instructional strategies, but should include conversations about all aspects of teaching. Many of the teachers described a mentoring system where teachers are considered “buddies.” They meet on a regular basis and have discussions about classroom culture, instructional practices, expectations, and classroom management. The mentor relationship should allow for both teachers to observe each other and provide feedback. These relationships should
extend beyond the first year of teaching, to a minimum of three years. Curtis (2012) found that teachers often go into teaching with a desire to help others but are often discouraged from a lack of administrative support and poor working conditions. Providing teachers with mentors that build strong relationships is important in improving working conditions.

**Finding 14 - Resilient Teachers Desire Relevant Professional Development**

Professional development within the school division was not viewed in a positive light by the interviewees. The teachers stated that division-wide professional development often does not pertain to them or is not usable. The teachers cited that more specific and personalized professional development would be more beneficial. Bozkus and Bayrak (2019) found that professional development should be provided for teachers that meet the individual needs of each teacher. This finding supports the need to provide teachers with the autonomy to choose professional development that matches their needs and time restraints.

**Implications for Policy**

The work schedule for teachers in this study was a significant factor in their decision to remain in the classroom. The teachers conveyed that they appreciate their summers off and daily routine. School leaders should continue to keep this in mind as they develop school division schedules. As school leaders consider the timing and layout of instructional days, there should be a concerted effort to take teacher recommendations into consideration. The work schedule described by teachers provides them with an opportunity to develop balance in their lives.

The veteran teachers in this study stated that mentoring programs should include opportunities for new teachers to develop strong relationships with veteran teachers and a reduced workload for new teachers. They also said that mentor teachers should be provided more compensation for their work as a mentor teacher. Elected officials should provide more funding
for mentor teachers so that administrators can develop schedules where mentors and mentees have an opportunity to collaborate on a regular basis. Funds for additional personnel, stipends, and training should be provided so that mentor teachers do not burnout themselves. Mentoring should be a rewarding experience for both the mentor and mentee. For mentoring to occur, more personnel will be required to reduce the workload of all teachers. School leaders should pair novice teachers with a mentor teacher for a three-year period, where the mentee has a reduced workload and can observe their mentor teacher, converse, and develop a collegial relationship. By providing teachers with a reduced workload, they can ease into the profession and gradually absorb the work that is required. It will also allow them to develop the relational skills necessary to manage their classrooms.

The teachers interviewed in this study and previous research indicated that they did not feel their teacher preparation program provided them with enough experience in the classroom (Curtis, 2012; Fontaine et al., 2012). School leaders should reduce the initial requirements for teachers to obtain a teaching license. A change in this policy would allow teachers to complete the academic requirements needed to enter the classroom. An apprenticeship program could be developed where teachers who have just graduated from a teacher preparation program could be hired in schools and gain experience under the three-year induction program just mentioned. This would provide teachers with experience in the school that they will be working at and with the mentorship they need. One of the teachers in this study indicated that he was hired in the school where he completed his student teaching, and that it really helped him transition into his first few years of teaching.
Implications for Research

There is not a significant amount of research in the field of teacher resilience. This study examined the very broad scope of why veteran teachers have remained in the classroom and if there were any factors of resilience present in those teachers. The factors of resilience that were identified in this study are in line with the factors that have been presented in previous research. More research needs to be conducted on the specific individual factors of resilience and how they are developed. Additional research is also needed on the strategies that school administrators use to develop resilience in teachers within their schools.

A key finding that arose in this study was the importance of collegial relationships. More research is needed investigating the components of effective collegial relationships. In this study, teachers identified their relationships with colleagues as supportive, friendly, and family like. Additional research investigating the actions that take place within these relationships would be beneficial to both teachers and school administrators.

The importance of relationships, both with veteran teachers and novice teachers, has been shown in research to be significant (Le Cornu, 2013; Mansfield et al., 2016). The development of positive relationships in teacher preparation programs and mentoring programs may be important in the future recruitment and retention of teachers. More research needs to be done by looking at the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and mentoring programs. In this study, 13 teachers stated that their teacher preparation program was not adequate in preparing them for the classroom. Research investigating effective and non-effective teacher preparation programs should be conducted. The teachers in this study stated that a blended model of teacher preparation and mentoring would be effective. Research into the strategies to better blend the
two experiences should be investigated so that novice teachers can better transition into the classroom.

School culture was a reason the interviewees in this study decided to remain in the classroom. This finding is supported by previous research in teacher retention and resilience (Malloy & Allen, 2007; Tait, 2008; Whipp & Salin, 2018). Future research into this contextual factor should focus on how specific characteristics of school culture impact the development of teacher resilience. Current practices that school leaders employ to develop a positive school culture should be examined to determine potential relationships with teacher resilience. As more and more relationships between practice and resilience are discovered, school leaders will be provided with more resources to develop positive school culture and improve teacher retention.

**Implications for Practice**

When developing a program to improve teacher resilience, administrators should include all four dimensions of resilience. The following framework (Table 5.3.) was designed to provide school administrators a resource when developing programs to support their teachers and build a resilient school culture. This framework was designed using both the data from the conceptual framework and the experiences of the veteran teachers interviewed. The framework includes actions for recruitment and hiring, school culture, mentoring, and professional development.

**Table 5.3.**

*Framework for Building a Culture of Resilience in Schools* (Shields, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Motivational</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Hiring</td>
<td>Recruit and hire teachers that are organized, reflective, and passionate about students and</td>
<td>Seek out teachers that enjoy working with others, are relational, and are good</td>
<td>Recruit and hire teachers that are self-motivated and view teaching as purposeful or “a</td>
<td>Seek out teachers who have displayed an ability to persevere through</td>
</tr>
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their content. Design interview questions to evaluate those characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design interview questions to evaluate those characteristics.</th>
<th>calling.” Design interview questions to evaluate those characteristics.</th>
<th>challenges or have demonstrated they can bounce back from failure. Design interview questions to evaluate those characteristics.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Culture</strong></td>
<td>Support teachers with the resources they need to be effective in the classroom. Reduce the teacher’s workload by not overloading them with tasks that are not necessary or beneficial to student learning.</td>
<td>Provide teachers time each day where they can communicate with their colleagues. Have social gatherings before or after school to provide opportunities to develop comradery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Mentor teachers need to communicate school culture, expectations, and procedures. They provide feedback on lesson plans, lesson delivery, and classroom management.</td>
<td>Mentor teachers observe their mentee. They are then observed by the mentee (peer coaching). They meet often to discuss strategies to improve classroom management, instruction, and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
<td>Division or school wide professional development</td>
<td>Time should be assigned for community groups to meet</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Maintain an open-door policy for teachers. Provide teachers with strong mentors and opportunities to develop collegial relationships. Display empathy with the daily demands of teaching.
should take place to share information that everyone needs. regularly to discuss challenges and strategies to improve. This will build comradery among staff. development that is pertinent to them, so that they can focus on improving. mental health, strategies to handle adversity, communication with parents, dealing with difficult parents, and maintaining work-life balance.

Recruitment and Hiring

The veteran teachers interviewed in this study indicated that education was important to them and that they were self-motivated from a very early age (Mansfield et al., 2012; Taylor, 2013). Five of the teachers indicated that teaching was something that they had always envisioned themselves doing (Polidore, 2004; Taylor, 2013). Fourteen of the teachers described how they find purpose in teaching, while 11 of them described being passionate about helping others (Bennett et al., 2013; Mansfield et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Taylor, 2013). Twelve teachers spoke of their passion for students while nine of them spoke about their passion for their content (Bennett et al., 2013; Mansfield et al., 2012; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014; Taylor, 2013). Thirteen of the teachers described themselves as self-motivated (Schunk et al., 2008). Fourteen of the teachers spoke about the importance of relationships and communication in teaching (Mansfield et al., 2012; Towers, 2017). All 15 teachers spoke about the importance of persevering through challenges and being able to bounce back from failure (Martin, 2016; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). These individual factors identified in this framework for the recruitment and hiring of teachers have been shown in this study and previous research to be important in the development of teacher resilience. (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Bennett et al., 2013; Mansfield et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2004; Taylor, 2013).
School Culture

In this study, seven teachers indicated that provision of necessary resources played a role in their decision to remain in the classroom (Castro et al., 2010; Mansfield et al., 2012). Twelve of the teachers indicated that additional responsibilities impact their enjoyment and satisfaction in their workplace (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Kersaint et al., 2007; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Fourteen of the teachers spoke about the importance of both collegial and student relationships (Le Cornu, 2013; Mansfield et al., 2012; Towers, 2017). Fourteen of the teacher interviewees spoke about the importance of administrative support and its role in their decision to remain in the classroom (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Kersaint et al., 2007; Nydoye et al., 2010). The teachers gave reference to administrative support in acknowledging teacher success and in dealing with parental concerns and student discipline. The interviewees also acknowledged the importance of mentoring in developing positive and professional relationships (Curtis, 2012; Fontaine et al., 2012; Malloy & Allen, 2007). The contextual factors inserted into this framework for developing teacher resilience were identified both in this study and from previous research (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Curtis, 2012; Le Cornu, 2013; Nydoye et al., 2010).

Mentor Teachers

Mentor support was discussed by eight teachers in this study, specifically. Support from veteran colleagues was identified by 13 of the teachers as important in their development as a teacher (Curtis, 2012; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Tait, 2008; Yost, 2006). The teachers discussed issues that new teachers face such as classroom management, dealing with parents, lesson planning, lesson delivery, developing relationships, and learning how to bounce back from failure (Castro et al., 2010; Curtis, 2012; Le Cornu, 2009; Mansfield et al., 2012; Yonezaw et al., 2011). The strategies that were incorporated in this framework for improving mentoring support
were drawn from the experiences of these teachers and the empirical research from the literature review (Castro et al., 2010; Curtis, 2012; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2004; Tait, 2008; Yost, 2006).

**Professional Development**

Professional development was mentioned by eight teachers in this study. The veteran teachers in this study did not have a positive view of professional development in their school division, although a few spoke of specific professional development opportunities in a positive light. The veteran teachers in this study felt that their current mode of professional development was at times a waste of time, and not applicable to them. They felt that professional development should be more personal and would be better served to address the specific needs of individual teachers (Bozkus & Bayrak, 2019; Patterson et al., 2004). The teachers mentioned that often professional development only focuses on the technical aspects of the job. The teachers felt that it would be beneficial to provide more professional development opportunities that address other aspects of the job (Castro et al., 2010; Yonezaw et al., 2011). The strategies incorporated in this framework were developed using the experiences of the teachers in this study and the research included in the literature review (Castro et al., 2010; Patterson et al., 2004; Yonezaw et al., 2011).

**Conclusions**

This study aimed to address a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The veteran teachers interviewed in this study gave seven reasons for why they have chosen to remain in the classroom. Those reasons were (1) a supportive school culture; (2) positive relationships; (3) a purpose in teaching; (4) passionate about students; (5) passionate about content; (6) an accommodating schedule; and (7) no other
opportunities available. This study took place in one rural school division in Central Virginia. The reasons these teachers gave are not applicable to all teachers but do add to the research on why veteran teachers choose to remain in the classroom.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that may influence teacher resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience through the lens of this group of veteran teachers. This study identified 10 contextual factors and 22 individual factors of resilience through the experiences of these teachers. These factors were assigned to one of the four dimensions attributed to Mansfield et al. (2012). The contextual and individual factors were found to be in line with the conceptual framework.

An additional purpose of the study was addressed through the development of a framework for school administrators to use in developing a resilient culture within their school. This framework provided personnel actions that school administrators could implement within their schools to improve teacher resilience. Personnel actions at school or district levels for recruiting and hiring teachers, improving school culture, developing a mentoring program, and providing professional development are included in the framework and covered in this study. This conceptual framework was developed using the empirical research cited and the teacher responses from the interviews I conducted.

Developing and retaining teachers is something that I have been passionate about since moving into school administration. From the beginning of this research process, I wanted to investigate why veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. As a school administrator, I felt this information would serve me and my colleagues well in developing programs to retain teachers. I also felt that it would provide insight into the effective components
in developing a positive school culture. I hope that other practitioners and researchers can benefit from this document.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Findings from this study identified the reasons veteran teachers have remained in the classroom within one rural school division in Central Virginia. The study utilized a small sample size to identify these reasons. Future research should include a larger sample size and compare among rural, urban, and suburban school districts to identify the individual and contextual factors that are present. Identifying these factors are important in developing policies and practices to improve teacher retention.

The individual and contextual factors identified in this study and previous research need more exploration. The nuances of each factor need to be better understood by conducting an in-depth analysis of them. The benefits of this research would not only improve teacher retention, but would produce practices to improve teacher growth and development.

Lastly, more research is needed to identify the strategies teachers employ when dealing with adversity. This research investigated the challenges and strategies of a small group of teachers. More research needs to be conducted on a larger scale to identify the challenges that are associated with school divisions serving rural, urban, and suburban populations. Identifying the strategies teachers employ when dealing with challenging situations will improve teacher resilience and retention. Future research should aim to identify the nuances of resilience and how they are connected to teacher retention.
References


Bennett, S. V., Brown, J. J., Kirby-Smith, A., & Severson, B. (2013). Influences of the


Tait, M. (2008). Resilience as a contributor to novice teacher success, commitment, and


Waddell, H.J. (2010). Fostering relationships to increase teacher retention in urban schools.
Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 4(1), 70-85.


## APPENDIX A

### Literature Review Table

**Factors that Impact Teachers’ Remaining in the Classroom (Shields, 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author and Year</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Purpose/Goals</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Leadership/Policy Implications</th>
<th>Methods/Data Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, Brown, Kirby-Smith, &amp; Severson (2013)</td>
<td>Influences of the Heart: Novice and Experienced Teachers Remaining in the Field</td>
<td>Factors influencing teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching.</td>
<td>Teachers that stuck with teaching had a passion for their career. They noted origination on a personal and spiritual level. A calling. Spending summer with family was important.</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>School leaders must find a way to support teachers with mentors, strong leadership, and autonomy.</td>
<td>Qualitative, Phenomenological/Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, &amp; Wyckoff (2011)</td>
<td>The Influence of School Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions</td>
<td>To examine the relationship between teacher turnover and (a) teachers’ own characteristics (i.e., what types of teachers are more likely to leave), (b) student body characteristics (i.e., what types of student bodies experience high teacher turnover), or (c) school characteristics (i.e., what types Working conditions and administrative support were indicated as factors associated with teacher retention.</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>School leaders can impact retention through motivating teachers and students, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high performance expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning.</td>
<td>A quantitative/survey results/multinomial logistic regression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author and Year</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Purpose/Goals</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Theme(s)</td>
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<td>Chiong, Menzies, &amp; Parameshwaran (2017)</td>
<td>Why Do Long-Serving Teachers Stay in the Teaching Profession? Analyzing the Motivations of Teachers with 10 or More Years' Experience in England</td>
<td>Provide understanding of the positive reasons why long serving teachers stay in the profession and how these reasons change over time.</td>
<td>1. Intrinsic and altruistic motivations predominate in both reasons for entering and staying in the profession, as well as perceived mastery. 2. Extrinsic motivators were less important in both entering and staying, especially for long serving teachers (holidays, pay) 3. The longer teachers stayed, the less important extrinsic factors became</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Administrators should develop policies to support teacher autonomy.</td>
<td>Mixed methods/questionnaire data, focus group, and interviews.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curtis (2012)</td>
<td>Why Do They Choose to Teach – and Why Do They Leave? A Study of Middle School and High School</td>
<td>Examined the reasons that mathematics teachers enter the teaching profession, and compared those reasons with the reasons for leaving the teaching profession.</td>
<td>Most of the teachers went into teaching because of their desire to work with young people, love of mathematics, and reasons of personal fulfillment or making a difference. Family or role models influenced many of them. Teacher blame, low salary, the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation, and lack of administrative support are reasons for leaving. The</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Teachers should be provided with more opportunities for development early in their careers without the pressure of “doing it on their own”</td>
<td>Mixed methods/Surveys, Interviews, and a Chi Square Analysis/ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author and Year</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Purpose/Goals</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Theme(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics Teachers</td>
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<td>illusion of what teaching entails is drastically different than what teachers find when they step into the classroom. Teacher education programs are not realistically preparing potential teachers for the job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dupriez, Delvaux, &amp; Lothaire (2016)</td>
<td>Teacher Shortage and Attrition: Why Do They Leave?</td>
<td>To examine the professional integration of beginning teachers and factors predicting why they may leave the profession during the first years of their career.</td>
<td>1. The credential is a key variable associated with the risk of leaving the profession. The more the training, the least likely they are to stay. 2. Socioeconomic status of the school did not have an impact in the study, in opposition to other studies. 3. Job conditions played a role in teachers leaving</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>Create policies that allow school leaders to create policies that pay more for advanced credentials and create positive school climates.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Data set results/Bivariate and multivariate analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, &amp; Savoie-Zajc, (2012)</td>
<td>New Teachers’ Career Intentions: Factors Influencing New Teachers’ Decisions to Stay or to Leave the Profession</td>
<td>To investigate: 1. Beginning teacher’s perspectives on teaching as a long-term career 2. Perceptions on their preparation 3. Links between preparation and early career experience and intentions to continue teaching 4. Teachers that felt ill prepared in these areas were more likely to leave teaching.</td>
<td>1. Most teachers perceived themselves to be well prepared at graduation from their preparation program 2. Consistent with research that when teachers graduate, they are confident and feel prepared. 3. Three areas listed as feeling underprepared after first year of teaching: assessment, classroom management, workload and conditions</td>
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<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>School leaders can better assess teacher preparation programs and enhance experiences in the areas of assessment, classroom management, and workload</td>
<td>Qualitative/Case Study/Interviews and questionnaires</td>
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<td>Author and Year</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Purpose/Goals</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Theme(s)</td>
<td>Leadership/Policy Implications</td>
<td>Methods/Data Sources</td>
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<td>Garcia, Slate, &amp; Delgado (2009)</td>
<td>Salary and Ranking and Teacher Turnover: A Statewide Study</td>
<td>Examined the effect of teacher salaries on teacher turnover.</td>
<td>A link was established between teacher turnover and teacher salaries for Texas School Districts. The higher the salary, the lower the teacher turnover rate.</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>Find ways to increase teacher salary and benefits to make them competitive with other professional careers.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Data Set/Texas Education Agency’s Academic Excellence Indicator System Web site 2003-2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glazer (2018)</td>
<td>Learning from Those Who No Longer Teach: Viewing Teacher Attrition Through a Resistance Lens</td>
<td>Examines the accounts of certified, experienced teachers who left teaching after making significant investments in the career.</td>
<td>The three themes that occurred in this study include: Imposed curriculum and dissatisfaction with that curriculum. Testing and its increasing influence on the school environment. Job insecurity, particularly early in the career.</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>When trying to reduce attrition, policy makers should not reduce the very qualities in teachers that are vital for effective practice.</td>
<td>Qualitative/Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson &amp; Alvarez (2008)</td>
<td>School Climate Factors Relating to Teacher Burnout: A Mediator Model</td>
<td>To investigate the components of school climate (parent/community relations, administration, student behavioral values) and assess their influence on the core burnout dimensions of teacher burnout.</td>
<td>Separate factors of school climate impact teacher burnout. Emotional exhaustion was the strongest contributor to teacher burnout. Depersonalization and personal accomplishment were next in influence. Emotional exhaustion was tied to parent/community relations and student/peer relations. Instructional management was tied to depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Undefined rules for the</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>School leaders should place more emphasis on classroom learning and less emphasis on administrative duties and activities outside the classroom.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Survey results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author and Year</td>
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<td>Ingersoll (2002)</td>
<td>The Teacher Shortage: A Case of Wrong Diagnosis and Wrong Prescription</td>
<td>To document the role of teacher turnover in the staffing problems of schools To closely examine the role of school characteristics and organizational conditions in teacher turnover.</td>
<td>emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of low personal accomplishment. school, degree of classroom time devoted to instruction, and the extent of outside interruptions impacted this variable. The more a school places quality time for class work and learning as a priority and reduces administrative tasks and outside interferences, the more a teacher feels personal accomplishment.</td>
<td>school, degree of classroom time devoted to instruction, and the extent of outside interruptions impacted this variable. The more a school places quality time for class work and learning as a priority and reduces administrative tasks and outside interferences, the more a teacher feels personal accomplishment.</td>
<td>Increase teacher salaries Reduce discipline problems Increase teacher influence and leadership Increase administrative support</td>
<td>Quantitative/Data Set/Statistical Analysis of data from Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)</td>
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1. Need for teachers has increased since 1980
2. Need to hire new teachers is a of teacher turnover.
3. A revolving door: Large flows in and large flows out
4. After 1 year, 11% of beginning teachers have left the profession another 10% leave after their second year, a cumulative 21%, after just 3 years, 29% of all those in the typical beginning teacher cohort have left teaching altogether, and after 5 years, fully 39% (more than one-third) are gone from the teaching ranks
5. High Poverty Schools have higher attrition rates
6. Half report they are departing either due to job dissatisfaction or out of a desire to pursue a better job, another career, or to improve
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</table>
| **Inman & Marlow (2004)** | Teacher Retention: Why do Beginning Teachers Remain in the Profession | To examine the reported attitudes of beginning teachers to identify perceived positive aspects of teaching that may lead to teacher retention. | Career opportunities in or out of education.  
7. Depart because of job dissatisfaction cite low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, lack of student motivation, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher influence over decision making as the causes of their leaving. | Leadership | Provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate and share ideas and promote teacher accomplishments. | Qualitative/Surveys (The Professional Attitude Survey) |
<p>| <strong>Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, &amp; Meisels (2007)</strong> | Why Teachers Leave: Factors that Influence Retention and Resignation | Examined factors that encourage or hinder resigned teachers from returning to teaching, the importance of such factors, and the importance of those factors for teachers who remained in teaching. | Time with family was important for teachers that left, not important with teachers that stayed; administrative support was important with leavers, not important with stayers; financial support was important to leavers, not as important with stayers; family responsibility was important to both leavers and stayers; paperwork and stress was important to both leavers and stayers; joy of teaching was of low importance to both leavers and stayers. | Contextual Factors | Target potential groups of teachers that may be susceptible to leaving due to family, administrative, or financial factors. Provide supports as needed. | Mixed Methods/Survey and Phone Interviews |</p>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kukla-Acevedo (2009)</td>
<td>Leavers, Movers, and Stayers: The Role of Workplace Conditions in Teacher Mobility Decisions</td>
<td>Analyzed the effect of three organizational conditions – administrator support, behavioral climate of the school, and classroom autonomy – on the transitional decisions of teachers.</td>
<td>Workplace conditions affected 1st-year teachers’ decisions to leave or move much more strongly than the general samples decisions to leave or move. Administrative support and behavioral climate played a role in decisions to leave.</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>Provide 1st year teachers support.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Data Set/tics/ Descriptive Statistics-Correlations-Binomial Logistic-Multinomial Logistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malloy &amp; Allen (2007)</td>
<td>Teacher Retention in a Teacher Resiliency Building Rural School</td>
<td>Examines the extent to which a rural school enhanced teacher retention by overcoming the barriers that might otherwise have presented a</td>
<td>Three key factors influenced teacher resiliency: 1. Caring and Support – Careful selection of initial assignments, encouragement from staff, non-threatening environment, and opportunities for discussion. 2. High Expectations – Clear administrative goals, regular feedback, experimentation</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Schools leaders should facilitate these factors in their schools.</td>
<td>Qualitative/Case Study</td>
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| Martin (2016)  | A Look at Grit: Teachers Who Teach Students with Severe Disabilities | To investigate and describe the impact of Grit on retention as perceived by special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities. | 1. Diligence, Relationships, Perseverance - Passion, Obstacles and Roadblocks, Hard worker, and love for the job were observed.  
3. Meaningful participation – Participation in decision making, interaction with parents | Passion           | School leaders should focus on students first and teachers second. Provide necessary supports including mentors, professional learning communities, create a culture of acceptance and inclusion of students and staff. | Mixed Methods/Surveys and interviews |
<p>| Nieto (2003)   | What Keeps Teachers Going? And Other Thoughts on the Future of Public Education | “What helps good public-school teachers persevere, despite all the deprivations and challenges? What can we learn from these teachers about what makes for good teaching and learning in our public schools? And what can we say about forging a more hopeful strong community of practice, teaching is an intellectual career which needs constant attention, involves love and respect, and professional development should be centered around the why, not just the how and when. | Passion               | The focus of best practices should be transitioned to a focus on the relationships amongst teachers and students. Teachers view the profession as a calling, or their mission. School leaders must treat them in a many that reflects that. | Qualitative/Group Inquiry |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nydoye, Imig, &amp; Parker (2010)</td>
<td>Empowerment, Leadership, and Teachers’ Intentions to Stay in or Leave the Profession or their Schools in North Carolina Charter Schools</td>
<td>Examined the relationships among teacher empowerment, school leadership, and intentions to stay or leave the profession within North Carolina Charter Schools.</td>
<td>School leadership is a stronger predictor of charter schoolteachers’ intentions to stay in their current school or to leave than is empowerment. Teachers need to feel a support system is in place that they can rely on to solve problems with a collective approach using identifiable steps. Another theme included teachers were more likely to leave the profession or school if the evaluation procedures were consistent.</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>School leaders should focus on providing teachers with the support they need to be successful.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Survey data and descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perrachione, Rosser, &amp; Petersen (2008)</td>
<td>Why Do They Stay? Elementary Teachers’ Perceptions of Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>To identify intrinsic and extrinsic variables that influence teacher job satisfaction and retention.</td>
<td>Intrinsic variables of working with students, job satisfaction, personal teaching efficacy as well as extrinsic variables such as good student, teacher support, positive school environment, and small class size influence teacher job satisfaction. Only extrinsic factors such as role overload, low salary, parent</td>
<td>Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>School leaders should develop policies that support the factors associated with increased job satisfaction and reduce those factors negatively associated</td>
<td>Mixed Methods/Surveys and a multiple linear regression</td>
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<td>Pretsch, Flunger, &amp; Schmitt (2012)</td>
<td>Resilience predicts well-being in teachers, but not in non-teaching employees.</td>
<td>To demonstrate that resilience could predict well-being in teachers above and beyond a vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity.</td>
<td>Among teachers, resilience contributed more to the prediction of general health perception than did vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity. Resilience could predict job satisfaction in teachers.</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Assessing resilience in potential teachers during the interview and teacher training process. Provide supports for those teachers that are susceptible to vulnerability to stress and negative affectivity.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Survey results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, &amp; Graber (2016)</td>
<td>The Impact of Resilience on Role Stressors and Burnout in Elementary and Secondary Teachers</td>
<td>To explain the ability of resilience to decrease role stress and burnout.</td>
<td>The role stress positively predicted burnout. Teachers who feel higher levels of resilience may be better able to navigate the sociopolitical landscape of the schools in which they work and derive less stress from interactions with role-sets. Resilience reduced the perception of burnout directly as well as indirectly as mediated through the reduction in perceived role stress. It appears as if teachers who develop higher levels of resilience feel less emotionally drained, derive a greater sense of satisfaction from their work, and can interact positively with others.</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Building teacher resilience includes adequate time to accomplish work; professional development opportunities; adequate equipment and materials; and caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making. Thus, school policies could be developed to aid</td>
<td>Quantitative/Surveys and Data set</td>
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<td>Robertson-Kraft &amp; Duckworth</td>
<td>True Grit: Trait-Level Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals Predicts Effectiveness and Retention Among Novice Teachers</td>
<td>To study the predictive personal qualities that are not typically utilized by schools when hiring teachers</td>
<td>Teachers that displayed more grit outperformed their colleagues with less grit and stayed longer in their schools. The results reveal why some novice teachers may outperform their colleagues and remain in the classroom.</td>
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**Theme(s)**
- Leadership/Policy Implications
  - teachers in the development of resilience, so they are better able to meet the challenges of the workplace and manage role stress and burnout.
  - Passion
    - Policy decisions on recruitment and development may need to include strategies to identify teacher passion, perseverance, and resilience.

**Methods/Data Sources**
- Quantitative/Data Set.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Schaefer, Long, &amp; Clandinin (2012)</td>
<td>Questioning the Research on Early Career Teacher Attrition and Retention</td>
<td>Examine scholarly work on teacher attrition and retention from 1999-2010</td>
<td>Burnout, teacher resilience, demographic features, and personal factors are intrinsic factors affecting attrition and retention. Lack of support, salary, professional development, opportunities for collaboration, school demographics, student issues, and teacher education were found to be significant extrinsic factors.</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Policy makers should begin to examine reasons of not only what retains teachers, but what sustains them.</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steele, Murnane, &amp; Willett (2010)</td>
<td>Do Financial Incentives Help Low Performing Schools Attract and Keep Academically Talented Teachers? Evidence from California</td>
<td>To assess California's Governor’s Teaching Fellowship (GTF) incentive for teachers, which was implemented from 2000-2002. The GTF was aimed at attracting academically talented, novice teachers to low</td>
<td>The incentive did succeed in attracting and retaining teachers. There was a significance found in the recruitment process when compared with a time that did not have the incentive. However, a significance was not found in retention rates.</td>
<td>Contextual Factors</td>
<td>Financial incentives may be successful at recruiting teachers, but incentives must be investigated to improve retention.</td>
<td>Quantitative/dataset analysis</td>
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<td>Author and Year</td>
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<td>Tait, (2008)</td>
<td>Resilience as a Contributor to Novice Teacher Success, Commitment, and Retention</td>
<td>To explore the relationships among resilience, personal efficacy, and emotion competence and their possible impact on first year teachers’ sense of success, confidence, and commitment to the profession.</td>
<td>Novice teachers that demonstrated high levels of resilience, personal efficacy, and emotional intelligence had the capacity to demonstrate social competence, take advantage of opportunities to develop personal efficacy, use problem solving strategies, display the ability to rebound after a difficult experience, learn from experience and set goals for the future, take care of oneself, and maintain a sense of optimism.</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Offer preservice, induction, and mentoring programs that offer resilience building activities and teach resilience strategies.</td>
<td>Qualitative/Survey and interviews</td>
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<td>Taylor (2013)</td>
<td>The Power of Resilience: A Theoretical Model to Empower, Encourage, and Retain Teachers</td>
<td>To find themes in teachers that display resiliency</td>
<td>Resilience impacted the participants of this study and their decision to remain in the education profession.</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>School leaders can apply the following to their resilience model for teachers: Positive relationships, autonomy, flexible locus of control, prepare them for change, demonstrate commitment to teachers, optimistic teachers, education viewed as important,</td>
<td>Qualitative/Historic al biography method with narrative inquiry technique/semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td>Towers (2017)</td>
<td>'Stayers’: a qualitative study exploring why teachers and headteachers stay in challenging London primary schools</td>
<td>To examine how long-serving teachers, or ‘stayers’, account for why they choose to stay teaching in challenging London primary schools.</td>
<td>This study found several themes: making a difference to children’s lives; the bonds and dynamic relationships formed with colleagues; effectiveness support of the principal and opportunities for career progression, growth and development; having a good salary; affordable housing and job security; love for the children and people at their school; suitable working arrangements compatible with childcare. The teachers talked about being comfortable and confident in their abilities, displaying self-efficacy in their job.</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>attract and retain effective and appropriate principal leadership. School culture and leadership matter.</td>
<td>Qualitative/Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walker (2004)</td>
<td>A Case Study of Why Teachers Choose to Remain in One Urban School District</td>
<td>To determine why teachers, choose to stay in an urban setting.</td>
<td>In this study, three factors were found to be statistically significant in determining why teachers chose to remain in the urban school District. These factors included: a feeling they have been effective in working with urban children; established good collegial relationships within the district; and gained a sense of self satisfaction from working in the school district. These reasons and several others were found to have statistical significance in teachers’ levels of commitment.</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>School leaders should develop opportunities for teachers to grow their levels of self-efficacy and to improve their recruitment and hiring practices.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Survey/Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Author and Year</td>
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<td>Whipp &amp; Salin (2018)</td>
<td>Physical Education Teachers in Australia: Why Do They Stay?</td>
<td>To assess the factors that satisfied PE teachers and motivations to stay in PE teaching.</td>
<td>The teachers gained satisfaction and motivation from their expertise, the opportunity to implement ideas collaboratively, professional interaction, participation in decision making, control of their classrooms, and respect.</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Mentoring programs that facilitate these variables should be implemented to support both novice and experienced teachers.</td>
<td>Quantitative/Survey results</td>
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APPENDIX B

Request for Superintendent Permission Email

Subject: Research of Veteran Teachers (Virginia Tech IRB 19-782)

Dear (Superintendent Name),

   My name is Brantley Shields, a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Tech Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program. This study is being conducted through Virginia Tech, IRB number 19-782. I am currently searching for a rural school division in Central Virginia to conduct the research for my dissertation. My research is guided by my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol Mullen. This research will focus on the experiences of veteran teachers in a rural school division in Central Virginia. This study will address a gap in the literature by exploring the reasons veteran teachers have chosen to remain in the classroom. The main purpose is to identify the factors that influence resilience and explore the dimensions of resilience presented through the lens of veteran teachers. An additional purpose will broadly address induction programs and professional development through a framework incorporating the key themes that arise from the teacher experiences.

   The conceptual framework for this study was developed through an in-depth review of the literature on teacher retention and resiliency. The research questions were developed to investigate the experiences of veteran teachers that teach in a rural school division in Central Virginia. The primary research question for this study is: What are the experiences that contribute to veteran teacher decisions to continue teaching? Research sub questions are (1) What contextual factors play a role in those experiences? (2) What individual factors of resiliency are revealed through their experiences? (3) What strategies have teachers used to overcome challenging experiences in teaching?

   A qualitative research design was chosen as the methodology for this study because it will yield a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the veteran teachers participating in the study. The qualitative design will consist of a 5-10-minute online questionnaire and a 45-60-minute audio recorded interview. The information provided by the teachers will be confidential. All responses will remain anonymous by not identifying the teacher, school, or division. Participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

   Please respond to this email with correspondence granting permission or denial to contact principals within your division to collect a list of veteran teachers. If you would like to discuss this research or its purposes in greater detail, feel free to contact me by phone or email. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

L. Brantley Shields
Doctoral Student, Virginia Tech
Assistant Principal, Rustburg High School
Email: lee79@vt.edu
Phone: 434-664-7085
APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TO PRINCIPALS REQUESTING TEACHER PARTICIPATION

Subject: Research of Veteran Teachers (Virginia Tech IRB 19-782)

Dear (Principal Name):

My name is Brantley Shields, a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Tech Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program. I am sending this email to request your assistance in a study of why teachers, with ten or more years of experience, have remained in public schools, IRB number 19-782.

I will send an email with the subject “Research Investigating the Experiences of Veteran Teachers”. This email will request the participation of veteran teachers within your school. Veteran teachers for this study are deemed to have ten years or more of experience. This study will include a 5-10-minute questionnaire and a 45-60-minute one on one interview. I am requesting your assistance in forwarding this email to teachers in your school that meet these criteria.

Thank you for taking the time to assist with this ongoing research at Virginia Tech.

Sincerely,

Brantley Shields
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of teachers who have remained in the classroom of a school division in Central Virginia. Completing the following questionnaire will assist me in purposefully selecting participants who meet the research criteria.

Demographics Survey

1. Please indicate your gender.
   a. Male
   b. Female
2. Please indicate your age range.
   a. 30-39
   b. 40-49
   c. 50-59
   d. 60-69
   e. 70 or older
3. Please indicate your ethnicity.
   a. Black or African American
   b. Asian or Asian American
   c. White or Caucasian
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. American Indian or Alaska Native
   f. Other
4. Please indicate your level of education.
   a. Bachelor
   b. Master
   c. Educational Specialist
   d. Doctorate
   e. Other
5. How many years of service do you have teaching?
   a. 10-15
   b. 16-20
   c. 20-25
   d. 26-30
   e. 31-35
   f. 36-40
   g. 40+
6. What grade levels have your taught during your career in teaching?
   a. K-2
   b. 3-5
   c. 6-8
   d. 9-12
7. What content area(s) are you certified to teach?
   a. Mathematics
b. Science
c. Social Studies/History
d. English
e. Foreign Language
f. Physical Education
g. Fine Arts
h. Music
i. Agriculture/Industrial Arts
j. Economics and Personal Finance/Business
k. Other

8. Please provide your name and email address if you are willing to participate in the one on one interview portion of this study. Each interview will be audio recorded and consist of 14 questions, lasting 45-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in person at the participants school. Brantley Shields will contact you by email to provide additional information and a consent form for your review.

Name _____________________________________

Email Address _____________________________________
APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTORY EMAIL REQUESTING PARTICIPATION ON THE

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Subject: Research of Veteran Teachers (Virginia Tech IRB 19-782)

Dear Educator:

My name is Brantley Shields, a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program. I am sending this email to request your participation in a study of why teachers, with ten or more years of experience, have remained in public schools, IRB number 19-782.

As a veteran teacher, your participation in this study would be important in gaining insight into developing programs to improve teacher induction and professional development. This study will include a 5-10-minute online questionnaire and a 45-60-minute one on one interview. Please click the link below and complete the brief questionnaire to begin participation in the study. Based upon your responses to the questionnaire, you may be invited to participate in an audio recorded interview at your convenience. In addition, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this phase of my research.

Thank you for taking the time to consider becoming a part of this study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPS97H7
Subject: Research of Veteran Teachers (Virginia Tech IRB 19-782)

Dear Educator:

My name is Brantley Shields, a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program. I am sending this email to thank you for completing the demographic questionnaire as a part of this research, as to why teachers, with ten or more years of experience, have remained in public schools, IRB number 19-782.

Based on your responses to the questionnaire, I would like to invite you to participate in a 45-60-minute audio recorded interview on (date/time) at your school. In addition, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this phase of my research.

If you are interested, please review the attached informed consent form and reply to this email and let me know if the date and time listed above is convenient for you.

Thank you for taking the time to consider becoming a part of this study.
APPENDIX G

Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Approval Letter

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 10, 2019

TO: Carol Ann Mullen, Lee Brantley Shields

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Investigating the Experiences of Veteran Teachers in Central Virginia

IRB NUMBER: 19-782

Effective October 10, 2019, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii)
Protocol Determination Date: October 10, 2019

ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.
APPENDIX H

IRB Training Certification

Certificate of Completion

This certifies that

Lee Brantley Shields

Has completed

Training in Human Subjects Protection

On the following topics:

- Historical Basis for Regulating Human Subjects Research
- The Belmont Report
- Federal and Virginia Tech Regulatory Entities, Policies and Procedures

on

July 11, 2018
APPENDIX I

CITI Program Certificate

Course Completion for Lee Shields

Congratulations on your recent course completion!

Name: Lee Shields (ID: 7938359)
Institution: Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech) (ID: 1684)
Course: Social & Behavioral Research
Stage: 1 - Basic Course
Completion Date: 23 Feb 2019
Expiration Date: 22 Feb 2022
Completion Record ID: 30699645
APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening Statement
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. If at any point during this interview you feel uncomfortable or do not wish to answer a specific question, please let me know. Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Open-ended Interview Questions

1. Was K-12 education important in your family? What kind of student were you?

2. Did you have any positive or negative experiences in K-12 education with a teacher or administrator?

3. Did you have any experiences K-12 where you were able to pursue a passion and persevere through a challenging situation? (Athletics, band, drama, etc.)

4. Do you have an experience that led you to choose teaching as a career? Is there an experience(s) from college or postgraduate school that prepared you for the rigors of teaching?

5. How would you describe the experiences that bring you the greatest satisfaction as a teacher?

6. How would you describe the experiences/factors influencing your motivation for teaching? How have these motivational experiences/factors fostered perseverance?

7. How would you describe what you consider to be essential supports to your motivation for teaching?

8. How would you describe the job conditions with which you work each day as a teacher?

9. How would you describe the experiences that yield the greatest dissatisfaction for you as a teacher?

10. How would you describe the adversity you have faced as a teacher? Can you describe one very serious incident in which you faced adversity more than at any other time? How did you overcome the adversity you faced in that incident?

11. What would you identify as the characteristics/qualities of a resilient teacher? How would you describe these resilient characteristics/qualities in action?

12. What would you describe as essential supports for fostering resilience in teachers?

13. Why have you chosen to remain in the classroom as a professional teacher?
14. Do you have any other experiences or comments that you feel would be important to add to this study?