STRESSORS FOR INTERMEDIATE/SECONDARY TEACHERS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR AND THEIR IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated in loving memory of

my aunt, Cheryl Miller,

who always believed in me and taught me I could do anything

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the causes of stress for teachers teaching in the Eastern region of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and the effects of these stressors on effective teaching. Interviews were completed, either face to face or via email, with 18 participants all of whom were teaching intermediate or high school in the region at the time of the interview. These participants all had varying teaching subjects and amounts of experience. Participants gave their thoughts and opinions on the causes of stress in the teaching profession, the impact of this stress on effective teaching, and what could be done to combat this stress.

Responses underwent qualitative analysis and a number of themes emerged. The study was driven by two primary research questions: 1. what are the major stressors facing teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador and 2. How do these stresses impact a teacher's ability to effective teach? The sub-research questions were as follows:

1. What do teachers feel are the biggest sources of stress in their profession?

2. What do teachers do to cope with these stresses?

3. Do teachers feel the amount of stress is changing in their profession?

4. Do teachers feel the sources of stress are changing in their profession?

5. What role has technology played in the stresses in the classroom?

6. What impact do these stressors have on effective teaching in the classroom?

7. What do teachers think can be done about the stresses in the classroom?

The study found that teachers experience a large amount of stress related to their profession on a regular basis and this amount of stress seems to be increasing yearly. The study's findings included a definition of stressor as defined by the participants, a discussion of the sources of stress and how they impact effective teaching, and suggestions on how to lessen the amount of stress faced by teachers and minimize the impact on effective teaching.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Teachers all over the world face many daily stressors in their profession. These stressors come from many different sources and are in the nature of the job, however, sometimes there is an excess of unnecessary stress or other factors that exacerbate the amount of undue stress placed on teachers. According to Younghusband (2008), "An extensive research base, spanning several decades, characterizes teaching as a high-stress occupation" (p. 1). Younghusband (2009) stated "in 2005 a picture emerged of teachers in Newfoundland who were experiencing a high level of stress" (p. 48). Stress on teachers can have a negative effect on many aspects of a teacher's life including job satisfaction, efficacy of teaching, and personal lives (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Younghusband L. , 2006). Many teachers are leaving the teaching profession because they are unable to cope with increasing demands, increased workload, lack of respect and professional autonomy, and substantial amount of stress coupled with a lack of support and resources (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Lande With (2017) has stated that "changes in teachers' work, often labelled intensification, have raised concerns that teachers are leaving the profession at an increasing rate" (p. 1). The stress placed on teachers can also have a negative impact on their ability to effectively teach. As a result of the stress placed on them teachers feel a lower sense of efficacy when teaching. This in turn can have a negative effect on the students being taught (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to obtain the self-perception of the amount of stress teachers with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) face, the causes of this stress, and ways to alleviate the stressors that they face in the teaching profession. The study was designed to explore the stressors, or causes of stress, that teachers face daily, and how this stress impacts a teacher's ability to teach effectively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While there have been several studies completed on teacher stresses and teacher burnout the amount of stress that teachers face seems to be ever increasing (Younghusband, 2006). Furthermore with the increased use of technology the world is changing faster and faster and education needs to keep up or risk becoming outdated and obsolete. While the use of technology can help teachers, it can also become another source of stress on teachers (Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008). This study focuses on the types of stressors, the changing amount of stressors, and how these stressors impact a teacher's ability to teach effectively. While there have been several global and local studies on both teacher stresses and effective teaching there has been limited research locally on how these stresses impact a teacher's ability to teach effectively. Furthermore there have been no recent studies completed in Newfoundland and Labrador on the stressors teachers face on a regular basis.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to explore two general research questions and several sub-questions. The general research questions are: What are the major stressors facing teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador? and how do these stresses impact a teachers ability to effective teach? The sub-questions are as follows:

1. What do teachers feel are the biggest causes of stress in their profession?

2. What do teachers do to cope with these stresses?

3. Do teachers feel the amount of stress is changing in their profession?

4. Do teachers feel the sources of stress are changing in their profession?

5. What role has technology played in the stresses in the classroom?

6. What impact do these stressors have on effective teaching in the classroom?

7. What do teachers think can be done about the stresses in the classroom?

1.4 Significance of the Study for Research and Practice

The amount of stress that teachers are placed under seems to be ever increasing despite research spanning the last few decades that indicate that teacher stress causes burnout and other negative effects on teacher wellbeing (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). This stress can also have a detrimental effect on a teacher's ability to be an effective teacher. Effective teaching can have a positive impact on students' lives and may lead to higher rates of student success.

By understanding what major stressors teachers are facing today, it allows policy makers an opportunity to take into consideration the potential effect that a policy will have on the stress level of teachers before it is put into place. It also allows policy makers to make amendments to current policies that may be causing undue stress on teachers to help alleviate some of the stressors that teachers may be encountering. By trying to reduce some of the stressors it can help reduce the instances of teacher burnout and increase teachers' overall wellbeing. This in turn may lead to more effective teaching and an overall positive impact on the students of out province.

By reducing some of the stressors on teachers it may allow teachers to be more effective in the classroom which will have a positive impact on their students (Bryk, Harding, & Greenberg, 2012). Bryk, Harding, and Greenburg (2012) stated "how teachers lead their classrooms can have a transformative impact on students' lives and that access to teachers with the most impact-those who have mastered artful and effective instruction-offers a promising pathway to closing achievement gap" (p. 83-84). It stands to reason that anything that could have a detrimental effect on a teachers' ability to effectively teach would also have negative consequences for the students within that teacher's class.

1.5 Delimitations

The delimitations of this study are:

1. only teachers currently teaching in the Eastern region of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District that were willing to participate were interviewed; and

2. the study focused only on the causes of stress, the amount of stress, the impact of the stress on effective teaching, and what could be done to mitigate these effects.

1.6 Limitations

The limitations of this study include:

1. only teachers in one region of the province were asked to participate;

2. the study only used one approach to gather data;

3. all participants volunteered to partake in this study which could have resulted in biased data;

4. this was the researcher's first study of this nature.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made during this study:

1. that the participants have developed perspectives on teacher stressors in the classroom based on their work with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District;

2. that the participants answered truthfully to all questions in the interview and were willing to share their honest experiences and opinions with the researcher.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

Stress has many different definitions. Some definitions of stress include the level of demands or pressure exerted on an individual, the amount of strain on a person, or environmental forces that trigger negative emotions and threaten a persons' wellbeing (Kyriacou, 2001; Abel & Sewell, 1999; Ouellette et al., 2018). Abel and Sewell (1999) specifically define teacher stress as "conditions of negative effects, such as frustration and anxiety, that result from aspects of the job and that are perceived by teachers as a threat to their psychological or physical well-being" (p. 287). Other sources define teacher stress as the unpleasant emotions that result from negative aspects of the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017) or "the experience of unpleasant emotions as a result of teaching work" (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012, P.1190). Kyriacou (2001) further elaborates that these feelings may include anger, tension, anxiety, frustration, or depression all related to the experiences one has as a teacher. For the purpose of this thesis participants will be asked to provide their own definition of stress in relation to teaching and the results will be explored.

Numerous studies have identified teaching as a high stress occupation (Kokkinos, 2007; Wolgast & Fischer, 2017; Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008; Younghusband, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Abel & Sewell, 1999). Pettigrew and Wolf (1982) noted that "stress is increasingly becoming a recognized occupational hazard of the teaching profession" (p. 373) and Ouellette et al. (2018) noted that when compared to other professions teachers

report high levels of psychological distress. Some international studies have shown that one third of all teachers experience high levels of stress on a regular basis (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). While there is minimal local research on this topic one article mentioned in 2005 Newfoundland teachers were experiencing high levels of stress which is consistent with the findings of high levels of stress from other parts of the world (Younghusband, 2009). Furthermore this international research on teacher stress has been ongoing for over three decades which indicates a longstanding problem to which a solution has not been found, in fact some research reports that the amount of stress that teachers are under is actually increasing (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). While most teachers regard teaching as an enjoyable and rewarding occupation the severe stress that they encounter on a regular basis can lead to symptoms of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Too much stress over a prolonged period of time can lead to teacher burnout if the stress is not reduced (Dunham, 1983). The possibility of experiencing burnout is a very real and valid concern for many teachers (Abel & Sewell, 1999). Burnout is "a psychosocial phenomenon of prolonged exhaustion and disinterest, typically in the work context" (Alarcon, 2011, p. 549) and has been defined in several ways including as a response to stress at work which results in negative attitudes towards the people whom one works with and the profession itself (Betoret F. D., 2006) and "as a reaction to chronic difficulty in controlling stress" (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996, p. 185), and as feelings of cynicim and emotional exhaustion stemming from chronic stress (Mearns & Cain, 2003). It has also been defined as "a persistent and negative mental state that is essentially characterized by the emotional exhaustion that accompanies distress, a feeling of reduced competence, little motivation, and the development

of dysfunctional attitudes at work" (Betoret, 2006, p. 520). Burnout is often broken into three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Emotional exhaustion is a feeling of being mentally drained and emotionally overextended, depersonalization is a negative attitude towards people, and reduced personal accomplishment is a feeling of reduced personal fulfillment (Betoret, 2009). Burnout among teachers can result in high turnover, lack of job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, detachment from the job, and reduced effectiveness of teachers (Alarcon, 2011; Betoret F. , 2009; Naring, Vlerick, & Van de Van, 2012). As Benoliel and Barth (2017) stated, "the consequences of teacher burnout affect society as a whole in terms of the cost of absenteeism and attrition" so we as a society need to be concerned about the persistant stresses that are placed on teachers (p. 641).

2.2 Cause of Stress in the Teaching Profession

Teachers have a high potential for emotional stress because they work with large groups of students for an extended period of time. This leaves teachers vulnerable to many experiences that can be emotionally draining and discouraging (Dorman, 2003). There are numerous causes of stress in the teaching profession and a wide variety of them have been described in the current literature (Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008). Pettigrew and Wolf (1982) said that there are three types of stress: task-based stress which are concerns based on the specific tasks a teacher must complete, role-related stress which is stress caused by the difference in a teachers expectation of their work role and their actual work role, and work events stress which is stress caused by events that occur while working while Collie et. Al. (2012) classified stress

based on whether it is related to student behavior or workload. Some of the main sources of

stress that have been described in the current literature are difficulties with students

(Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993; Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996; Mearns & Cain,

2003), lack of resources (Betoret, 2006; Betoret, 2009; Alarcon, 2011), changing perception and

lack of support for teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Betoret, 2009), time constrains (Skaalvik

& Skaalvik, 2017; Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996), increasing workload (Betoret, 2006;

Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996; Mearns & Cain, 2003), lack of professional autonomy

(Betoret, 2006; Mearns & Cain, 2003), technology (Reid, 1999), and uncertain job security

(Morley, 1999).

2.2.1 Student Difficulties

Student misbehavior is a major source of stress for teachers and can be one of the main

sources of burnout in a teacher. When teachers encounter a very difficult class that includes a

large number of students that misbehave it can put a lot of pressure on teachers and cause

teachers to spend an inordinate amount of time on classroom management. One teacher in a

study completed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) said "some students with behavioral problems

make it difficult to carry out lessons as planned" and "controlling students' behavior takes a lot

of time and effort". Disruptive behavior by students interferes with the overall classroom

functioning and the ability of teachers to help students achieve within that classroom (Ouellette

et al., 2018).

Class size and composition are ever increasing problems that continues to cause many

difficulties for teachers. Class sizes are increasing and more students with learning disabilities or

behavioral issues are being placed into the regular classroom (Schmidt, 2003). Teachers may

find that there is an increase in stress when they feel they have too many students or there is

an abundance of learning problems and deficiencies in their classes and they feel unequipped

to deal with the extra challenges. Frequently teachers are not provided with adequate training

or resources to effectively teach in such an environment (Blase, 1986).

2.2.2 Lack of Resources

Having a lack of resources can place considerable strain on a teacher as they constantly

have to try to do more with less. The fewer resources available to a teacher the higher the

demand that is placed on them and if this continues for an extended period of time it can lead

to depletion of other resources such as a teacher's time and energy (Alarcon, 2011). In a thesis

completed in Kentucky 68% of the teachers interviewed wished for more resources and 66%

wishes for more support to go with the resources (Crosby, 2003). When teachers feel that they

have inadequate resources they may consider work demands and work related pressures to be

unmanageable (Younghusband, 2005).

2.2.3 Lack of Parental and Public Support

Brenner and Bartell (1984) write "teaching is one of the most publicly scrutinized

professions". In studies completed in Newfoundland and Labrador it was found that many

teachers are dissatisfied with society's attitude towards education and teachers (Dibbon, 1984)

and that there is a negative public attitude towards teachers (Browne Peters, 2001). There is

also a declining amount of public respect for teachers which has led some teachers to leave the

profession (Lande With, 2017). There is a tendency of people to criticize teachers and the

education system even if they have no professional expertise in this area. This challenge of professional knowledge is unique to teaching as most people would not challenge the knowledge and expertise of another professional such as a doctor (Hornsby, 1983).

One study showed that teachers were more satisfied with their jobs when they had positive relationships with parents and felt as though they had their support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). It can be incredibly frustrating for teachers when they do not have the support and respect of parents (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

2.2.4 Time Constraints

As Blase (1986) wrote "there's never enough time in a day to get things done. Teaching five classes with four preps, doing lesson plans, grading papers and all the other things involved in teaching keeps me plenty busy" (p. 13). This highlights the many things teachers are expected to accomplish in the run of a day, many of which are not possible to complete in the span of a normal work day causing teachers to have to bring work home with them nightly. This means that school work is intruding on teachers out of school time as they try to get all their tasks finished. (Dorman, 2003). In a study conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) teachers said "life at school is hectic and there is no time for rest and recovery" and "meetings, administrative work, and documentation take much of the time that should be used for teaching preparation" (p. 22). In a study of Canadian teachers 77% agreed that they did not have sufficient time to adequately help students that were experiencing difficulties (King & Peart, 1992).

2.2.5 Workload

" Teachers have both curricular and extra-curricular obligations such as planning, preparing and conducting lessons, supervising playgrounds, organizing school events, coordinating with secretaries, and communicating with parents" (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017, p. 98). More and more there seems to be an increase in non teaching menial duties that add to teachers workloads (Dibbon, 1984) and it has been found that teachers workloads have increased to the point of being unmanagable and unacceptable (Younghusband, 2005). Many teachers now feel overworked and under-thanked because they are being asked to do more with less and less resources (Browne Peters, 2001). With the increase in supervision duities, both in school and extracurricular, and paperwork and other administrative duties teachers are finding it much more stressful and exhausting (Ross, 1995). Teachers may become stressed or feel an increase in pressure when they feel they cannot adquately keep up with the increased demands that are placed on them (Travers, 2017). In a study by Bentam Tye and O'Brien (2002) an increase in paperwork and other non teaching demands was listed as the second most common reason that teachers left the profession.

2.2.6 Lack of Autonomy

Teacher autonomy can be defined as "the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it" (Travers, 2017, p. 29). Increasingly it seems teachers' professional judgement is being stripped away and ignored and they are having more and more regulations and policies placed on them (Betoret F. D., 2006). Teachers often feel stripped of

control within their own classroom (Browne Peters, 2001) and believe they have no voice in the

current education system (Travers, 2017). They are often not consulted in the decision making

process when it comes to new policies and there seems to be a lack of professional recognition

by administration and school boards (Dibbon, 1984). This can lead to frustration when teachers

are forced to implement policies and procedures that they feel go against their own

professional values and pedagogical understanding (Betoret, 2006). Additionally an increasing

number of policies create stress and make teachers feel as though they have less and less

autonomy (Travers, 2017). Benoliel and Barth (2017) stated that allowing teachers to exert

some control over their work environment and allowing them some decision making had

positive effects on teachers. When teachers' have a lack of control they feel powerless to make

necessary changes and helpless when they have changes they do not agree with forced on

them. This can leave them feeling accountable without any power, angry, and frustrated at the

situation (Younghusband L., 2006). Many teachers feel that they are the experts in their field

and they should be allowed to exercise their professional judgement in their classrooms (Bell,

1995).

2.2.7 Technology

In a study by Al-Fudail and Mellar (2008) it was shown that teachers' suffer stress

associated with technology use in the classroom. Teachers are facing a variety of problems

when it comes to technology. The use of technology can be very time consuming when teachers

already have very limited time. It takes time to learn to use new technology and time is wasted

when technology breaks or needs to be fixed in some way (Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008). The speed

at while technology changes alone requires teachers to commit time to stay on top of it or risk

being left behind or not understanding the newest technology available. While technology can

be a great learning tool students can easily use this technology to become distracted and off

task. Furthermore technology has a tendency to malfunction or break and there are a very

limited number of people within the school board who are able to fix it. (Reid, 1999).

2.2.8 Minimal Job Security

Teachers are increasingly facing uncertain employment situations and less job security

(Morley, 1999). Teachers may experience stress as a result of limited professional opportunities

(Kokkinos, 2007). In a study by Browne Peters (2001) it was found that 28% of graduates with

an education degree were not currently employed as a teacher. One of the major reason for

this was many of them had some trouble finding a secure, full time teaching position which led

to other stresses such as financial concerns. This can led to teachers leaving the profession

before they even get a chance to start as many cannot afford to not have financial security.

2.2.9 Teacher Stresses in Newfoundland and Labrador

Younghusband seems to be the leading expert on teacher stresses in Newfoundland and

Labrador having published several books, papers, and articles on the subject however her most

recent work was published in 2009 so there is a need for more up to date research on this

subject. A study by King and Peart (1992) found that only 11% of teachers in Newfoundland and

Labrador are highly satisfied with their jobs and 14% of them considered themselves to be in

the high stress group. This is consistent with Younghusband's (2009) findings that teachers in

Newfoundland and Labrador are experiencing a high level of stress on an ongoing basis. The

sources of stress were consistent with the findings of the other studies and include things such

as unreasonable demands, increasing behavior problem, lack of control in the classroom, and changes to the education system (Younghusband, 2006).

2.3 Effects of Stress on Teachers

Persistent stress on teachers can have many negative effects including leading to many mental and physical health problems and could cause an increase in absenteeism for teachers (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003). Schonfeld, Bianchi, and Leuhring-Jones said that teachers are at a higher than average risk for developing mental health disorders due to job related stresses (Schonfeld, Bianchi, & Leuhring-Jones, 2017). Often when teachers are stressed they still act happy while teaching for the benefit of their students, putting their own well-being on the back burner and putting their students first (Cardinal & Thomas, 2016). This faking of emotions is in itself stressful and can lead to emotional exhaustion for teachers (Naring, Vlerick, & Van de Van, 2012). This constant state of emotional exhaustion can lead to threats to teachers' emotional wellbeing such as frustration and anxiety (Abel & Sewell, 1999). This constant stress can cause teachers to have a lack of self-confidence as well and they may find themselves feeling like a failure or overwhelmed by their job. These continuing feelings may cause them to have lower patience and become irritated with students (Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012). Some teachers even get to the point where they are so exhausted that they feel they have nothing more to give to their students (Alarcon, 2011). It can also have an impact on their personal life and their personal relationships (Ouellette et al., 2018). One study reported that up to 75% of the teachers surveyed felt that they did not have enough time to spend with their

family and friends (Younghusband, 2008). Teachers may even feel a sense of loss and that this stress has taken a serious toll on their lives (Younghusband, 2006).

If stress is unresolved for long periods of time it can lead to psychosomatic symptoms such as rashes, headaches, disturbed sleep or insomnia, stomach issues, chest pains, or high blood pressure (Dunham, 1983; Betoret, 2009; King & Peart, 1992). It has even "been suggested that stress and burnout are significant factors in development of various illnesses" (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996, p. 185). Stress can also lead to teachers feeling fed up and worn out, they may experience a feeling of exhaustion, fatigue, and even boredom with their jobs (Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993). Some teachers have gone as far as to turn to "comfort eating" (Dunham, 1983) or other coping mechanisms such as alcohol to help cope with the stress that is placed on them on a regular basis (King & Peart, 1992).

2.4 Ways to Reduce Stress

There are various ways teachers can reduce the effects of stress on their lives. These coping strategies may help buffer the effect of prolonged stress on a teacher's well-being (Mearns & Cain, 2003). As Cardinal and Thomas (2016) wrote "self-care –intentional actions aimed at taking care of oneself physically, mentally, and emotionally –allows the best of a person to be revealed and shared with others" (p. 5). Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the mental and physical effects of long term stress (Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012). This may be achieved by undertaking some new hobbies or activities outside school for enjoyment (Kyriacou, 2001) or enjoying regular physical exercise and healthy eating habits (Dunham, 1983).

Organization and good time management can help reduce feelings of stress (Kyriacou, 2001). Working out a plan of attack or a way to approach a situation can help that situation not become overwhelming and out of control. Having a range of plans in place for handling sources of stress can also help because if one fails there is another to try (Dunham, 1983).

Another way to reduce stress is taking a break when needed (Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993). Teachers have found when they do not get a break or time to themselves they are more stressed (Younghusband, 2006). Taking some time after work to relax and have some personal time can help teachers feel less overwhelmed (Kyriacou, 2001), this could include "setting aside a certain amount of time during the evenings and at weekends during which [one] refuses to do anything at all connected with school" (Dunham, 1983, p. 193). Trying to avoid working when particularly stressed or over tired is also helpful. As is maintaining social contacts outside of school and talking to friends or spouses about things that are worrisome (Dunham, 1983).

One major reducer of stress in the teaching profession that has been mentioned in several articles is the support of one's colleagues (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017; Younghusband, 2006; Mearns & Cain, 2003). "Seeking out social and emotional support by turning to others has also been shown to benefit teachers under stress" (Mearns & Cain, 2003, p. 73). Teacher satisfaction with their job has been shown to increase when they have a positive and supportive work environment (Benoliel & Barth, 2017) and when teachers share concerns with each other it can lead to helpful suggestions from colleagues which can resolve some of the stress (Kyriacou, 2001). Dunham (1983) wrote "by discussing my feelings as openly as I can with

more experienced staff in my department. I feel very grateful that I am able to do this and the knowledge that I am not alone in these feelings helps a great deal" (p. 193).

Trying to keep a positive attitude regarding the situation and the profession has also been shown to help (Dunham, 1983). It has been shown that it may lessen distress if one compares their job favorably to other professions (Mearns & Cain, 2003). Trying to think objectively, keep problems in perspective, and keeping feelings under control are another way to lessen the effects of stress on a teacher (Kyriacou, 2001; Dunham, 1983).

2.5 Effective Teaching

Effective teaching means many different things to different people. One definition is a teacher's ability to bring about the desired outcomes of student engagement and learning (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Another definition is when the organizational objectives of the classroom are met (Reagan, Case, & Brubacher, 2000). Some definitions include a measurement of student results and attainment levels (Paisey, 1983) while others define effective teaching as the act of making a difference in students' lives (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Bryk, Harding, and Greenburg (2012) said "how teachers lead their classrooms can have a transformative impact on students' lives and that access to teachers with the most impact –those who have mastered artful and effective instruction –offers a promising pathway to closing the achievement gap" (p. 83-84). Wong and Wong (2014) said "effectiveness is achieved by employing effective practices" (p. 2) and "when effective teaching occurs in the classroom, you will find happy children, and the finished product is a successful classroom" (p. 253). Teachers everywhere have the desire to be effective however sometimes the stressors that they

encounter on a regular basis can diminish their effectiveness (Paisey, 1983). This study will

allow the participants an opportunity to define effective teaching and will explore what

effective teaching means to them.

2.6 Impact of Stressors on Effective Teaching

Teacher performance can be difficult to measure, and is somewhat subjective, however

it has been shown that heightened stress levels do have an impact on teachers work

performance (Huk, 2011). Many researchers look at the negative impact of stress on teaching

effectiveness (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Betoret, 2009; Alarcon, 2011; Ouellette et al., 2018

;Younghusband, 2008). Teacher effectiveness and quality of teaching is directly related to

teacher satisfaction with their job (Benoliel & Barth, 2017; Hung, 2012). "Research indicates

that the consequences of burnout are potentially serious for staff and clients alike" (Greenglass,

Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1996, p. 185). Dorman (2003) even went as far as to say "teachers who

show a high level of stress and burnout and yet continue to teach can have a negative influence

on their students" (p. 108).

"Stress within the teaching profession is considerable and may have far-reaching

consequences for the entire public education system" (Pettegrew & Wolf, 1982, p. 374). The

amount of stress that teachers are under could have a negative effect on the quality of their

instruction (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). "Teachers who feel pressured or constrained at work are

more likely to use controlling, maladaptive, and less effective teaching methods" (Marshik,

Ashton, & Algina, 2017, p. 42). Teachers who are under more stress tend to make more

cognitive mistakes which could impact the learning of their students (Huk, 2011).

Younghusband (2006) noted "it is reasonable to think that when teachers are feeling stress their students are affected too" (p. 13).

When teachers experience a lot of stress or burnout this may lead them to believe that they are less effective, which in turn could cause them to actually be less effective (Huk, 2011). Teachers are less motivated to do their best work in the classroom if they do not feel supported at work (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017). Collie et al. (2012) stated "teachers who experience lower perceived stress and greater perceived teaching efficacy and job satisfaction encourage greater achievement" (p. 1189). So it follows that teachers who feel that they are more stressed and less effective could have lower levels of student achievement.

Teachers that are under a lot of stress may find that their students also suffer a lack of motivation due to their lowered quality of instruction (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). They may feel less motivated and have a lesser degree of work involvement (Betoret, 2006). Teachers can have a hard time fostering students psychological needs if their own are not being met (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017). This stress can have a negative effect on student-teacher rapport and can impair the working relationship between students and teachers (Abel & Sewell, 1999). Sometimes the stress can take an unexpected toll on teachers and they may find they devote less attention to their students or get frustrated and use inappropriate language with them (Cardinal & Thomas, 2016) or cease to care if a student learns (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). They may also suffer withdrawal and be less likely to engage with students (Naring, Vlerick, & Van de Van, 2012). They may even lower the amount of time and energy they put

into their job as a result of stress which is detrimental to the students in their class (Abel &

Sewell, 1999).

2.7 Ways to Reduce the Impact of Stressors on Effective Teaching

It would seem that many of the sources of stress placed on teachers are systemic rather

than personal (Benham Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Because the sources of stress are systemic rather

than personal there are changes that can be made to help alleviate some of these sources of

stress on teachers. One way is for the administrators of the schools to ensure that they create a

positive atmosphere of support for teachers. This enables teachers to talk to each other, share

concerns, and brainstorm on possible solutions (Kyriacou, 2001). A comfortable and welcoming

physical environment that feels orderly and safe, and where the work day allows for regular

interactions between colleagues, can increase teacher satisfaction (Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012).

Teachers need to "feel safe, cared for, and accepted by management" in order to be fully

satisfied at work (Hung, 2012, p. 1436). Teachers who feel supported at work are more

motivated and more likely to foster their students'needs (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017).

It is also helpful when school districts or administration avoid setting unrealistic goals

and targets (Kyriacou, 2001). Teacher satisfaction increases when they engage in frequent

professional development and have adequate resources (Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012). It can be

argued that there is a need for more teachers, more books, more equipment, and more

materials (Hornsby, 1983). Teachers should have full access to school equipment, supplies, and

personnel support such as psychologist, speech therapists, and resource specialty teachers as

needed (Betoret, 2006).

Teachers are critical to the operation of the school and the more effective they can be the better it is for their students (Hung, 2012). Teachers are more likely to reach out to students, try to understand them better, and use strategies to create a friendlier learning environment if their own needs are being met in the workplace (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017).

School districts and other educational management should keep the lines of communication open with teachers to allow them to have a say in policies and practices being made (Kyriacou, 2001). Teachers want their voices heard, and not marginalized, when decisions are being made that impact teaching and learning (Lloyd & Sullivan, 2012). "Teachers are more likely to support their students' autonomy in the classroom when they perceive that they have some degree of choice and control over their work/teaching, and this may ultimately affect students' motivation" (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017, p. 42).

When talking about teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador Younghusband (2006) stated "stakeholders need to become more aware of the realities of teaching. Understanding these realities could lead to working relationships and policy changes that would support teachers to be effective in the classroom and to feel confident in their abilities" (p. 13). She also mentioned that emphasis should be placed on the importance of effective communication, proper administative and collegial support, current and meaningful professional development, and access to adequate resources.

2.8 Teachers Leaving the Profession

As a result of all these stressor and changes in their work many teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate (Lande With, 2017). In a global study over 42% of respondents answered yes to the question have you thought of leaving the teaching profession (Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993). Benham Tye and O'Brien (2002) heard from many experienced teachers that teaching was losing its joy and satisfaction. Both Lloyd and Sullivan (2012) and Lande With (2017) found that 40%-50% of new teachers leave the profession within five years.

In Canada over 40% of the Canadian school boards report a problem with new teachers leaving within the first five years. The highest rate of this is in Ontario where up to 60% of new teachers leave the profession. In the Canadian study by King and Peart (1992) several teachers, including two from Newfoundland and Labrador, expressed their interest in changing careers however they felt they would have trouble finding a job outside of teaching without returning to school. Also in this study when asked if they would leave the profession 19% said they would leave if they could, 33% had seriously considered leaving and 9% had actively looked for a career change.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the sources of stress placed on teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador and how this stress affects their ability to effectively teach. By looking at the experiences of teachers when dealing with the stressors that they encounter in their profession it will allow district policy makers and administration to better inform policies that could affect the stress level of teachers. Furthermore by looking at teachers' current perceptions of the causes of stress it will inform policy makers of any current policies that may be placing undue stress on teachers. By studying the perceived effect of these stresses on effective teaching we can find ways to alleviate some of these stressors and allow teachers to be as effective as possible.

3.2 Research Design

This study is a qualitative study that uses cross- sectional survey design to collect data. Creswell (2015) writes "survey research designs are procedures in qualitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population" (p. 376). The goal of this study was to look at teachers' opinions of, and attitudes towards, the stress that they encounter on a regular basis while teaching.

The data was collected using an interview style of data collection. According to Whitt (1991) "interviews are used in qualitative research to obtain respondents' perspectives and

perceptions" (p. 410) which was the goal of this study; to obtain teachers perspectives on the causes of stress in their profession and their perception of how this impacts their ability to effectively teach.

3.3 Data Collection

For this study one on one interviews were conducted to maintain participants' privacy and allow participants to speak openly and truthfully. Participants were either interviewed in person or via email. For the in person interviews the interview was recorded using a voice recorder. It was later transcribed by the primary researcher and the transcript was sent to the participant for approval. The participant was free to add, delete, or change any of their responses that they wished. Once any changes were made, the participant returned the transcript to the interviewer for coding.

For the interviews that were conducted via email the participants were emailed the same set of questions as the in person interviewees. They were also emailed a digital copy of the consent form that had to be signed and returned along with their responses. If any clarification was needed after reading the initial interview the interviewer asked any follow up questions via email as well.

Once all data was collected the researcher coded it for specific themes and analyzed the results. All the data was anonymized and grouped to answer the research and sub-research questions of the study. These results were then compiled into a report to be shared with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and all participants.

3.4 Participant Selection

The sampling in this study was done by purposive sampling. "In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2015, p. 206). The central phenomenon being studied in this case was the teacher stresses that occur in the intermediate or secondary classroom in the Eastern region of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.

Participants in this study were all teachers who were teaching intermediate or secondary students in the Eastern region of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) at the time of the interview. The researcher chose to limit the participants to this region to facilitate face to face interviews and chose to focus the study on intermediate and secondary classroom as the types of stresses and daily routines are vastly different in the primary elementary classroom and the researcher felt it would provide more valid data if it was focused on one style of classroom as opposed to being spread over all grade levels. The researcher contacted the NLESD to seek approval to conduct a study on the sources of teacher stress in the classroom and their impact on effective teaching. Once approval was granted an invitation to participate in the study was sent to the principals' of all intermediate and secondary school in the Eastern region of the NLESD. The researcher found the emails for the principals' of these schools using the schools' individual websites. The researcher asked that the principals' forward the invitation to their staff if they were willing to allow them to participate. The participants then contacted the researcher via email or phone. Any teacher that contacted

the researcher wanting to participate was given the opportunity to do so. There were eighteen

participants in total.

3.5 Data Analysis

All in person interviews completed during the study were recorded on a digital voice

recorder. Each recording was transcribed by the interviewer. The transcripts were sent to the

participants at an email address of their choosing to ensure they were happy with the

transcription and the answers that they provided. The participants were free to add, delete, or

change anything they wished on the transcript. Any changes to the transcript were sent back to

the researcher by the participant. Once the transcripts were checked with the participants they

were coded for relevant themes emerging in the data. For interviews conducted via email the

original transcript was sent to the researcher from the participant. The researcher used this

document to code for relevant themes. The researcher chose to complete the coding by hand

to allow full immersion in the data and to ensure all relevant themes that were emerging were

discovered.

All names of participants and schools were changed or omitted in the final draft to

protect the participants' anonymity. This is important for the participants to remain

anonymous as some of the stresses identified may be about the employer. Participants may

have feared repercussions when bringing up negative points about their employer. It was

important to maintain confidentiality when talking to the teacher participants as they may not

have felt comfortable giving their true opinions about the current policy and practices if they

felt it may have gotten back to their employer. This could have caused participants' to not be

open and honest with the researcher about the true causes of stress in their profession. By ensuring confidentiality the researcher allowed the participants to speak openly and honestly without fear of repercussion.

All data is stored on a flash drive and all files are named using a code that only the researcher has access to. The digital recordings of the interviews were removed from the digital recorder once they were transcribed and a copy was kept on the flash drive with the transcript.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Due to the fact that qualitative research relies on descriptions and perceptions instead of numbers it can be harder to ensure the scientific rigor and validity of the research. "Qualitative research emphasizes exploring individual experiences, describing phenomenon, and developing theory" (Cope, 2014, p. 89). To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity are used (Cope, 2014). This study strives to meet all these criteria to ensure the highest quality of research.

Credibility is the truth of the participant data and the accurate interpretation and representation of them (Cope, 2014). In order to ensure credibility the researcher did all the coding of the data by hand to ensure all emergent themes were relevant. Only data given directly in the interviews by the participants were used to explain the themes that emerged within the study. Furthermore all transcripts were sent to the participants to be reviewed by them and to ensure the responses given represented the true thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the participants. This was a form of member checking. According to Cope (2014)

member checking is "an important step in qualitative research that substantially enhances credibility" (p. 90). Finally all interviews were conducted in private so the participants' answers would not be influenced by other people or fear of losing anonymity.

Dependability is the consistency of the data in similar conditions and can be achieved when another researcher agrees with the conclusions of the researcher at each stage of the research (Cope, 2014). The researcher kept all original and edited interview transcripts as well as all data from coding and emergent themes. If another researcher were to study them similar findings should be achieved.

Confirmability is the researcher's ability to show that the data and emerging themes represent the views of the participants' and not that of the researcher (Cope, 2014). As stated previously all data was kept and analyzed carefully by the researcher. Only data found in the interview transcripts was used to support the emerging themes. The researcher used only the information provided by the participants to determine what those themes were.

Transferability is the ability of the findings of the study to be applied to other locations or groups (Cope, 2014). While this study focused on only on the Eastern region of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District policies tend to be implemented district wide so it stands to reason that many of the stressors that are found in the Eastern region would also transfer to other regions within the province. Furthermore many of the stresses found in this study are found frequently in teaching no matter the location so it is likely that much of this research would also be applicable to teachers teaching in other parts of the world.

Authenticity is the extent to which the researcher accurately expresses the feelings and emotions of the participants in the study (Cope, 2014). In this study direct quotes from participants were used to convey the true emotions and feelings of the participants and to back up the emerging themes.

3.7 Researchers Role and Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct this study the researcher had to obtain permission from Memorial University's ethics review board. All research had to adhere to strict ethical principles'. To ensure these principles were met several step were taken. These steps were as follows:

1. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Newfoundland and Labrador English school district (NLESD).

2. NLESD policies were followed; the researcher had to obtain permission from the principals' of the schools before teachers were permitted to participate.

3. All participation was voluntary. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time and have their data removed.

3. All participants were required to sign an informed consent form which detailed any risks associated with the research as well as their rights as a participant.

4. All efforts were made to protect the privacy of the participant and ensure their autonomy. While principals needed to give permission for their staff to participate they were not informed of whom, if anyone chose to participate.   The NLESD was also not informed of which teachers agreed to participate.

5. All transcripts were sent to the participants through an email of their choosing and NLESD email was avoided upon request.

6. All data was stored in a secure location and was kept confidential.

The researcher took a passive role in this research acting only as an interviewer. Because there were no classroom visits there was no influence on the teachers from the researcher. As well the researcher asked open ended questions that allowed the participants to give their own answers without the researchers bias influencing them.

The researcher is also an intermediate/secondary teacher in the NLESD who has her own experiences with the stressors found in the classroom. While the researcher was interested to see if her experiences were shared with other teachers she was careful not to allow her own biases to influence the participants' or her analysis of the data. Care was taken not to mention personal bias or experiences during the interviews so not to influence answers. As well the researcher was careful to ensure that all emerging themes were found in the data and represented in the results, not only ones that the researcher felt were relevant to her experience.

Chapter 4

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the themes that emerged as a result of the data collected via the interviews. Participants were interviewed using open ended questions that centered on several main areas which are as follows:

- participant's definition of a stressor

- sources of stress, or stressors, in the teaching profession

- technology's impact on teachers stress

- participant's definition of effective teaching

- the effect of these stressors on effective teaching

- what can be done to combat the effects of stress on effective teaching

All areas emerged as a result of the responses of the participants and are supported by direct quotes taken from the interviews.

4.2 Participants

In total eighteen participants were interviewed either in person or via email. The grades taught ranged from grades seven to twelve, with one participant also having experience at the primary/elementary level as well. The subjects taught include Science, Mathematics, English, French, Social Studies, Physical Education, Music, Special Education, and Technology. Some

teachers that were currently substituting or had replacement and substitute experience were also included. This allowed for a wide variety of experiences and perspectives. The number of year of teaching experience of the teachers was also very varied and ranged from four years to twenty five years.

4.3 Definition of a Stressor

The participants were asked to provide their definition of a stressor and what it means to them. The answers were focused around five main themes:

- something that causes anxiety;
- something that causes stress;
- something that causes them to be upset;
- something that creates challenges when doing their job;
- something that hinders job performance;

4.3.1 Causes Anxiety

A large number of participant definitions included that a stressor was something that caused anxiety in teachers. This included participants defining a stressor as something that caused them personal anxiety, worry, stress, or discomfort. It was also mentioned that this anxiety could cause upset to their daily routine and impact their ability to perform well in the classroom.

4.3.2 Causes Stress

Another major theme in the participants' definition of a stressor was that something that causes stress to an individual. This included factors that cause stress, events that make them upset, or as one participant explained "an incident or situation which increases the stress I feel as a teacher". Another teacher described a stressor as "something that elicits a stressful response in a person". It was also recognized that a small amount of stress can be normal and healthy, as one participant described "I recognize that there is positive stressors and being on edge can be beneficial at times and cause me to work more efficiently" however a stressor is usually thought of as "negative and beyond the scope of healthy stress" and "internal or external factors that exert pressure of some form in your professional and personal life".

4.3.3 Causes Upset

A stressor was also frequently described as something which causes upset to a teacher. It was mentioned that stressors can cause a teachers blood pressure to go up, it could cause them to feel on edge a lot of the time, or it could cause them to be agitated, aggravated, or upset. These feelings can cause a teacher to spend time thinking about the stressor and ruminating over it. It can also cause an overall feeling of unhappiness as well as negatively impact the mental wellness of a teacher. As one teacher put it these feelings of unhappiness can end up "invading my personal and home life" and another teacher mentioned that stressors can "cause me to go home early".

4.3.4 Creates Challenges

Another common response when asked for the definition of a stress was something that creates more challenges in the classroom. One teacher mentioned that many of the stressors are beyond his control and tend to happen at the beginning of the year. These stressors can cause problems within the classroom and impact a teacher's ability to do their job. One teacher wrote

> I think a stressor is anything that kind of makes it more difficult to do what you're doing. For me it would mean like things that would impact my teaching, things that make it more difficult to do my job

Another teacher noted that a stressor would be something that negatively impacts their work life and causes them to spend extra time to prepare.

4.3.5 Hinders Job Performance

One participant described a stressor as "some event or circumstance that makes it more difficult or emotionally draining to do what I need to do" and another participant explained a stressor "is something that reducing my effectiveness, causes frustrations, and reduces my efficiency". A stressor was also described as something that distracts a teacher or prevents and gets in the way of them doing their job to the best of their ability. According to one participant it is "anything that gets in the way of me delivering the information, the content, the activity" to their class. Another participant summed it up nicely as

> Something that might seem unnecessary or sort of deters you or in a way wastes your time from focusing on what your role should be and that's to do the best of your ability to teach the curriculum to your students in a way that will lead to their success.

All these stressors can interfere with a teacher's job performance making it more difficult for them to effectively teach and do their job properly.

4.4 Stressors in the Teaching Profession

Three questions in the interview were asked that pertained to the sources of stress, or stressors, in the teaching profession. These were can you articulate some sources of stress or stressors that you encounter on a regular basis while teaching?, what are some stressors that teachers encounter in general?, and what do you feel are the biggest causes of stress in your profession?. A very large number of responses from these three questions overlapped so the analysis and interpretation was combined.

According to one teacher "the job itself requires one to deal with high stress situations on the daily" and she concluded that there were too many stressors to properly list them all. Another teacher thought most of the stressors were systemic issues which would need to be resolved as a whole in order to alleviate some of the stress placed on teachers.

While there were a vast and varied number of stressors given in general the stressors could be grouped into six main themes with several subthemes emerging within each section. These emerging themes were as follows:

- student related stressors

- workload related stressors

- lack of professional respect

- lack of support

- stresses caused by interpersonal relationships

- personal stresses

4.4.1 Student Related Stressors

The title student related stressors is a broad topic that can be broken down even further into subcategories to be studied individually. The six sub themes of student related stressors are:

- student behavior

- student mental health

- inclusion and differentiation of instruction

- lack of student accountability

- social promotion

- class size

4.4.1.1 Student Behavior

Perhaps the most obvious of the stressors student behavior was listed by many of the teachers as a common stressor in the classroom. Classroom discipline and management, major negative classroom behaviors, and bullying were some of the stressors mentioned in the interviews. One teacher noted that "some children are worse behaved then others" and those "children that are worse behaved are distracting me from focusing on what I'm doing and distracting the students from listening to what I'm doing". It was also noted that "uncooperative students tend to make a major stress" in their classes as well.

Student misbehavior and belligerence of students is a major stressor to teachers. Often the "teacher doesn't seem to have the respect of the students, the respect of the parents, and that sense of authority...is not there". Many of the students openly display disrespectful attitudes towards the teachers and this caused a lot of stress for teachers. Teachers reported students having poor attitudes towards them and lashing out while they are teaching. The students may repeatedly talk while the teacher is talking, disrupt other students learning, talking back in a rude and disrespectful manner when talked to, or even curse at the teacher in class. It is very difficult for a teacher to deliver the curriculum and effectively teach the students while also trying to manage the unruly students and dealing with so much disrespect in the classroom.

Another student behavior that creates undue stress on teachers is the apathetic attitude that is displayed by some students regarding school and learning. It is not uncommon for a student to "sit in class and refuse to do any work". Similarly often students do not have the attention span to sit through, and behave for, an entire class. This is particularly true for junior high students and students in grade 10. Furthermore students frequently show up unprepared for class and expect the teacher to provide them with material. This creates a constant interruption to the class as the teacher has to stop what they are doing to find and distribute materials that the students should be bringing. One teacher mentioned that in the second week of school he had two or three kids this year that had not brought a pencil or paper to class at all yet. "Trying to teach in a classroom where there's so many interruptions" or distractions is very stressful on a teacher.

Several teachers also mentioned that it is more common today for students to be physically threatening towards other students and even teachers in the classroom. Actual incidents of physical violence against teachers in the classroom are an increasing concern that was raised. Teachers are finding it stressful to deal with "volatile students who disrupt and cause the classroom to feel unsafe" as they feel they are "teaching in an unsafe environment". One teacher told the story of a student in his class whose behavior escalated to the point where it was very intense and frightening. He said:

> I had a girl today stomp up and down through the classroom, she was overreacting and looking for attention, and at the end of the class I had to send her to a counsellor because she talked about hating another student. She talked about if I don't get out of this class I'm going to kill somebody.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. Another teacher mentions that she had a student tell her he was going to slit her throat and her colleague had a student make a shooting motion at her to indicate that he wanted to shoot her. This can greatly add to the stress of a teacher if they do not feel they are safe in their own classroom.

Classroom management can be one of the biggest stressors for teachers. As one teacher put it "you [have] to deal with the students in your class and teach them the best you can and they may have these issues for whatever reasons, from their background or whatever they have going on". Classroom management becomes even more of a stress when a teacher feels "that there is no solution to challenging student behavior, especially if the home is not supportive and/or the office is too passive". Sometimes teachers encounter "students who are extremely disrespectful, tell students off, tell teachers off, and there doesn't seem to be a consequence" for these students and their behavior. The lack of consequences for these students with

behavioral issues causes a lot of undue stress on the teacher and can impact the instruction of the class and the ability to learn and the mental wellness of the other students in the class as the student learn there is no repercussions and the behaviors escalate.

4.4.1.2 Student Mental Health

The mental health and wellbeing of students is another source of stress for teachers. "Mental health issues are on the rise, as well as drug abuse" which means teachers now spend more time worrying about the mental wellbeing of their students as well. One teacher said "there's so much stress behind the mental health of your students these days because not only do you have to care about their academic well-being but you have to care a lot more about their emotional well-being". This places the burden of trying to help these students, often without adequate training, on the teachers because there are not usually enough resources to help the students deal with it and the students have trouble focusing and completing class work.

4.4.1.3 Inclusion and differentiation of Instruction

Inclusionary classrooms are classrooms that have students of all abilities included in them. This includes students with learning or other cognitive disabilities as well. Often there is none or not enough support provided in these classrooms and that leaves the classroom teacher trying to provide "accommodations appropriately to students during classroom activities" all on their own. This places a large amount of stress on the teacher and makes something simple like a small quiz challenging to administer. Teachers must put a significant amount of extra effort into planning to ensure that they meet all the needs of the diverse

learners in their classroom while still effectively delivering the curriculum. Trying to support all

their students in all ways and designing intervention strategies for the wide range and variety of

abilities of students in their classroom places a lot of pressure on a teacher. As one teacher

explained it is great to see more students staying in school however that means more learning

differences that may or may not have been diagnosed and the student may not be receiving

adequate support.

Unfortunately many teachers indicated that there was not adequate support available

to help in the inclusive classroom. They may be dealing with students that are significantly

below grade level, students that cannot read, students that are struggling, and students that

are misplaced in their course. These students could be on drugs or have any other variety of

issues that require extra help however there are not enough counsellors and support staff

available in the schools to do testing and provide the appropriate support. As a result some of

these students are not progressing adequately and teachers have noticed a decline in the skill

level and quality of students' background knowledge.

The few resources that are available tend to go to help students on the lower end of the

learning spectrum. This means that "students on the high end of the learning spectrum don't

get justice" and teachers must try to come up with differentiated instruction that will allow

struggling learners to understand while still challenging exceeding students. This is a stressor

for teachers as it can increase their planning time dramatically when they have to make three

or four versions of the same lesson for the different levels of learners in their class. If teachers

are unable to do this then often the high end learners get forgotten and are left unchallenged

and bored. One teacher mentioned the "emphasis seemed to be more on the student with need and trying to get them to have some degree of success and the middle of the road students and the high end students don't get any support". He went on to add that he has had students in the past that have "pretty much taught themselves because of the number of students in the class that had such high need that took up so much time" which resulted in him not having time to spend on enrichment activities for excelling students or even on properly supporting the average student in the class.

4.4.1.4 Lack of Student Accountability

Many teachers have found increased stress in the "paradigm shift of student responsibility". It now seems that more of the responsibility for student learning is placed on the teachers and less and less on the students and parents. There are more policies that do not hold students responsible for their own work. Several teachers mentioned that the subtext of many professional development days is now what more can the teacher do once again placing the onus on the teachers to try to motivate and inspire students who are not taking a personal stake in their own education.

"Students do not take pride in their schoolwork, they do not care about grades, or how they can improve or what will happen after high school". It seems students are putting less effort into their work and are happy to coast by. A few teachers talked about how students are more likely to look up answer or ask a friend for answers rather than trying to figure out a problem themselves. One teacher talked about how when giving online quizzes frequently it is obvious that students have not completed their own work because there are multiple versions

of each assignment and students are answering questions that are not on their assignment.

Changes in the evaluation scheme has made it harder for teachers to ensure that students are

doing their work and not copying or skipping doing their homework. This adds extra stress to

teachers because they are trying to teach the curriculum to students who cannot be bothered

to learn it but then the onus is put back on the teachers to ensure the students understand the

material.

Coupled with this is the parents' tendency to blame the teacher instead of their son or

daughter when their child does not do well. Many teachers have had to deal with "parents who

place the blame on teachers and do not hold their children accountable for their own learning"

and as one teacher stated "if parents do not hold students accountable and place extra

workload back on teachers, this becomes a major stressor". It also seems that parents are less

likely to take on the responsibility for ensuring the students do their work and again shift the

responsibility back to the teacher. One of the participants said "no one ever points the finger at

the parent or the kid and says you guys got to do more" he elaborated that the sole

responsibility seems to be with the teacher even when the student is unwilling to learn.

Furthermore he explained that parental involvement can go a long way to helping "the students

achieve and the lack of parenting leads to a lack of achievement" for the student.

This shifting paradigm has served to increase teachers' workloads and in turn increase

teachers stress. As one teacher noted "communication with the home is the sole responsibility

of the teachers instead of a team approach between parent/guardians, the students, admin,

and the teacher" and "this coupled with the fact that teachers are now responsible for getting

notes to students increases the workload since you essentially have to deliver lessons twice and need to keep a digital footprint of everything you do". Another teacher added to this by talking about how in the past students were responsible for catching up on any missed work however recently it seems that it is once again the responsibility of the teacher to track down the student and ensure they have copies of the missed work.

4.4.1.5 Social Promotion

Social promotion is the act of progressing a student through a grade or a course even if they have not met all curriculum requirements so they stay on track with their peers. According to the participants of this study this practice has negative consequences and causes stress for teachers both at the intermediated and the secondary level of school.

According to one high school teacher "at younger levels children are promoted for social reasons regardless whether they can read, write, or if they know any of the content whatsoever" however once they hit high school everything is based on the credit system and it is possible to fail. This is stressful on teachers for two reasons. The first being that students are not used to the idea that they can fail so teachers must "try to get them aware of the fact that there's no pushing ahead and you don't get pushed ahead if you don't do the work" which can be difficult and stressful particularly when you have students who are used to not doing the work but being promoted anyway. Secondly this is stressful on high school teachers because the background knowledge needed for the courses is, as one teacher put it, "woefully inadequate". Because the students are pushed through to the next grade without having met the required curriculum outcomes they are struggling once they hit high school because they

do not have the foundation knowledge that is required. One teacher explained that this causes extra stress for her because there are "too many problems with students who are misplaced or who need extra help and not enough resources for those students". Another teacher added that he finds it very stressful "teaching children that I know are poorly equipped to handle the classes that I teach. They just don't have the proper knowledge to learn it but yet they go into my class and I know that things are not going to end well for them on an academic basis". This lack of background information often leads teachers to have to try to re-teach material that was covered in earlier grades which they often do not have time to do as it is a challenge to finish the prescribed curriculum as it is.

This social promotion also causes stress at the intermediate or junior high, level. One teacher explained "there are no repercussions for not doing well at the junior high" level and another added "we get stuck in a situation where students are not allowed to repeat but if they fail there's really nothing done either". One intermediate teacher explained that this causes him stress because the students know coming into class that they will get pushed ahead whether they do any work or not so it is a real challenge to get the students to even try.

4.4.1.6 Class Size

The final stressor related to student behavior is large class sizes. It is not uncommon to have class size of over thirty students in some schools. Many of the participants commented on how class sizes are increasing and having a large number of students in the classroom causes even more stress. One participant said "class sizes are way too large" and another said "classes just end up getting bigger". Large class sizes mean that it can be harder to control the class and

deal with student behavior. This also makes doing activities with students more difficult as there are more students to watch as well as more students to prepare for and it is very difficult to support a large number of students in the classroom on your own. One teacher mentioned "when you got 30 kids in one room and you're trying to do an activity you can't be as effective if that activity was trying to be done with 20 students. There's too many students and not enough hands in the classroom".

Plus as one teacher noted "having thirty plus students watching you all the time is a huge demand on your energy". In addition to the extra demand on teachers during the school day large class sizes also increases the at home workload of teachers. Having extra students in the classroom increases the amount of marking that is required which takes away from teachers' personal time and causes increased pressure and stress on teachers. As well there are more parents to communicate with which increases the time teachers spend answering emails.

4.4.2 Workload Related Stresses

Another major topic that presented itself during the interviews was workload related stresses. One teacher said

> The job responsibilities are enormous. I have come to learn that teaching is one of the noblest professions as we influence young minds. Teachers will sacrifice a great deal so that their students succeed. They do this without proper recognition of the challenges they face every day. I feel teachers do this to their own detriment so that they can meet the needs of their students.

The workload associated with teaching is greater than most people realize. In addition to regular classroom work teachers also have a large amount of work that falls outside of school. As one teacher said people "don't realize how much preparation goes into each lesson,

how much correcting there is to do, how much knowledge you have of each student. That at the same time as teaching you're counselling, enforcing rules, meeting curriculum outcomes and so on". The stressors associated with the workload of teachers can be broken down into three categories as follows:

- classroom related work

- curriculum

- out of class work

4.4.2.1 Classroom Related Work

Many of the participants in this interview mentioned that workload and increasing workload was a major stressor in their profession. Some of the teachers with the most teaching experience also said that there seems to be a greater workload now then there was when they first started teaching and that the expectations and demands that are placed on teachers seem to be increasing. The teachers talked about how they are given more work to do or things have changed which has resulted in increased work for them. As one teacher explained asking teachers to do things in a new way creates more work and as a result more stress. He explained "working differently is new work, working differently if you're asking me to teach, administrate, assess, any educational verb you want, if you're going to ask me to change that, that's more work". Some teachers talked about the new weighting policy and how that has increased their workload, others mentioned new curriculums or pilot courses. As one teacher explained "some teachers are intimidated by change to curriculum, or change to reporting procedures, or grade

tracking software" and this can increase a teachers workload as they try to figure out these changes which can increase their level of stress.

Furthermore the teaching loads that teachers are given can cause stress. One teacher said "teachers with many and varied course loads must find preparing for classes extremely stressful" and another added "The drain on personal time that results from developing novel resources and activities. There is no reason why each course should not have a well-designed set of resources and appropriate activities prepared by an expert teacher, shared across the district". One teacher felt that the administration of the schools should make their best effort to keep the teaching loads reasonable by giving teachers multiple slots of the same courses whenever possible and not having them teach too many courses that they have not taught before at one time. A science teacher explained that the workload of labs adds to her stress levels. She said "although I love teaching science, the preparing, setting up, cleaning up and marking of labs creates stress on my daily workload". On top of trying to do extra and new activities there is still the normal editing and preparing of notes for class and the marking that still goes with courses even when they have been taught many times before.

Many of the teachers felt that there is not enough time for them to complete everything that is being asked of them. As one teacher said "normal tasks such as marking, planning, attending meetings, calling parents, etc. are usually not stressors but when coupled with the extra time constraints even small work tasks are a source of stress". Another teacher added that it is "very difficult when you get home at the end of the day and you have three tests to

create, four quizzes to correct, parents to respond to, and try and manage to get supper on the table".

Despite the increasing workload participants feel that there is not enough support offered for teachers. According to one of the participants "there's no support given when significantly extra workload is placed on teachers from one year to the next. Even when you go through the channels that are available to you (ie. NLTA, etc.) a concrete plan does not exist to keep teachers healthy and happy in their job." Another teacher mentioned that there are always "new initiatives and professional learning" opportunities but these require time and teachers are already under serious time constraints trying to get everything completed.

With the workload increasing teachers end up giving up more and more of their own personal time to try to keep up with it. This can cause stress for them, place strain on their relationships, and mean that they do not get a chance to have a break or some personal time to unwind. One teacher stated "I have resigned myself to working all day, all night, and a large portion of my weekend" to keep up with the workload that is given. Another teacher noted "the sheer amount of time that this profession takes away from your family and personal life is emotionally and physically draining". It seems as though too much is being expected of teachers these days and it is interfering with both their professional and personal lives.

4.4.2.2 Curriculum

The amount or changes in the curriculum can also cause stress to teachers. One of the biggest stressors that was mentioned with curriculum was how much is in the curriculum and the time constraint to try to get it all covered by the end of the year. One teacher mentioned a

major stress for her is "the amount of time you have to spend on the curriculum when the curriculum needs double that time" and another said "you feel a pressure to complete a certain amount of curriculum and with the delays and interruptions that's a real challenge" and that you "feel this stress that you have to complete but you don't feel like you're doing justice to the stuff you've taught for years". One teacher said "we jam pack the curriculum all the time" while others said there's an "awful lot of curriculum" and "the biggest cause of stress would be trying to get the curriculum completed". Because there is so much curriculum teachers feel "you're either rushing through things you have done in the past over longer periods of time or you're trying to rush through new content that you've never taught so that creates a little bit of stress too". This issue is exacerbated when students come into courses without the proper foundational knowledge because teachers have to try to find time to teach material that was supposed to be covered in previous grades as the students need a good grasp of that material before being able to successfully move on to the current curriculum.

The other part of curriculum that teachers find stressful is when new curriculum is introduced without proper support. One teacher said "new curriculum planning has been a major stressor for me over the last year". Another added that it is stressful when "curriculum changes and we're not exactly aware of what we have to teach and exactly what manner until we are actually given in-service" which may not be for a few months into the school year. One teacher even talked about how there was changes to the exams for courses she was teaching and she currently did not know if there is even an exam in her course which had started.

4.4.2.3 Out of Class Expectations

In addition to the classroom expectations teachers are also expected to take on roles outside the classroom such as extracurricular activities. When asked about stressors, one teacher explained that a big stressor for him was "expectations. So not only your teaching load, but many teachers are expected to coach things or be teacher sponsor for things or supervise things". Another teacher talked about how the number of teachers on staff tends to decrease as cuts are made to the education system but "there's still the same number of hockey teams, drama clubs, all those things" so the burden falls to a smaller number of teachers and they end up having to do more.

Supervision duty is also a large stressor for teachers. Teachers find it difficult "always being on duty instead of just being on duty when you're in the classroom". Sometimes this means that teachers do not get a break at all during the day because they have lunchtime duty which could mean that they do not get a break to relax or even time to use the washroom during the school day. Some teachers also find that this takes away time that they could be spending developing personal relationships with their students which could lead to better outcomes for their students. One teacher said "How effective would it be if instead of on Tuesday you have to race down to the first floor and do supervision duty, like no one else in the whole country has to do, that you were able to be in your classroom and talk to kids?"

Teachers also find it overwhelming to be able to be reached at all times. Now that email is so prevalent teachers are available to student and parents at all hours which can cause stress

for a teacher because they do not have any disengagement from the job and time to step away from the job for a while.

4.4.3 Lack of Professional Respect

Teachers find it stressful when they encounter a lack of respect for their profession. This may come from society, parents, or the lack of profession autonomy that teachers are given. This lack of respect and support can make a teacher's job much harder and place more stress on already overworked teachers.

4.4.3.1 Society

There seems to be a decreasing amount of respect for the teaching profession. One teacher said "I love my profession but I know my profession overall is greatly judged. People assume they know the work of teachers because they have all attended school or because their children go to school" but often they don't realize the amount of work and preparation that teachers put in outside of the classroom.   Another teacher stated "the population believes they can be teachers" but this could be due to a general "lack of respect and understanding for the work of teachers in general". Unfortunately this lack of understanding and respect from the public can also create stress for teachers. It makes negotiating contracts and changing policies harder as teachers may not have the publics support. As well teachers sometimes feel as though they are under a microscope and any mistakes will become public news which can be stressful.

4.4.3.2 Parents

Parents can sometimes show a lack of respect and support as well. One teacher said

"lack of support for families and communities is there, because in the past when the teacher

said something people respected it" but now more and more it seems when you call home

parents are not as receptive to what you have to say. Parents "don't necessarily believe that

their child is capable of doing any wrong" and are "constantly viewing their child as the perfect

child and when test and assignment marks are low instead of talking to their child about how to

improve or what needs to be done they are blaming the teacher". One teacher said it is

stressful "dealing with parents who refuse to take ownership of any issues that may be arising

with their child" and another teacher said "I've experienced grief from parents that I am the

reason their child received a low grade on an assessment" and instead of putting the onus on

the student the parents blame the teacher and say that they are not doing a good job.

Parents may not trust a teacher's professional judgement even though the teacher is

trained in education. One teacher explained

> A teacher's expertise is sometimes not recognized when addressing concerns
> surrounding a student's needs. For example, although it is very important to work with
> parents and understand their point of view, they are not educational experts and may
> request interventions for their children that may not be in the best interest of their
> child.

Another teacher talked about how parents can have an opinion on classroom management and

put a lot of pressure on teachers as well.

> Students are acting out in class and you're trying to manage a whole class of all different
> personalities and the parents get in on it and they're like well how come you're not

doing this, how come you're not doing this, you're the professional you should get to make those decisions

4.4.3.3 Lack of Teacher Autonomy

More frequently it seems like teachers are losing their professional autonomy. They seem to have less and less control of their classroom and their input and feedback is not taken into account on decisions that directly affect them. One teacher said there "seems to be an attack on our autonomy and I'm offended by that to be quite honest". Another teacher noted "teacher expertise seems to be less respected and decisions can be made surrounding the work of teachers without proper consultation". This leads to frustration for teachers when their concerns are not heard and they feel as though they do not have a say in the decisions that directly concern them. One of the participants explained "a teacher's input does not appear to be valued when decision makers make major policy changes that impact their day to day work, as well as the students they interact with every day" and another stated "I don't have anyone knocking on my door, well no one from the district, saying what do you think? I have these people telling me and I'm thinking you know that's not a good idea". Even though teachers are not properly consulted and feel many of these idea will negatively impact them and the students as one teacher said "they fly it anyways and then I'm forced, because they're my employer, to implement the thing which I know to be a foolish thing". Teachers find "decisions made by the department of education that affect teachers without any consultation with us" to be very stressful. One example is the new assessment weighting policy. As one teacher said

> I think the assessment weightings have tied teachers hands quite a bit, its removed our autonomy, its removed in a lot of ways some of the fun that you can have because being

flexible, trying to meet the needs of the individual students, I think that has been taken away from us with this new assessment weightings and I find that frustrating.

Another teacher mentioned he's had to redefine how he teaches his classes as a consequence of decisions that were made without his consultation.

4.4.4 Lack of Support and Resources

Every participant mentioned lack of support in one form or another as one of their major stressors. This lack of support can be broken down into two categories: lack of support from people and lack of provided resources. Teaching is already a difficult job but without adequate support and resources it is near impossible and creates even more stress for teachers.

4.4.4.1 Lack of Support

Many teachers feel there is a "lack of physical support and resources" available to them which can create stress for teachers as they feel as though they are alone. As one teacher put it "teachers do not feel supported in their day to day delivery of curriculum outcomes. It literally feels like the last thing on everyone else's agenda when in fact it is what we are hired to do". This lack of support can be demoralizing for teachers and can exacerbate everyday stresses because teachers feel they have nowhere to turn to receive help. One teacher said that there is nobody available to help support teachers and just say "hey I'm here to help you or I'm here to help you get your job done" instead it all falls on the teacher.

Sometimes this lack of support comes from the community, the school district, or the department of education. One teacher said "lack of support from all levels is the biggest cause of stress" for her. Sometimes this could be in the form of staffing, it was mentioned that there

is not "enough student assistant support to help students" which leaves teachers trying to pick

up the slack. This is especially difficult in an inclusive classroom where there are many levels of

different learner, oftentimes teachers are unable to properly teach to all levels of their

classroom without additional support.

Another place where teachers do not feel adequately supported is the implementation

of new technology in the classroom. As one teacher put it the "constant change actually in the

technology of the school without adequate support" causes stress for teachers. Other teachers

mentioned that when technology is not working they do not have permissions to fix it so they

are held up when trying to prepare for teaching their classes. This includes things such as

PowerSchool needing to be set up, smartboard issues, or passwords needing to be reset. One

teacher said he finds it frustrating because "there's no one to offer us support other than

district personnel and there are not enough of them" which leaves teachers waiting and

struggling while trying to teach their classes. One teacher talked about how he was unable to

update a program on his computer so he could no longer use an application that he frequently

would use in his class in previous years, this meant he had to change his lesson plans because

he did not have permissions to update a simple program on his computer and instead had to

wait for someone to do it for him.

4.4.4.2 Lack of Resources

Coupled with this lack of support is a lack of resources which causes even further stress

to teachers. Teachers find it stressful and frustrating when "there's not enough resources for

every teacher to use" or when they are "asked to do things without having the adequate

resources to do them". It is difficult to teach when there are "not enough resources in the

classroom in terms of IRT, support staff, etc." and there is a "lack of resources to teach all level

of learners including not having all necessary resources or an IRT in a high need classroom".

This lack of resources also extends beyond the classroom and teachers note that there is a lack

of "resources of time or being able to access photocopiers or digital resources". One teacher

noted when she went into school a week before school was to start to prepare for the

upcoming school year she was unable to do much because photocopiers were not working,

PowerSchool was not working, and there was nobody available to help her. This makes

preparing and delivering lessons difficult when there are not proper resources in the school.

4.4.5 Interpersonal Relationships

As with all jobs interpersonal relationships can also cause stress for teachers. Teachers

deal with many people on a daily basis. Stressors related to interpersonal relationships can be

broken down into four categories:

- colleagues

- administration

- school district/Department of Education

- lack of communication

4.4.5.1 Colleagues

Most participants said that their colleagues were a source of support and helped

alleviate the daily stressors however some participants' said "dealing with some co-workers can

be stressful". One teacher said "confrontation is my biggest stressor. If I disagree with a colleague it takes a lot of courage to speak" and another noted that it is difficult "working with staff members that are not "team players" and want their thoughts and opinions valued more than others".

A few teachers mentioned that the "inconsistent application of school rules by other staff members" causes them grief. As one teacher put it "this can lead to unpleasant interactions with students when I enforce the rules that others do not". It is important that teachers back each other up and there is not a lack of support from colleagues. If colleagues are divided and inconsistent students will pick up on that and use it to their advantage to get out of following the rules.

The other stressor that came up in regards to colleagues was a lack of support due to being so busy themselves. As one teacher explained "colleagues are now so maxed out as far as work is concerned colleagues don't have the opportunity to back each other up or help each other out". Another teacher explained that even though teachers are known as good collaborators often teachers end up doing their own thing and not sharing resources or working together even though that could cut down on their workload and stress level because they are so busy there is not time to collaborate with each other.

4.4.5.2 Administration

Administration is another interpersonal relationship that can be tricky and cause some stress for teachers, particularly when teachers feel they do not have the support of their administration when dealing with troubles in the classroom. Some teachers feel there is a "lack

of consistency from administration in enforcing consequences" and one teacher was even

asked to bend the rules for a student because their parents had complained to the

administration. This puts a lot of stress and pressure on teachers when they cannot be

consistent in enforcing rules. Some teachers felt there were not sufficient consequences for

kids when they were sent to the office and that the office just became a place for the students

to sit when they were removed from class rather than there being proper repercussions for the

student's misbehavior. One substitute teacher described the stress of sending a student to the

office when you are not familiar with the school because

> You don't want to appear incompetent, so sending students to the office is the last thing
> on your list when it comes to controlling difficult students. It can often increase the
> stress you feel when you send a student to the administration and ten minutes later
> they are back in your class doing what they always do, no consequences given for their
> unacceptable behavior.

Another teacher said "I've taught at a number of different schools, sometimes admin backs you

up sometimes your admin does not back you up". This inconsistency can create problems for

teachers when students know that if they get sent to the office there will be no consequences

for them so it does not deter any bad behavior in class.

4.4.5.3 School District/ Department of Education

Both the school district and the Department of Education were mentioned as stressors

for teachers in the interviews. The two biggest things mentioned were policies that were

implemented without the input of teachers and the lack of support for teachers. Many teachers

felt that "poorly thought out and reasoned implementation of policies, firstly at the district

level and secondly at the department level" caused a lot of stress for them. Teachers find that

the way the district or the department changed things, such as the evaluation policy, made things unnecessarily difficult for them. Teachers felt they should be given more of an input into the decisions and policies that directly affected their day to day lives.

The second stressor related to the school district and department of education is their lack of support for teachers. One teacher said "the district just doesn't have your back" while another talked about how the district does not defend teachers when they try to use their professional judgement. Furthermore some teachers talked about how when decisions are made it seems like they are made to benefit the district as opposed to support the teachers. One teacher noted "it appears to be they just want their job easier but it's ok to make my job harder where I'm the front end delivery person. They have more concern about making their life easier, less phone calls, less concern, less contention for them". Another teacher noted that changes by the district create enough stress that he would consider leaving. He said "if I were to leave this job tomorrow it would be because the district has pissed me off so much that I'm gone. Not the kids, not even the parents, certainly not my administration, but my employer is making me not want to do this job as much as I used to".

4.4.5.4 Lack of Communication

According to one teacher "communication lines can be challenging and cause stress for teachers as well". This can cause stress when dealing with students and parents as you may be dealing with various situations with students and you have not been informed of extraneous things that are going on in that child's life. This can also cause contention with parents when they assume you are aware of a situation but that information has not been passed along to

you. As one teacher said "I've had to make a call home on something and the parent was terribly upset over the content of the phone call because there was information in a confidential file that I wasn't aware of and they were upset that I wasn't aware of it, but again there was no information anywhere to say go and check this file". When teachers are not given all the pertinent information it can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts which can in turn cause more stress for them.

4.4.6 Personal Causes of Stress

In addition to the other stressors there are also several personal stressors that were mentioned including "regular life stressors" and "things for which I cannot plan". Some teachers found "the constant need to be performing" to be stressful and exhausting coupled with their own expectations for their performance as a teacher which could have a negative impact on their work/life balance. Another teacher added that "not getting enough sleep in the evenings on account of staying up late to do school work contributes to all other stressors". As well some teachers have trouble letting the stressors go and that ends up causing them more stress because they are unable to unwind and relax with so many things on their mind. This can lead to an increase in anxiety and burnout for teachers.

A final source of stress, particularly for substitute teachers and teachers early on in their career, is the lack of job security. Many substitute teachers find it stressful to not have a set schedule or a guarantee of work. It is very difficult to gain permanent employment, especially in the Eastern Region of the province. Even once gaining permanent employment the stress is still there as there is a fair amount of "uncertainty of the future of the education system in this

province. Cuts seem to come out of left field" and there is "a lot of stress behind the unpredictability of the career in terms of the security and your job. There are so many teachers and so few positions you have the stressor of are you even going to have a job next year". Many newer teachers found it stressful not know if they were going to be more redundant and moved from school to school year after year. This often leads to them having to prep for new courses each year which increases their overall workload and stress level as well.

4.5 Technology's Impact on Teacher's Stress

The participants were asked "Has technology changed the stress level of teachers? And if so how?". The responses to this question were very varied however most agreed that there were both positive and negative sides to technology use in the classroom. One teacher said "technology is very much a two sided, double edged sword" while another said "as many solutions as it gives us it presents just as many problems". Some teachers felt that it has dramatically made a negative impact while others felt technology had made things easier. The responses to this question can be broken down into six categories:

- positive use of technology for teachers

- positive use of technology for students

- technology not working

- lack of support and control over technology

- students using technology inappropriately

- technological burden on teachers

4.5.1 Positive Use of Technology for Teachers

Many teachers felt that when teachers were comfortable using technology the use of technology made their preparation much easier. "Technology has the potential to streamline some elements of teaching like organizing and storing materials, communicating with home, and analyzing student grades". Another teacher said she finds "that having a website, having all my notes all that stuff, having the remind app, that has saved me a lot of time and has enhanced the efficacy of my teaching". Technology has also made it easier to share resources both with other teachers and with students. Many teachers use a website to keep their notes on for their students so if I student misses time they can get the missed work themselves and parents can stay in the loop and see what their children are learning.

Teachers also mentioned that they enjoyed how technology has enhanced their lessons. One teacher said "I am really a believer in the use of technology. I can display things, videos, images, and the quality in the imaging that I can display... as opposed to chalk drawing it's just night and day" he also added "the projector in the classroom, the sound system in the classroom it's just such a richer experience then chalk and talk or even a great textbook". Another teacher said "I like using technology in the classroom. I like the smartboard, the use of computer simulations, and sharing my website with students and teachers" while another added "technology can be wonderful and we have done some excellent projects and stuff using technology". Many of the teachers interviewed felt that when technology was used properly it could enrich the classroom experience and help students become more engaged in a subject.

4.5.2 Positive Use of Technology for Students

Several of the teachers also talked about how they get the students to use technology on a regular basis in the class. One teacher said "I know cellphones are a distraction but I try and turn it around and get them to use their cellphone an awful lot to help their learning". Cellphones can be used by students to do classwork and practice material using things like online quizzes such as Socrative. This allows students to be engaged in their school work while still using technology which they enjoy. One teacher said "technology has made it easier because they like using the technology" and another added it is good to "plan activities where the children have to use their cellphones, or can use their cellphones, to learn and do" because the students enjoy it and it keeps them more involved in their work. When the students are focused and using technology in an appropriate way it can facilate learning and make the material more interesting for them.

4.5.3 Technology Not Working

One complaint heard from teachers is that sometimes the technology in their classroom does not work which can make it stressful for teachers when they plan a lesson that relies on the technology. Even small things like taking attendance or projecting notes for the students can become harder when the computer or projector is unexpectedly not working properly. Teachers also have no permissions to change or fix things so when the computer goes down they must rely on someone else to fix it which can take a while because there are only a couple of computer technitions to service a large area with a lot of schools. One teacher explained he had no access to his google drive where all his notes were stored on his classroom computer

and it was over a week and a half before it was fixed. Another teacher talked about how his

technology class was delayed at the beginning of the year because students needed new

passwords and he was unable to reset them himself. This meant that the student were unable

to proceed in class so the teacher had to find something else for them to do that wouldn't

require the computer which caused some stress. As one teacher put it "what is stressful is

having technology that is unsupported or not ready for what we are doing". Many of the

teachers felt it was insulting that they did not even have basic permissions to do things like

install printers and update programs. They also felt that if they were able to do these things it

would make using the technology run much smoother and create much less stress.

4.5.4 Lack of Support and Control over Technology

Teachers also find it stressful and frustrating when there is not adequate support for

technology and teachers do not have any permissions or control over fixing it. When there are

problems with the technology but teachers are not allowed to fix it this causes stress for

teachers. As one teacher explained "it's not that they are problems that can't be solved

because they have simple solutions but again if we don't have the funds and the manpower on

it, it makes it almost useless". Another added "we don't have any control of our desktops, I

can't personalize it, I can't install simple little updates. I can't do anything, nobody at school can

do anything you have to send in a request to get it done" and he added "one tech is running

around to 700 computers or something" so getting things fixed can take a while which is

frustrating for teachers. Another teacher added it is stressful "being unable to resolve simple

technological issues that used to be within in power to fix have been restricted to district level

staff intervention which is incredibly slow" he went on to explain "we have been waiting nearly three weeks to have schools printers added to computers across the school, which could be done in five seconds locally but we still cannot get a date for someone to configure it". Teachers find it very frustrating and stressful when technological problems arise which they know how to fix but they cannot deal with them because they do not have the authority to do so, but not having them fixed impacts their ability to continue with their lessons in the way they want.

Teachers also find it stressful when they feel the "technology that we're provided by the district never meets what we need to do". Teachers talked about how they are expected to use a certain level of technology in their classes however they are often not provided with this technology or there is not enough for everyone to use. One teacher noted she cannot always use technology in her lessons when she would like to because there is a very limited amount in her school. Another teacher noted that he must be sure to book the computer labs or tech carts well in advance otherwise he cannot use them because he also has limited access to resources. Some teachers also found it difficult when they are expected to use new technology but they are not given proper instruction or backup on how to use it.

4.5.5 Students Using Technology Inappropriately

While many teachers agree that technology can be a great tool for student learning it also became quite obvious during the interviews that students often were using technology for the wrong reasons in class. Several teachers mentioned it was difficult when trying to teach to see students looking at their phones instead of paying attention in class and that it was

extremely frustrating when you're doing your best to ensure the students know the material but they are too busy on their phones to pay attention and know what they are supposed to do. As one teacher said "cellphone technology can be used for a lot of good but it's not going to be used for good when you can text your friends, when you can look up magazines that you like reading on the internet, or if you want to cheat" and another added "sometimes it's hard when students have full access to technology and their cellphones. That is definitely something that can be distracting to them". One teacher mentioned that students are "depending on [cellphones] to tell them answers instead of actually learning it for themselves" and another added students "do not have the emotional maturity to look at a phone as a tool" for learning and instead use it for the wrong reasons. While many felt when used appropriately cellphones could be a great asset almost everyone agreed right now they are mainly a big distraction and rules need to be put in place to minimize this.

On top of students using technology for the wrong reasons another stressor for teachers is "trying to control students' use of technology when it is not needed for classwork". One teacher said there should be "some sort of device that shuts them down as soon as they walk through the doors…because it's impossible to monitor such small devices on a large scale". Another teacher added that cellphones "create enormous challenges in the sense of what they are doing with it and how do you monitor it and how do you police it". Students could be using their cellphones to cheat, bully other students, or even record teachers which causes a large amount of stress for teachers in the classroom. As one teacher said "people are 100% addicted to phones" and another teacher added that if you take a student's phone from them this can cause the student to have a large amount of anxiety. Furthermore teachers and schools have

been held responsible when phones have been taken from students and have gotten lost or broken. This puts a lot of pressure on teachers because they do not feel they can remove the distractor from the students but they also cannot get the students to pay attention while they have full access to their technology.

4.5.6 Technological Burden on Teachers

While technology has made some aspects of teaching easier it has also placed a burden on teachers that was not present before technology. There is now an "expectation that we have a high level of technological development and delivery" even when there is not enough resources available or teachers feel like they have not been properly trained. As one teacher mentioned "for teachers who are in the system who are probably getting ready to retire now I'd say technology may have drove a few teachers out early just because of the learning curve associated with trying to figure out what to do and how to do it" and another teacher mentioned "I do know some of my coworkers feel a lot more stress by the level of technology because they don't feel they can keep up with it". One teacher who has been teaching for almost 20 years says "it seems like the world is moving faster and faster and if the world is moving faster and faster I think technology is just going to move quicker with it too and a dinosaur like me is just going to go extinct as far as my teaching is concerned".

Many teachers are also finding that technology has increased their workload and becoming an administrative burden to them. As one teacher said:

> I think a lot of times technology might seem like it should make it, I suppose ideally it should make it less work but actually in a lot of ways it's made more work. There's a lot of top down responsibilities passed on to teachers that maybe years ago wasn't done or

really it would often depend on the school. Even something like doing your marks in PowerSchool, the expectation is you've got to get your marks posted as soon as possible but yet we still have to do report cards.

Another teacher noted "the level of accountability has increased with technology advances in terms of student data processing and expectations from parents and administrators in terms of access to information". Teachers now feel pressured to maintain a website for their students which adds time to an already busy career and it has also increased the time it takes to do up notes and lessons for some teachers. One teacher summed it up nicely by saying

> Suddenly now everything has sped up and because it's sped up there's more responsibilities, more workload put on my shoulders as a teacher and as a result I don't have time. There's only 24 hours in a day and because there's only 24 hours in the day if I'm too busy worrying about the technological components of what I'm teaching I do not have as much time to spend on other aspects.

One teacher wrote "technology has been a big change-teachers can be reached at all times" while another added "being able to be reached at any time certainly increases my stress". Teachers find emails are difficult to manage because it is something they have to get control of everyday. There are many emails received every day and some require action or contain a lot of information to read. Some teachers have even been told that they must answer parents' emails within 24 hours which places tremendous pressure on teachers to find time outside of the school day to keep up with these emails. As one teacher wrote "even the access to email and the requirement that you have to always check email seems like such a minor thing to everyone else in the regular workforce. What they don't get is that I work all day with teenagers. Where am I getting time to check email? That has to be done on lunch breaks, afterschool, on my cellphone at random times in the evening, or when my kids are in bed and

I'm up till all hours planning and answering emails from teachers, admin, parents, and district personnel". This requirement to constantly be on call causes stress to teachers and makes them feel like they do not get a break from the job.

4.6 Differences in Stress Levels at Differing Grade Levels

Teachers were asked if they felt the stresses at their level of teaching were greater then, less then, or the same as at other levels. The responses to this question were very varied and there was no consensus on what grade level had the greatest amount of stress associated with it.

Some teachers felt that high school teachers had the least amount of stress while others felt that high school teachers faced the greatest amount of stress and pressure. One teacher said "I think things are more intense at high school because the stakes are higher, you're closer to graduation, you've got more teen pregnancy, you got kids dropping out, you've got those sorts of things". Other teachers agreed with this sentiment citing the reasons for stress being higher at the high school level is because of drugs, a higher level of absenteeism, and larger class sizes.

Others felt that junior high would be the most stressful because of the nature of junior high and its students. The students are younger and therefore less mature which means you also have more interactions with parents. The students are also just entering puberty and are in the adolescent stage where they're trying to find their own way and they do not have a real appreciation for the education system and may display a more negative attitude towards teachers.

Still others felt that primary/elementary would have the greatest amount of stress because they are dealing with young children and their parents. At the primary/elementary level the students are much more dependent on their teacher. As well there is a massive amount of paperwork with young children to be able to do things such as field trips.

Many teachers thought that teaching all grade levels was equally stressful however the sources of stress would change from grade to grade. Teachers felt that each grade level would have their own set of stressors and that there are challenges for all teachers. One teacher that participated in this interview teaches at both the primary/elementary level as well as the high school level and confirmed that the stress level is similar across the levels but the reasons for the stress differ.

As one teacher brought up usually teachers pick the levels that they are best suited to. She explained:

> I think the thing with teaching is you kind of recognize what you're best suited to. Like for instance I love little kids but I'd never want to be able to spend my time with them all day and I know there are people who love doing that, they adore it, and that's good on them. I know people who teach junior high that love junior high, there are people who don't like the responsibility, or added stress I guess, the pressure when you're teaching public exam courses whereas that's something that I actually like.

4.7 Changes in the Amount of Stress

Participants were asked if the amount of stress or number of stressors has changed since they started teaching. Some teachers felt it had not changed much at all. Usually it was the newer teachers that felt that the stress level had not changed as they had not been teaching long enough to see much of a difference.

Other participants felt that the amount of stress they encounter in their profession has greatly increased. One teacher even went as far as to say "stress has gone up, the amount of stress has gone up, and the amount of stress has increased exponentially since when I started teaching". Other teachers said that the job has changed and more and more is expected of teachers each year which means that the amount of stress also increases each year. It also seems as if things have gotten more complicated and busy for teachers which all contribute to the increasing amount of stress.

Conversely some of the participants, mainly teachers who were well into their teaching career, felt that the amount of stress had decreased. Some felt it had decreased because of changes in the location of where they teach or because they are now more experienced. One teacher said "the number of stressors has stayed about the same but the amount of anxiety they create has lessened" while another said that being more "seasoned" has allowed her to manage stressors better. Others find as they teach the same courses over it is less stressful because there is less planning.

4.8 Changes in the Sources of Stress

Participants were also asked if they felt the sources of stress had changed since they started teaching. Some teachers felt that the causes of stress had not changed much while others felt they had changed significantly. Many of the participants who claimed the causes of stress had not changed much have been teaching less than ten years, however some more experienced teachers also felt that some of the sources did not change. For example one teacher said "students are always going to be a portion of your stress when it comes to

teaching". Other teachers felt that the same sources of stress keep being brought up over the years however they are never effectively dealt with.

One of the sources of stress that participants did find a change in was the workload. Teachers mentioned that there is now much more paperwork then there used to be. They also thought that technology had increased their workload substantially. Furthermore they felt that mental health issues and drug use was on the rise however there is not enough support for this. They also felt that there was less respect and support from parents and the community as a whole.

4.9 Definition of Effective Teaching

Participants were asked how they define effective teaching and what it means for them in their classroom. One teacher defined effective teaching as "any model or tool that you can use to help students succeed" and noted that it "changes every year because it depends on the students in my class". In general the responses can be broken into four categories:

- understanding curriculum

- engaged students

- students learning about themselves

- creating relationships with students

4.9.1 Understanding Curriculum

One teacher said "effective teaching happens when a teacher has clear objectives, a clear plan, and has informed the students of that and manages to deliver the content to the

students who then can manage to show that they have mastered those outcomes". Another

teacher stated that "being organized is important to being an effective teacher". Other

definitions include everyone in the class being able to learn and succeed and when students

"want to be in your class because of the learning that is taking place". Another teacher said

"effective teaching for me is meeting the needs of my students and making sure that they are

meeting the outcomes of the courses that I'm assigned to teach to the best of their ability" and

another said effective teaching is achieved when you can look at your students and know that

they have understood the material being taught.

4.9.2 Engaged Students

One definition of effective teaching "involves different teacher behaviors like designing

engaging and interesting lessons, but also consistently managing the classroom environment in

a way that minimizes distraction". Other teachers said effective teaching involves captivating

students' interest, intriguing them, and inspiring and motivating them to do their best. By giving

students a feel for success it will hopefully motivate them to get the best out of life. Teachers

mentioned this could involve designing activities that interest students instead of just giving

notes and worksheets and trying to be as interactive with the students as possible. According to

one teacher "as long as the kids seem to be enjoying and interacting in the class then you're

doing something effective". A different way to state this is "effective teaching means that your

students are having experiences in the classroom that make outcomes accessible to each of

them". This can "instill a desire to learn" in some students which can make them more

motivated to continue on with their education in the future.

4.9.3 Students Learning About Themselves

One teacher said "effective teaching is when my students are learning, not only the subject I am teaching them but also about themselves" while another explained "effective teaching to me is not only teaching curriculum but making a meaningful impact on your students' lives". One teacher said "effective teaching to me means reaching students and having them emotionally engaged in the material that they're doing so that it leaves an actual impact on them when they leave the classroom" and another added that she hopes her students are learning an ethical framework for their lives and how to do things right for themselves. One science teacher explained she hopes her students learn how all their actions fit into the world and that they develop "an appreciation for how important science is, that it impacts our daily lives" she went on to say she hopes that her students gain a world view of how it is everyone's responsibility to take care of the planet.

4.9.4 Relationship with Students

Many teachers felt that the "core to effective teaching is building a relationship with your kids" and having good "human-to-human" contact. This included "leading by example, setting high expectations, having consistent classroom procedures, listening, being accountable, and being approachable". It can be explained by

> Effective teaching is a relationship between you and your individual students. You teach a class, but it has nothing to do with your subject area, you are teaching other humans who all have their own personal story, likes, and dislikes. As an educator you have the task of relating to each and every one of those humans in your room to help them better their future by learning. It doesn't matter what they learn, just that they can learn.

Some teachers felt that extracurricular activities are a great way to get to form personal relationships with students. By building a relationship with your students you can "find ways to improve their motivation and anticipate where they may have difficulties". Furthermore if you have a good relationship with your students they are more likely to confide in you, ask for help with problems that pertain to both school and their personal lives, and seek guidance from you.

4.10 Effective Teaching by Subject

Teachers were asked in the interview if they felt effective teaching varied from subject to subject. Some teachers felt that it did while others felt that effective teaching was the same no matter what the subject was. The teachers who felt that effective teaching varied from subject to subject thought this was the case because different courses require different skill sets. For example a math or science teacher may need to focus on getting students to properly graph while an English or philosophy teacher may focus more on developing students critical thinking skills. One teacher who was teaching three different subjects said was like he was "three different teachers in three different settings" because the methods of teaching to be effective change so much from subject to subject. Depending on the subject matter teachers may need different behaviors or different strategies to help students effectively learn. One teacher said "I think effective teaching can be one thing to a certain subject and it can be something completely different to another" while another added that specific strategies will vary not only from subject to subject but also from class to class and even student to student.

Some of the participants felt that "the general idea of effective teaching can spread across all grade levels and all subjects" and that while we all have different curriculum outcomes to meet we are all trying to help students develop in a positive manner. This means the strategies used to effectively teach may vary but the general outcome of effective teaching should be the same across all subjects.

4.11 Impact of Stress on Effective Teaching

Most of the participants agreed that these stressors have a large negative impact on their ability to effectively teach. They felt that there are many stressors and inefficiencies that cause undue stress in the profession which detracts from their ability to be an effective teacher. One teacher explained "I think you could do a better job if the stress wasn't so high because you would have more flexibility in how you do things". Another teacher noted that often when teachers get extremely stressed and overwhelmed they give up and the quality of their work decreases which can reduce their effectiveness in the classroom. This is echoed by another teacher who said when she gets extremely stressed in class she feels hopeless and wants to give up during class, almost like she is shutting down. This can have a negative impact on students because if the teacher is no longer motivated and excited about what they are teaching it will be harder to get students interested if the teacher is not showing any interest. As well the teacher may not put as much effort into lesson planning which can detract from the educational experience that the students have. Another teacher thought "the sources of stress handicap you in doing your job, they prevent you from doing your job, they prevent you from giving you 100% or if you do give your 100% these stresses actually make it seem like it's not

100%". These sources of stress make it not only difficult to be an effective teacher but they also make it harder to enjoy being a teacher and it could lead to a career change for many teachers if these sources of stress are not properly addressed.

4.12 Effectively Teaching Over a Long Period of Time

Teachers were asked if it has become harder to effectively teach over the course of their career. Some teachers felt that it has gotten easier because they are more experienced and they continue to improve their craft. As well most of the younger teachers also felt it has not gotten harder because they have not been teaching very long so the challenges were pretty similar for their whole career.

Many other teachers felt it definitely has gotten harder to effectively teach since the beginning of their career. Some teachers felt that when they started teaching it was simpler times and now students have more distractions, usually in the form of technology, and the level of respect for teachers has decreased which can make their job harder. There also seems to be more diverse needs in the classroom and no extra, or sometimes even less, help for the teacher. This can make it harder for a teacher to effectively teach a class because they are trying to teach many different styles and level of learners by themselves. Other teachers felt it has gotten harder to effectively teach because of different policies that have been implemented that prevent teachers from teaching the way they feel is best.

4.13 Ways to Reduce Stress

Participants were asked three questions on ways to reduce the stressors that they encounter on a regular basis. They were asked What are some ways that you deal with the stressors that you encounter while teaching?, Do you feel there is a way to reduce these stressors or make them have less of an impact on your ability to effectively teach? and What strategies might a teacher use to minimize the impact of these stressors on effective teaching?. There was a lot of overlap on all three of these questions so the responses have been compiled into one section that can be broken down into five categories:

- relaxation techniques

- organization and planning

- support of colleagues

- create an enjoyable environment

- more support from the school board

4.13.1 Relaxation Techniques

Many teachers felt that it was important to have good self-care and relaxation techniques for themselves when dealing with stress on a regular basis. Teachers may need to cut themselves some slack and not put too much pressure on themselves. They find it is important to maintain balance in their lives and not let the job overwhelm them. To do this some teachers use self-reflection and self-calming techniques as well as learning to say no to extra stresses and putting themselves first sometimes. This may also including trying to take some time for themselves at the end of the day to decompress.

Many of the participants use exercise and self-care to help combat some of the stress they feel. As one teacher said "focus on eating well, exercising, and sleeping. Balancing this crazy job is definitely more manageable when you feel better in your body". Other teachers mentioned things like walking, running, swimming, and practicing yoga to help reduce their stress levels.

Other teachers found that their hobbies help them unwind and relax after a stressful day. Things such as reading or crafts can help take teachers minds off the stresses in the classroom. As well some teachers are involved in outside activities such as music which provides a break for them.

4.13.2 Organization and Planning

Many of the participants felt that being organized could greatly reduce the stress that they encountered in the classroom. By being well organized and having a clear plan laid out some teachers felt it reduced the instances of bad student behavior in their classroom and kept the students more on task. They felt if they were over prepared this allowed them to quickly change plans or handle any curveballs that may have been thrown their way.

Coupled with this was trying to ensure the students were interested and engaged in their learning. When students are engaged in what they are doing they are less likely to cause trouble in the classroom. As well when students see the extra effort that teachers put in they understand that the teacher has their back and they are more likely to try harder for them.

4.13.3 Support of Colleagues

One of the biggest reducers of stress mentioned was the support of ones colleagues. Most of the teachers said that when they have a problem in the classroom they find it extremely helpful to be able to talk it over with another teacher. Sometimes this allows them to get advice and see how another teacher would handle the situation while other times it is just nice to talk to someone who understands the situation you are going through and may be able to offer some moral support and reassurance.

4.13.4 Support from the School District

All of the participants said that one way to reduce the stress of the teaching profession is to have more support from the school district. This could including allowing teachers to have a say in new policies and respecting teachers' professional autonomy. Furthermore teachers would like to see more resources available to them. This includes support for technology both in the form of having it available to them as well as having someone available to fix it when broken. More IRT support in the classroom so teachers are not trying to teach a large group of students alone as well as smaller class sizes and less content in the curriculum would also help to reduce the stress that teachers feel on a regular basis.

4.13.5 Create an Enjoyable Environment

Teachers also felt it was less stressful to teach when they created an enjoyable environment to be in. One teacher felt when they created "an environment where the teacher is having fun doing what they're doing" the students are also having fun and cause fewer

distractions. This includes using humor in the classroom to help lighten the mood and allow them to laugh things off so it does not stress them out too much.

4.14 Conclusion

All these interviews highlight the numerous challenges and stressors that teachers face on a regular basis while trying to do their job. These stressors can have a negative impact on both a teacher's wellbeing and on their ability to teach effectively. It is vital both for teachers to have coping strategies to lessen the impact of these stressors and for stakeholders to do everything possible to reduce the number of stressors that teachers face on a regular basis.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a summary of the results

of the study and discussion of the conclusions reached by the researcher. The second section is

the importance of this research and suggested implications arising from the results of this

study. The third section is suggestions for future research on this topic.

5.2 Summary and Conclusions

The results of the study showed that an overwhelming majority of teachers regularly

experience stress as a result of their jobs. While the sources of this stress vary, every teacher

that participated in the study experienced some form of stress due to teaching. One of the

most significant findings of this study is that the majority of teachers also felt that these

stressors had a large negative impact on their ability to effectively teach their students. There

were also many suggestions given on what could be done to reduce this stress as well as what

can be done to combat the stress that teachers are currently experiencing. Most of the findings

of this study agreed with the findings in the literature review. Many of the sources of stress

were the same as were the suggestions of how to reduce these stressors.

5.2.1 Stressors in the Teaching Profession

When the participants were asked about the sources of stress, or stressors, that they

encounter in the teaching profession there was a wide array of answers. The number one

answer seemed to be "lack of support". Almost every participant mentioned that a lack of support in one form or another causes them stress in their jobs. This stressor could be in the form of lack of support from the public, parents, administration, other staff, the school district, or in the lack of resources provided. When teachers don't feel supported by parents it can make their job harder. If a teacher needs to discipline a students this is made much more difficult if the parents are not on their side and refuse to back them up. This lack of support from parents also sends the message to students that they do not need to value and respect teachers which can lead to more behavioral issues in the classroom. This can be made worse when there is a lack of support from administration because if the parents do not see eye to eye with the teacher then the teacher must rely on the administration for back up. If the administration does not support the teacher this can again send the message that there is no consequences for students and they do not have to respect the teacher. Furthermore if the administration does not support teachers when they are feeling overwhelmed or stressed then this can create even more stress for teachers because they do not feel like they have anyone on their side. This is also true for lack of support from colleagues. One of the main reducers of stress that participants mentioned was talking to colleagues so if colleagues are not supportive then teachers do not have that outlet for their stress release. The school district can also create stress for teachers when they do not support them. This could be when they create policies that make things harder for teachers or when they do not provide adequate resources for teachers. This creates more stress for teachers because they are trying to effectively do their job without having the proper resources and support to do it.

The second most mentioned stressor was student misbehavior. Teachers found it very stressful to have to deal with students who regularly misbehave or are rude and belligerent to them while they are trying to teach. Students who refuse to complete their work or put in effort as well as students who consistently show up to class unprepared are also stressors for teachers. It is difficult to effectively teach someone when they are refusing to participate in their own education, this can be extremely frustrating for teachers because they want their students to do well but that does not happen if the student is not a willing participant in their own education. This stress is compounded when combined with the lack of support. If parents and administration does not support the teacher then student misbehavior can become out of control. As well the school district often looks at students' marks and places the onus solely on the teacher when in reality it is also the responsibility of the students to take control of their learning and put in the effort to succeed.

Another major stressor for teachers was their workload. Teachers felt that their workload was ever increasing and many of the new tasks placed on teachers were administrative type tasks which cut into their time to prepare for teaching. Teachers found that an increase in technology meant that they had to put more work into learning the new technology which left them less time to plan their teaching day. Furthermore the inclusion of many diverse learners in the classroom without adequate support has also increased teachers' workload as they are trying to do up lessons to suit every students need. This may mean that they have to do up three versions of the same lesson. This increase in workload left many teachers having to choose between doing less for their students or having less personal time for

themselves, family, and friends. This dilemma has created an abundance of stress for some

teachers.

Teachers also find their lack of professional autonomy stressful. It frequently seems as

though teachers' freedoms in their classroom are being taken away from them and their

profession is being micromanaged. This shows a lack of respect for teachers and their

professional judgement and many teachers find it insulting. It also can create more work for

teachers as things they have used in the past to teach, such as websites, are no longer

supported on their computers and they need a school board member to come allow them to

use it which could take weeks.

In addition to all of the stresses that teachers encounter while teaching many teachers

also mentioned that the stresses from their own personal lives can also impact their teaching

and vice versa. Teaching is a very personal profession and it can often be hard to separate work

from life and create a healthy balance. Many teachers found that an increase in their workload

at their job had a negative impact on their relationships with their family and friends. This strain

on their personal relationships made them feel guilty because they feel as though they are

constantly having to put work ahead of their personal relationships which lead to resentment

towards their profession.

5.2.2 Technology

Technology was another main subject discussed in the interviews. The increasing

amount of technology available has a wide array of impacts and implications for the teaching

profession. In some aspects the increase in technology has made teaching easier however on the other hand many new challenges were created due to technology.

Many teachers found that advancing technology has made sharing of resources, both with colleagues as well as with student and parents, much easier. Teachers can now easily email resources or use an online platform to distribute resources to their students. Teachers have also found that new technology has allowed them to differentiate instruction and come up with new ways to present material easier. There are many projects and activities that are able to be done now with the use of technology that can capture students' attention and help them learn the material in a different way.

While there are many positives to technology there are also drawbacks that come along with the ever increasing amount of technology that students have access to. One of the biggest sources of stress that teachers mentioned was cellphones in the classroom. Teachers are constantly competing with cellphones for students' attention, and more often than not they are losing that battle. Furthermore teachers now have the fear that they may be recorded during class and it could be posted on social media. This is not a problem that is exclusive to teachers either, students are recording each other and it is leading to more bullying. This form of cyberbullying is harder for teachers to catch and intervene on as well. Another major problem with the increase of technology in the classroom is the lack of support that is provide for said technology. It is very frustrating for teachers when they are being told to use more technology in their classroom but they are not being given adequate training or support to do so.

5.2.3 Increasing Stress

Teachers were asked in the interview if they felt the amount of stress was increasing as well as if they felt that the sources of stress had changed since they started teaching. Some teachers felt that the amount of stress was comparable but the sources of stress were changing with the way technology and society as a whole is changing. Some other teachers mentioned that as their career progressed there was less stress for them personally as they gained more experience and were better able to handle stressors that they encountered. However many other teachers felt that the amount of stress was definitely increasing in the profession as were the number of sources of stress. Teachers felt that the attitudes of society towards teachers is changing and teachers are being given more responsibility with less power and support. They are constantly being asked to do more but the support and resources for them always seem to be getting less. The onus is now on the teacher to ensure that a student is doing well rather than on the student and it is becoming less likely that parents will support the teacher. This increase of responsibility partnered with a decrease in support for teachers has increased the stress of many teachers who are trying to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

5.2.4 The Impact of Stress on Effective Teaching

Teachers were asked if they felt that the stresses that they were feeling had an impact on their ability to effectively do their job. Almost every teacher said that the increasing amount of work and stress has a negative impact on their ability to effectively teach their students. This was one of the most significant findings of this study as the more effective a teacher is the better it is for students. If the stress teachers face on a regular basis is causing them to be less

effective at their job then steps should be taken to mitigate this stress as much as possible by all stakeholders.

Many of the teachers said the increasing amounts of administrative duties that are placed on teachers are having a negative impact on their ability to effectively teach. When the amount of work increases that means focus and time needs to be taken away from other places as there are only so many hours that can be devoted to the job. The fact that many teachers have to spend an increasing amount of time tracking down missing assignments, sending and answering emails, and trying to conquer other administrative duties regularly means that they often have less time to put into lesson planning for their students. As well some teachers mentioned when they have to leave their classroom to go do duty it means they miss out on opportunity to for a relationship with students which could benefit the students.

In addition to these extra responsibilities teachers say that the lack of support, both in the form of resources and physical support, is also making it harder to effectively teach. It is hard to effectively teach in a classroom when the smartboard or computer is broken or needs to be updated but it cannot be fixed for a week or more because there are only a couple of a people to service the entire province. Some teachers talked about things such as student passwords, they are teaching a technology course however they have no permissions to add or change student passwords so their course may be delayed while they wait for someone to do it for them. When trying to plan instruction for diverse learners in the classroom it is hard to effectively do this without support as well. Many times it would be better to have an extra teacher or student assistant in the classroom however there are not enough resources. As a

result the instruction tends to be less effective for students who need extra help. It is also hard to effectively teach without support from parents, administration, and the school district. When dealing with a student who is misbehaving and interrupting the learning of the whole class it is difficult to effectively manage that behavior when the student knows the parents or administration will not support the teacher. It sends the message to the student that they can do whatever they want with no consequences which means the student will continue to misbehave.

Due to all these roadblocks to effective teaching some teachers find themselves getting frustrated, burnt-out, and as a result giving up. Once the teacher is no longer enjoying their job it is much harder for them to effectively teach their students as the students can sense that the teacher is not excited or passionate about the material so they are less interested. This can cause the instruction to be less effective and as a result it is the students who suffer.

5.2.5 Ways to Reduce Stress

Teachers were asked what they felt could be done to reduce the stressors in the profession and what they could do to reduce the impact of the stress on their effective teaching. The results were broken down into what could be done in general to reduce the stress on teachers, what teachers can do professionally to combat the stress in their profession, and what teachers can do in their personal lives to help alleviate the stress.

The biggest thing that teachers felt should be done to reduce their stress was to have more support provided to them. Teachers felt that if there was more support in the classroom in the form of IRT's and student assistants then they would be better able to teach. As well

many teachers felt that much of their stress would be lessened if there was better support for problems with technology or if they were given permissions to fix some of the problems themselves rather than having to wait. Support from parents and administration when dealing with student misbehavior would also eliminate much of the stress of teachers, as would having more professional autonomy. Many teachers also felt that the support of their colleagues was one of the biggest reducers of stress that they currently have.

Many teachers mentioned one of the biggest things they currently do to try to reduce stress and the impact on effective teaching is to be as organized as possible. Being organized allows them to start their teaching day with a clear plan and a calm head. As well when they are organized they are better prepared to deal with unexpected things that may happen in their classroom. By using effective time management techniques they can better manage the increasing workload while still effectively teaching.

On a personal level many teachers suggested things that they use to help them relax and alleviate some of the stress at the end of the day so they do not burn out. Many teachers mentioned various forms of exercising as good stress relief, while others mentioned other hobbies such as reading or art. The importance of taking some time to yourself to just relax and unwind at the end of the day was also mentioned by several teachers.

5.3 Importance of Research and Suggested implications

Research of this nature is vital to the wellbeing of teachers and students alike. When teachers are under too much pressure and stress they are more likely to burn out and they are unable to effectively do their job which has a negative impact on their students.

The findings of this study showed that teachers are under a tremendous amount of stress in their profession and that stress is increasing while the support for teachers is decreasing. This is leading to more and more teachers becoming burned out and sometimes even leaving the profession all together.

The results of this research show that more should be done to support teachers and try to lessen the stressors that they face every day. More support should be given to teachers both in the form of resources as well as support from personnel. Furthermore the workload placed on teachers should be reduced so teachers can focus more on their students and effective teaching rather than focusing on administrative work. This would benefit both the teachers as well as the students because the teachers could put much more of their energy into effectively teaching their students if they were provided with more support.

5.4 Future Research

According to Kyriacou (2001) "there will certainly always be a need for studies to continue to explore the prevalence of teacher stress, the sources of teacher stress and the coping actions used by teachers. Such studies are needed to update our data in this field and to explore trends and changes" (p. 32). As technology and society continues to change so will the stressors and the amount of stress placed on teachers. The sources of stress in the classroom now are very different then the sources of stress twenty, or even ten, years ago. Because the sources of stress are constantly evolving it is important for research like this to continue so changes can be made to help support teachers and ensure that they are able to effectively do their job.

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APPENDIX A: Individual Interview Protocol

Individual Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Nicole Ash

Informant ID (Coded): …………………………………………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Time: …………………………………………………………………………………………………

Location: ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

Preamble: This interview seeks to elicit your views on teacher stresses in the classroom and how it impacts teaching practices. I will ask you to share your thoughts on causes of stress in the teaching profession and describe how you feel it impacts your teaching practices or ability to effectively teach. Please be reminded that you are not obliged to answer all the questions during the interview. You are free to skip any question that you do not wish to answer and you are free to end the interview and withdraw your data at any time.

1. How long have you been teaching and what grades/levels do you teach?

2. How do you define stressor and what does it mean to you?

3. Can you articulate some sources of stress or stressors that you encounter on a regular basis while teaching?

4. What are some stressors that teachers encounter in general?

5. What do you feel are the biggest causes of stress in your profession?

6. What are some ways that you deal with the stressors that you encounter while teaching? (Both inside and outside of school)

7. Has the amount of stress or number of stressors changed since you started teaching?

8. Have the causes of stress changed since you started teaching?

9. Do you think the stresses at your level of teaching are greater, less then, or the same as other grade levels?

10. How do you define effective teaching and what does it mean for you in your classroom?

11. Do you feel that effective teaching varies from subject to subject?

12. Describe how you feel these sources of stress impact your ability to effectively do your job.

13. Do you feel there is a way to reduce these stressors or make them have less of an impact on your ability to effectively teach?

14. What strategies might a teacher use to minimize the impact of these stressors on effective teaching?

15. Has it become harder to effectively teach over the course of your career? If so what are some of the reason why?

16. Has technology changed the stress level of teachers? If so how? Including both technology that can be used by the teacher as well as technology that students bring themselves.

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Title: Stressors for intermediate/secondary teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador
                          and their impact on effective teaching

Researcher(s):   Nicole Ash, Department of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St.
                          John's, NL, w36nec@mun.ca

Supervisor(s):   Dr. Jerome Delaney, Department of Education, Memorial University of
                          Newfoundland, jdelaney@mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled *"Stressors for intermediate/secondary
teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador and their impact on effective teaching."*

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the
research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from
the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you
should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is
the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given
to you. Please contact the researcher, Nicole Ash, if you have any questions about the study or would
like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in
this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no
negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

My name is Nicole Ash and I am a Masters of Education student at Memorial University of
Newfoundland. I am completing my MEd in Leadership Studies. As part of my Masters thesis I am
conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Jerome Delaney.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to look at perceived stressors for intermediate/secondary teachers and examine how these stressors may impact a teacher's ability to effectively teach.

What You Will Do in this Study:

Participants will be asked to undergo an interview with the researcher regarding sources of stress in the classroom and how it affects your teaching ability.

Length of Time:

Participants will be asked to do one or two interviews. Each interview will take approximately an hour.

Withdrawal from the Study:

- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence. Withdrawal of consent can be made to the researcher via email or in writing or verbally at any point during the interview.
- All interviews will be transcribed and a transcript of their interview will be provided to each participant. The participant may change or withdraw any or all of the data as they see fit.
- Any data can be removed prior to all data being aggregated. After this time it will not be possible to remove data as it will be anonymized. The final date to withdraw from this study will be November 30, 2018.
- If the participant withdraws from the study their data will be removed and all data (interviews, transcripts, etc.) will be deleted.
-

Possible Benefits:

This research will allow policy makers to be aware of the causes of stress in the teaching profession and take steps to minimize this stress. By minimizing this stress it will allow teachers to be more effective in their classroom which is of great benefit to both teachers and students.

Possible Risks:

It is possible that discussing stressful aspects of the job may be upsetting for some participants. These psychological/emotional risks will be minimized by allowing participants to skip any questions they do not feel comfortable asking or allowing them to end the interview at any point. Furthermore the researcher will have the number for appropriate resources available if the participant should require them, such as the NLTA employee assistance program which provides counselling to staff members.

NLTA employee assistance program, http://www.nlta.nl.ca/employee-assistance-program/

Mental Health Crisis Line, 24 hour Toll Free -- 1-888-737-4668

Confidentiality:

The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the course of this study. All interviews will be conducted in private and transcripts of interviews will not be shared with anyone other than the participant.

Anonymity:

Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as name or description of physical appearance.

All data will remain anonymous. Names will not be attached to transcripts of interviews as codes will be used instead. The key for the codes will be stored separately from the transcripts of the interviews and will be password protected.

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in publications without your explicit permission.

Recording of Data:

Interviews will be recorded. The recorded files will be transferred to a password protected flash drive and deleted from the original recording device.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:

- All data will be securely stored
- Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password protected flash drive which will be kept in a locked fire proof box in the home office of the researcher
- The key to the codes to anonymize the transcripts and the consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researchers office, away from the locked box containing the other data
- Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the data
- The data will be kept for five years as per the policies of Memorial university of Newfoundland. After this time the data will be destroyed.

"Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research."

Reporting of Results:

- A report of the data will be complied and sent to the participants
- Upon completion, my thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.
- All data will be reported only in an aggregated and/or summarized form with no names of participants attached

Sharing of Results with Participants:

At the end of the study the data will be compiled into a report and sent to each participant.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Nicole Ash at w36nec@mun.ca.
supervisor's information: Dr. Jerome Delaney jdelaney@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.

- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that **point will be destroyed**.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to November 30, 2018.

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

APPENDIX C: Ethics Approval from ICEHR

MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	20190278-ED
Approval Period:	June 7, 2018 – June 30, 2019
Funding Source:	Not Funded
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Jerome Delaney Faculty of Education
Title of Project:	*Causes of stress for intermediate/secondary teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador and its impact on effective teaching*

June 7, 2018

Mrs. Nicole Ash
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Mrs. Ash:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 4, 2018 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to June 30, 2019. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project.

The *TCPS2* requires that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before June 30, 2019. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. If you need to make changes during the project which may raise ethical concerns, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration prior to implementation. If funding is obtained subsequent to approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR before this clearance can be linked to your award.

All post-approval event forms noted above can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

KB/lw

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Jerome Delaney, Faculty of Education
        Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education