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Keeping Good Teachers Teaching
A Study of the Retirement of Baby Boom Teachers

by
Dean C. Erickson

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

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Approved by:

Advisor: Dr. Dennis Morrow

Reader: Dr. Craig Paulson

Reader: Dr. Harley Schreck

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I would also like to dedicate this work to baby boom teachers. Through this study I have again realized the talent and energy it takes to be a good teacher. To all of you who have dedicated your lives to this incredibly important job of teaching, I thank you and encourage you to keep doing good work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

Every morning nearly four million Americans go to work as teachers in K-12 public and private schools across the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Of these teachers, over 30% are baby boomers, part of the cohort born between 1946 and 1964 (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2009). What motivates these baby boom teachers to keep working? Many their age have already decided to leave the profession to retire or to seek another career. What keeps some baby boom teachers passionate and stimulated by their profession while others leave while still effective in the classroom?

There are challenging trends noted in the current supply and demand paradigm for K-12 teachers in the United States that could lead to a teacher shortage and a lack of age and experience balance in faculties. One trend is the increase in the number of teachers employed. According to the United States Census Bureau, the 20 years from 1988 to 2008 saw a 19% increase in student enrollment in public, private and charter schools while the number of teachers in the same schools has increased

48% (Ingersoll, 2010). There are several explanations for this trend of increased number of teachers including more special education teachers, more demand for science and math courses, and more specialist teachers in the elementary level. This trend not only has budgetary implications, but also impacts the demand side of the teacher employment equation.

The increase in teacher demand has necessitated an increase in new hires. These new hires are predominately younger teachers, but given the increase in mid-career or later career entries into the teaching force, we also see many older new teachers. In 1987-88 there were 65,000 first year teachers and by 2008 the number of first year teachers had grown to 200,000. By that year, a quarter of the teaching force had five years or less of teaching experience (Ingersoll, 2010). New teachers do bring energy and fresh ideas to a faculty and also cost less than veteran teachers. New teachers, however, need the mentoring and leadership provided by veteran teachers to reach their full potential.

The increase in teacher demand and the increased percentage of new and inexperienced teachers leads to the important question of the role of the baby boom teachers in the teacher supply and demand picture. This large cohort offers both the numbers to solve a potential teacher shortage and the experience to mentor the inexperienced new teachers. In 2005, 42% of teachers were 50 years old or older. In 2011, the percentage of teachers in this age group dropped to 31% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). As the large number of baby boomers approach

traditional retirement age, this age group number and the corresponding average age of teachers will continue to drop.

As the total number of teachers increase and the large older portion of the teaching force retires, teaching will be practiced predominantly by beginners and the young. With the average retirement age in teaching now 59 (Ingersoll, 2010) and the trends mentioned above pointing to a potential teacher shortage including a shortage of experienced teachers, there is a need to look for reasons why baby boom teachers are retiring at a relatively young age and how the education profession can change that trend.

The question of retention of teachers, especially those approaching retirement, has huge ramifications for K-12 education. According to a report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's future, we can expect to lose as many as a 1,500,000 veteran teachers to retirement during the eight years between 2009-2017 (National Council on Teaching and America's Future, 2008). Educational leaders have had the security of baby boom teachers' long-term service. This security led to a somewhat smoothly functioning career pipeline in which large cohorts of young teachers enter the classrooms in their 20's and exit after 25 or 30 years of service. The new reality of this career pipeline, however, is that teachers at the beginning of the pipeline are leaving at an alarming rate, and the vast number at the end of the pipeline may not be adequately replaced. As was stated in a report by the NCTAF in 2009:

The wave of retirements will be exacerbated by the fact that the percentage of

new teachers leaving the profession within five years continues to climb. Since 1994, the number of teachers leaving the classroom each year for reasons other than retirement has doubled. Today, over a third of the nation's new teachers leave the profession within five years. In urban school districts, one in five new teachers leave the classroom after just one year, and nearly half leave within five years (NCTAF Report, Nations schools facing Largest Teacher Retirement Wave in History, 2009, p. 1).

It is true that teacher retirement can bring a new generation of teachers with fresh ideas into the classroom, but at a cost of losing the accomplished veteran with decades of hands-on experience. Schools will be forced to staff schools with a growing number of inexperienced beginners who, as mentioned above, are dropping out of the profession at an increased frequency. A large amount of finances and human energy is put into the process of hiring and replacing beginning teachers who leave before they have acquired the tools necessary to be successful teachers. We are losing new teachers as they begin their careers, and we are losing veteran teachers who still could have a positive impact on student learning.

This study will focus on the exit end of this teacher pipeline. Many people believe that a new definition of retirement is being perpetuated by the baby boom generation. Maybe it is the size of the generation or maybe it is the turbulent period in which it came of age, but most likely, it is a combination of size and historical happenings that gave the baby boom generation the power and the energy to bring about an abundance of change. As this generation begins to reach traditional

retirement age, it is looking at ways to change the workforce exit strategy. Dr. Ken Dychtwald, author and authority on issues of aging and retirement, speaks to this change in the following statement:

I believe this generation is going to radically redo aging, just as we've changed every other stage of life and institution we've encountered: the way we look, the way we feel, what it means to be sixty, what it means to be ninety, the nature of friendships and relationships in maturity, how long we'll work, who pays, what we might blossom into when we're eighty versus what we thought we were going to be when we were twenty (Croker, 2007, p. xiii).

With life expectancy in the United States in 2011 at 78.6 years (World Bank-Open Data, 2012) and healthy and active lifestyles changing expectations for life quality after age 65, a new vision of retirement is being cast by those approaching this threshold. Some are calling this change in vision a new map on life. The labeling of this map is up for debate among demographers and sociologists, but the general consensus is that the traditional three stages of life paradigm, youth/education, middle age/career, old age/retirement, is being redefined by the baby boom generation into a four stage paradigm. Peter Laslett (1991) in his book, *A Fresh Map of Life*, defined these four stages. There is an obvious danger in designating specific ages to life stages, but for definition sake Laslett laid out this new map, which includes what he calls the "Third stage":

STAGE 1- Birth to age 30

childhood, adolescence, emerging adulthood.

STAGE 2- Age 30-55- The middle years

forging careers, raising families, other mid-life tasks

STAGE 3 Age 55-80-Third Age

to be determined...a time of confluence, a time of maturity, a time to give back.

neither-nor (neither old nor young)

STAGE 4 Age 80- Death

old age-retirement

Defining this Stage 3 may be the contribution, even more than Woodstock and Vietnam, which will define the baby-boom generation. This generation may once again be a trendsetter as it enters life “Stage 3”. Imagine a society where members look forward to these years as a time of selfless giving, not as a time of selfish retreat.

According to Laslett:

Growing older does not absolve a person from responsibility, certainly not responsibility for the social future. It could be claimed that many more duties of older people go forward in time than is the case in those who are younger. This follows from the fact that they owe less to their own individual futures-now comparatively short-and more to the future of others-all others. Third stagers must become trustees for the future (Freedman, 2011, p. 60).

There are more factors leading to the development of this Stage 3 in the life cycle of baby boomers. Research focusing on recently retired baby-boomers following the traditional model of job exit has shown them experiencing a unique feeling of inexplicable loneliness. In a report from Civic Ventures (2002), the new

baby boomer retirees explained that what they missed was a particular kind of relationship--one linked to purposefulness. "They missed the experience of working together to solve problems, shared experiences throughout the day, and the camaraderie that came so naturally when purposes were linked" (Civic Ventures, 2002). This need for purposefulness may be at the heart of the new "third stage" of life. Continuing to find purpose, yet finding that purpose in new ways or under new rules, may be the new direction for baby boomers coming of age.

This study is looking at the confluence of several trends, and these trends will have a definite impact on education. A teacher pipeline that is "leaking" at both ends with new teachers leaving the profession and a large number of baby boom teachers poised to exit in the next few years will result in a potential teacher shortage. Not only is there a pending teacher shortage, there is a pending shortage of experienced teachers to mentor inexperienced teachers. The redefining of traditional retirement by the baby boom generation will impact how and when teachers exit the profession. The education establishment must find creative ways to use this new third stage of life being defined by the baby boom generation to keep baby boom teachers in the educational profession. Will the third stage create more opportunities for veteran teachers to stay in the profession under different terms or will it encourage teachers to leave and look for new ways to make a difference? Perhaps other professionals will look at the teaching profession as a potential third stage career, adding a new dynamic to the teaching profession. There is no longer a question as to the impact of a good teacher on student achievement. The question is, how can we keep good teachers

teaching? To continue to lose seasoned, effective teachers for reasons that could possibly be addressed seems unconscionable. New ways of thinking about life and career planning and the new third stage paradigm impacts these questions in new and profound ways for the baby boom teacher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This dissertation focuses on the baby boom generation and the profession of teaching. The rethinking of life stages and the redesigning of the traditional view of retirement by the baby boom generation will have an impact on the anticipated shortage of experienced teachers. Are there ways the education establishment can tap into this new way of thinking about life's third stage that will provide opportunities for teachers age 50 and older to continue to contribute and help students learn?

The literature review begins with a brief overview of the demographics of the baby boom generation followed by a look at the unique history of this generational cohort. This demographic and historical foundation describes the unique characteristics of this generation as well as how these characteristics impact the workplace and perhaps individual decisions to continue teaching. The final section of this review looks at literature dealing with new views on life stages and the impact these views have on our traditional understanding of retirement and "encore careers". The study of the demographics, the history, and the new life stage trends helps answer the question of how to keep good teachers in the baby boom generation teaching in the later part of their careers.

Demographics

Generations, like people, have personalities. A generation is defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant events at critical junctures of development (Corsten, 1999). The word cohort, originally

defined as one tenth of a 5,000 man Roman military legion, is now used to describe a group of people sharing a common experience over time. Although there are no fixed boundaries to establish where one generation begins and another ends, new generational cohorts are said to emerge every 18 to 24 years (Lovely, 2012). Shared events influence and define each generation, and while individuals in different generations are diverse, they nevertheless share certain thoughts, values, and behaviors because of the shared events and experiences (Zemke, 1999). Within each group, there is a sense of sameness, social identity, and reciprocal existence. “Generational cohorts become forever linked by the music, media, defining moments, and cultural norms of the times in which they grow up” (Lovely, 2012, p. 56).

The impact of a generation is directly related to its size (Jones, 1980). Therefore, a study of the baby boom generation and its impact on our culture must first begin by looking at their demographics. The 1930s, the pre-baby boom era, were known for the great depression and the dust bowl. It was a time of great economic turmoil, of soaring unemployment and increased pressure on families to provide the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. Economics impact procreation, and the 1930s were a time when the birth rate tumbled. There was fear among some demographers that the American population would never pass the two hundred million mark (Jones , 1980 p.17). Although World War II was tragic in its cost, both human and economic, it revived a struggling economy and with that revival came a surge in population. Procreation became patriotic in post-war America. Americans celebrated the end of the war in 1945 and thousands of returning American soldiers,

bolstered with confidence of the surging American economy and its new status as a superpower, began families.

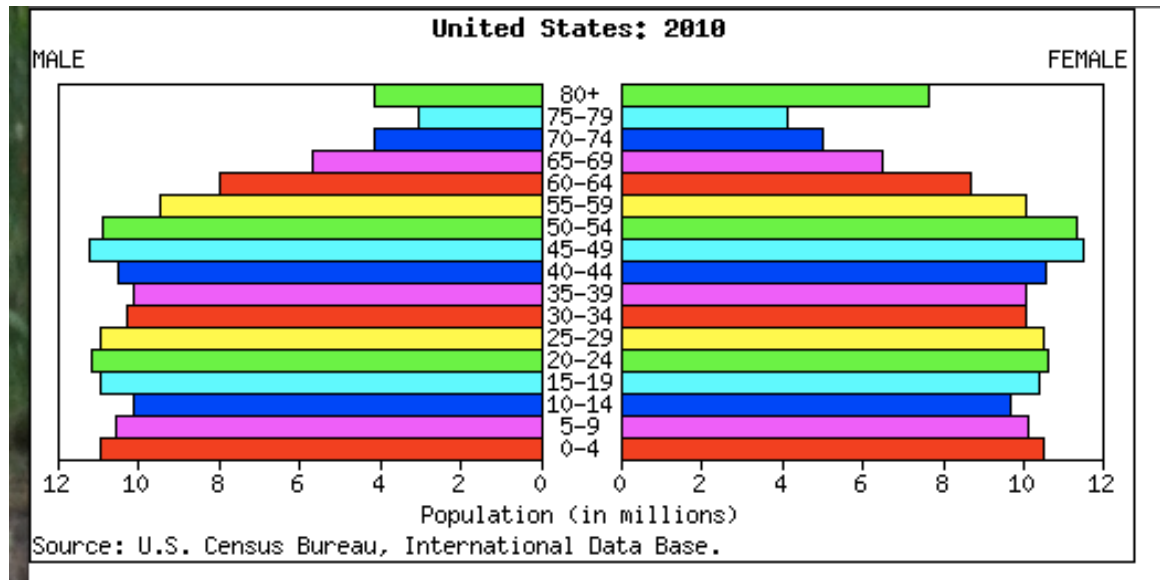
Looking at the number of new births in the United States during this period clearly demonstrates why this era (1946-1964) is called the baby boom. In the 1930s to early 1940s, new births in the United States averaged around 2.3 to 2.8 million each year. In 1945, the number was 2.8 million births. In 1946, the first year of the baby boom, new births in the United States skyrocketed to 3.47 million births (Pearson Education, 2013). New births continued to grow throughout the 1940s and 1950s, leading to a peak in the late 1950s with 4.3 million births in 1957 and again in 1961. By the mid-sixties, the birth rate began to slowly fall. The United States birth rate fell to 63.2 births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age in 2010, which is just over half of what it was at its peak in 1957. The number of births in 2011 was 3,953,593 (Pearson Education, 2013), again significantly lower than the 1957 and 1961 rates. These two years are the peak birth years in raw number of births for the nation even though the total national population was 60% of the current population. The following chart of new births in the United States between 1940-2011 summarizes these numbers.

United States New Births-1940-2011

1940	2,559,000	1961	4,268,326
1945	2,858,000	1964	4,027,000
1946	3,470,000	1969	3,600,206
1950	3,632,000	1980	3,612,258
1955	4,104,000	2011	3,953,593
1957	4,308,000		

(Pearson Education, 2013)

On January 1, 2011, the oldest baby boomer turned 65. Every day for the next 19 years, about 10,000 more will cross that threshold. By 2030, when all baby boomers will have turned 65, fully 18% of the nation's population will be over 65 (Pew Research, 2012). Today, just 13% of Americans are ages 65 and older. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the current 2013 population in the United States is approximately 315,500,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Of this number, approximately 80,000,000 were born between 1946-1964. The following chart shows these numbers in an age breakdown of current population numbers. Baby boomers in 2010 would be in the 45-64 age categories.



As has been stated, generations are an important agent of social change and the impact of a generation is directly related to its size, so according to this brief demographical summary, it is clear why the legacy of the baby boom generation is and will continue to be one of influence and change:

It is, above all, the biggest, richest, and best-educated generation America has ever produced. The boom babies were born to be the best and the brightest. They were the first raised in the new suburbs, the first with new televisions, the first in the new high schools. They were twice as likely as their parents to go to college and three times as likely as their grandparents. They forced our economy to re-gear itself to feed, clothe, educate, and house them. Their collective purchasing power made fads overnight and built entire industries (Jones 1980, p. 45).

The Historical Context-The Shaping of the Baby Boom Generation

This study is based on the premise that generations matter. “Each generation is born in a time it shares with no other and is a product of a life experience it shares with no other”(Jones, 1980 p. 4). Historical context shapes generational attitudes and values. It is quite obvious that a 25-year-old, a 50-year-old, and a 75-year-old person are quite different from each other and view the world through different lenses. But sorting out why they are different from each other is quite a complicated task. At any given time, according to the Pew Research Center, the differences can be the result of three overlapping processes (Pew Research Center, 2010).

- Life cycle effect-young people may be different from older people today, but will become more like them tomorrow as they age.
- Period effects. Major events such as wars or economics affect all groups, but the degree of this impact will depend on the life stage one is in.
- Cohort effects. Events and trends often impact young adults the most because they are still developing their core values.

The powerful experiences of youth, stated in the cohort effect above, shape the values that distinguish one group from another. Beliefs, attitudes, and memories from adolescence provide a lens through which adult experiences are filtered. Major historical events that occur during one’s youth make impressions that strongly impact one’s world-view. If these events are of a large enough scale, they will impact the

world-view and values of a majority of a cohort of youth. This will form an imprint that will distinguish one generation from another:

The values we develop in our youth are the foundation for what we believe as adults. Understanding this concept is the single most important tool we've ever seen to clearly identify why people of different generations hold different values. Thus, one must look carefully at the historical context of generations to determine where these distinctions come from. The differences between generations are more than just distinct ways of looking at things or new solutions for problems...they are gut level differences in values that involve a person's beliefs, emotions, and preferences (Hicks, 1999, p. 4).

Stillman and Lancaster (2002) use the terms icons and conditions to describe the shaping factors of a generational cohort. Icons can be people, places, or things that become reference points for a generation. Conditions are the forces at work in the environment as each generation comes of age (Stillman and Lancaster, 2002 p.14). For example, an icon for the baby boom generation would be Martin Luther King and a condition would be the cold war or the racial tensions that led to the riots in major cities in the 60's.

Shared experiences shape a generation. Shared events influence and define each generation, and while individuals in different generations are diverse, they nevertheless share certain thoughts, values, and behaviors because of the shared events (Zemke, Raines, & Fillpczak, 1999). The events and conditions each of us experience during our formative years determine who we are and how we see the

world. Therefore, each generation has adopted its own “generational personality” (Stillman et al. 2002, p. 14). These experiences can be historical events, economic realities, music and the arts, religion, and a variety of other value-shaping events. The common denominator of the event, the shared experience among a majority of the cohort, is the important factor in shaping a generational ethos.

Given that shared experiences shape the generational ethos, and that these shared experiences are more powerful and life-shaping when they occur during the youthful value-shaping period of one’s life, a brief historical review of major events during the 1940s through the 1980s gives the reader insight into the formative years of the baby boomers’ generational culture. The emphasis is again on events that were shared across the generational cohort, for it is this sharing of experiences that define generations. (See Appendix A for list of major events in each decade from 1940 through 1980)

Generational Characteristics- Impact on the Workplace

The literature supports the premise that there are generational differences that are formed through shared experiences. The question then remains as to how these differences impact the baby boom generation in the workplace. The literature points to several generational characteristics of baby boomers that play out in the workplace. Knowledge of these characteristics will be helpful in attempting to create an environment that supports and encourages career longevity for baby boom teachers.

It is important to understand that the world of work that the baby boomers were introduced to in the late 60s through the early 80s was significantly different

then the workplace environment today. A classic book on management was written in 1960 by Douglas Macgregor, the Sloan professor of management at MIT. His book, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (McGregor, 1960), popularized his Theory Y approach to management. McGregor's book contrasted two ways of looking at leadership: Theory X, the old idea of control and dominance over the worker and Theory Y, a more cooperative partnership with the worker. Although most baby boomers may not know it, they have been influenced by Theory Y. The focus on the nature of human relationships and the integration of personal goals with the success of enterprise is in line with the value system of the baby boom generation. Baby boomers want their work to have meaning and the emphasis will be on relationships instead of authority (Finzel, 1989).

Another classic book that looks at change in the workplace is Adam Toffler's, *The Third Wave* (Toffler, 1984). Toffler's writings spoke to the new workforce and its impact on the baby boomers workplace values. Toffler suggested that our society has shifted from an industrial focus to an information/technology emphasis. Although that shift is now obvious, when this book was published in 1984 this theory was cutting edge and controversial. According to Toffler, the first wave of our society was the agricultural era, the second was the industrial era, and the third wave, which he predicted in the 80's, was the focus on technology and information. This latest wave, Toffler suggested, ushered in a new and dramatic change in management style (Toffler, 1984). Again, like McGregor's theory Y, Toffler identified a much more flexible, values based and less hierarchical work place than the baby boomers'

parents experienced.

McGregor's (1960) and Toffler's (1984) work may seem quite dated to the current management student. These writers, however, impacted the workplace that baby boomers were just beginning to enter. This emphasis on the human side of the work place, obvious and prevalent in today's culture, was a huge change that had a major impact on the shaping of the baby boom work force.

An article in the magazine Business Week in 1984 examined the emerging conflicts between the older generation and the newer baby boom generation. The article suggested that these conflicts are caused by baby boomers' different attitudes toward work:

The emerging conflicts (between the older generation and the newer) are not just a matter of numbers. The baby boomers have different attitudes toward work. Those values are reshaping corporate cultures — what many see as a "greening" of management. The shift to participatory decision-making, teamwork, flexibility, and autonomy is often attributed to adopting the apparently successful Japanese style of management. But it may be a direct outgrowth of dealing with the 60s generation of workers (Finzel, 1989, p. 56).

As the 1984 Business Week article pointed out, not only management styles were changing as baby boomers entered the work force, but baby boomers' relationship to the corporation took on different meaning. A Newsweek article in 1986 spoke to this change as well. The author of the article, Michelle Ingrassia, wrote:

Unlike their fathers, they [baby boomers] have resisted being molded by the all-seeing, all-knowing corporations; instead, they are molding corporate America in their own image. Better educated, they're more inquisitive and more eager to have a say in their jobs. Competitive, they are writing their own definitions of success. Impatient, they are unwilling to spend 40 years climbing through the corporate ranks. They are the generation trained to want it all — and they want it all now (Finzel,1989,p.57).

The baby boomers were beginning to make waves in the workplace. No longer married to the corporation, no longer desiring a top down hierarchical management style, the friction between the old way of management and the new was becoming clear. A personnel manager quoted in the same 1986 Newsday article referred to this change by saying that baby boomers would do what they were asked, but they would always ask why. They would ask, “Is there another way we can do it better or do I really have the visibility of knowing what is going on in my company to satisfy myself that I should be doing what I’m doing” (Finzel, 1989,p.58)?

The face of the workplace changed rapidly in the 80s and 90s. Not only were management styles and relationships to the corporation changing, but also the homogeneous, paternalistic environment was changing to one of increased racial and gender diversity. The workplace slowly began to reflect the rapid political and social changes of the nation. The baby boom generation coined terms such as the “glass ceiling” and the “equal opportunity workplace” and began using personality profiles to build awareness of how to get along with all co-workers (ValueOptions, 2010).

The historical events that shaped this large generation infused it with characteristics that play themselves out in the workplace. It is important to understand these group characteristics as we explore how to provide the optimum workplace environment to keep good teachers teaching. The disclaimer that has been stated throughout this study must continue to be emphasized, that it is understood that these are generalizations made about a group of people and there are certainly individuals that do not hold true to these generalizations. That being said, there are several group characteristics that regularly surface in the literature about the baby boom generation that have a direct impact on their relationship to the workplace.

Optimism-Anything is Possible

I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

President John F Kennedy, 1961

As many baby boomers were entering their adolescent years, their young and charismatic president, John Kennedy, in May of 1961, challenged the country to put a man on the moon. With confidence and boldness, he declared that this task could be done if the country willed it to be done. This task took on extreme relevance for the country because the other superpower, The Soviet Union, was far ahead of the U.S. in space exploration. This challenge, delivered with the optimism that characterized the

up and coming baby boom generation, set in motion the necessary political, financial, and scientific investments to make Neil Armstrong's moon walk in 1969 a reality.

Baby boomers were born into an economy on the rise. The Baby Boomers' parents returned home from World War II with great hope for the future. They had been victorious in a war that many felt would end all wars. The economy was in a post-war recovery mode and the GI Bill provided opportunities for a college education and a loan to buy a new house in the suburbs. Baby boomers were born into this positive and optimistic time and grew up in households that exuded opportunity. "Boomers grew up in a unique moment in the nation's history—a time of unprecedented economic growth and unparalleled expectations about the future" (Gillon, 2004,p. 317).

The title of Landon Jones (1980) classic book "Great Expectations", does sum up this optimistic spirit. Jones believes that one of the key forces that shaped the baby boomers has been the great expectations for their lives that accompanied them from their birth. Although they have a sense of optimism in many areas, the author concluded that, "the tribe of the baby boom will live and die believing more than anything else in itself" (Jones, 1980, p.334). The combination of economic opportunities, victorious post-war confidence, political leadership that demonstrated positive engagement, and demographic power that elicited marketers to focus on their needs as a special generation all contributed to this optimistic spirit.

Ambition-Competition to Succeed

You can't be born and raised with eighty million peers competing with you

for everything from a place on the football team in an overcrowded high school to a place in the college of your choice to placement with your dream company and not be competitive. Boomers, while graced with many blessings and privileges, have had to fight for much of what they've achieved in corporate America against the sheer number of their peers competing for the same jobs and promotions (Stillman et al. 2002 p.22).

Stillman went on to say that the baby boomers have a deep identification between who they are and what they achieve at work. Although not as loyal to the corporation as the previous generation, baby boomers are loyal to the concept of working hard for career rewards. Long hours at the office, including evenings and weekends, seemed to be caused by the viewing of themselves and their careers as one (ValueOptions, 2010). Baby boomers have been characterized as a group that believes hard work and sacrifices lead to success. The term "workaholic" became a descriptor coined for the baby boom generation (Zemke et al. 1999). Although the generation before the baby boomers, the traditionalists, were also known for their hard work, the difference between traditionalists and baby boomers is that baby boomers value the hard work because they view it as necessary for moving to the next level of success while traditionalists worked hard because they felt that it is the right thing to do (Tolbize, 2008).

This is the story of an entire generation. It is the story of baby boomers raised on ambition and of a generation that is never happy with what it has. When everything comes too easily, all you want is more. Ambition is the longest

unrequited love affair of boomers' lives. It scrambles their brains, and leaves them empty and unfulfilled. No wonder boomers are feeling as fried as the Colonel's best. You become ambitious. And you become even more ambitious about not being ambitious (Rubin, 2000).

Questioning Authority

Do not trust anyone over the age of 40 became a mantra of the baby boom generation. Youth of every generation want to push limits and challenge authority. But the baby boomers in the 60's took that challenge to a new level. It may have been the sheer size of the generation, or the impact of television, or the fact that so many more baby boomers had more education than their parents, but everything was questioned and suspect (Hicks, 1999, p.141). This generation felt lied to by adults, whether it was the Viet Nam War, the social inequities being experienced by minorities, the environmental and social damage caused by greed, all these factors led to the first real "generation gap" between the baby boom generation and their parents. According to Hicks:

Baby boom kids picked up the antiestablishment values that were bombarding them through the media and people they came in contact with. They developed an incredible mistrust of the status quo. This caused a large number of them to question and then reject many of the values of their parents, which led to much misunderstanding and tension in families. The values they clashed over included such things as hair and clothing style, music preference, attitudes toward money and materialism, morality, sexual

freedom, war, drugs, religion, the government, the environment, health food and authority. There seemed to be few topics that parents and their kids agreed on. The concept of the generation gap was quite real and strongly felt (1999, p. 142).

Susan Mitchell, in her study entitled, *American Generations: Who They Are, How They Live, What They Think*, (Mitchel, 1998) felt that educational differences is the greatest contributor to the generation gap between baby boomers and their parents:

Education influences a person's attitudes, lifestyle, and consumer behavior. The striking generational differences in educational attainment are one of the most important causes of the generation gap between older and younger Americans....because education influences attitudes, the gap creates many differences of opinion (1998, p. 86).

Hicks agreed with this assessment, stating that, "Perhaps the greatest cause of the conflict between the two generations was the difference between the education level of the baby boomers and their parents" (Hicks, 1999, p. 248).

Nowhere was this questioning of authority more clearly demonstrated than in the most widely read periodical by teenagers other than Life Magazine in the 1960s, Mad Magazine. Leonard Steinhorn in his book, *The Greater Generation: In Defense Of The Baby Boom Legacy*, wrote that Mad Magazine was:

A glimmer of truth, a benign but trenchant voice against hypocrisy and pretense, a way to laugh at parents who fretted over status symbols and

authorities who talked one way but acted another. Mad was a symbol to boomers that they weren't alone, that something really was amiss in society (Steinhorn, 2006, p.67).

Hypocrisy was what many baby boomers saw in their parents' generation, and this hypocrisy was what was satirized in Mad Magazine. They saw hypocrisy in a war being fought for freedom, yet the United States seemed to be on the side of dictators. They saw hypocrisy in the retreat to the suburbs to avoid dealing with issues of the city, and they saw hypocrisy in parents who seemed on an endless treadmill to accumulate stuff. Baby boomers heard endless lectures in college about the American dream but saw whites in authority denying this dream to blacks. The protest movements of the 60s and 70s, the hippie movement and the trashing of traditional values that that movement represented, all stemmed from this lack of respect for authority. For baby boomers, "It was hard not to conclude that their elders were saying one thing but doing another" (Steinhorn, 2006, p. 69).

The Vietnam War and the huge anti-war protest movement led by the baby boom generation added to this feeling of hypocrisy and lack of trust in authority. Serious questions about the U.S. government's goals, motives, methods, and truthfulness in reporting made this war very unpopular among the baby boomer youth (Hicks, 1999, p. 140). Watergate provided baby boomers with the final proof that people in authority were generally corrupt and would stop at nothing for power. "For it wasn't the baby boom that undermined authority in America during the sixties-it was authority that undermined itself, and Boomers quite sensibly have been

questioning it ever since” (Hicks, 1999, p. 71).

Forever Young-Relationship to Aging

American culture is youth-oriented. Television commercials and magazine advertisements continually tout the latest way to look and feel younger. There is nothing new about this emphasis and it certainly is not unique to the baby boom generation. The industrial age changed perspectives and ushered in the belief that old thinking and old technologies were holding us back. The Roaring Twenties were the epitome of that way of thinking, and the “cult of youth” was really begun in that era (Croker, 2007 p. 192). Huber and Drowne in their book entitled, *The 1920's*, (Huber et al, 2004) spoke about that time period’s youth culture and the “flamboyant, reckless spirit” exhibited by flappers and sheiks. The youth of the 20’s believed their parents generation to be “infinitely old-fashioned” (2004 p. 30).

Former President Jimmy Carter, a model of aging with dignity and purpose, wrote in his book entitled *The Virtues of Aging* (Carter, 1998)

The results of this obsession with youth are almost sinister, as this endless barrage of images of the young and beautiful creates not only favoritism toward youth, but a prejudicial attitude against age, a prejudice which is similar to racism or sexism made even more disturbing by the fact that it also exists among those of us who are either within this group or rapidly approaching it (1998, p.8).

But the literature clearly states that there is something different about the attitudes of the baby boomers toward aging. Part of the difference is in the approach

to retirement and the re-definition of life stages, which will be discussed later in this chapter. But as former CEO of AARP, Bill Novelli, stated:

Boomers act young, I think, for two reasons. One is because they are younger. If you look at the average boomer today, that person is healthier than his parents were at that age. But there is another reason too, which is, boomers are boomers, and they just want to defy gravity and defy aging for as long as possible (Croker,2007, p. 214).

The question asked by Dr. Ken Dychtwald, psychologist and author of several books on aging, is vital to this topic.

Are boomers going to accept that view (of previous generations) of aging as the status quo, or are they going to take their rebellious nature and change it? To what extent will the boomers have the capacity and the fire-power to rewrite the language, the rules, the marketing, the media, the messaging, to create a version of aging that more suits their needs and reflects their actual feelings, and makes it a more hopeful and desirable stage of life?

(Dychtwald, 1989, p.12)

Dr. Dychtwald's question is at the heart of this study. Will baby boomers, as they age, approach aging with new ideas and spirit and will this new approach impact decisions teachers make as to when and how they will leave the profession?

Retirement and the New Life Stage

Throughout their history, baby boomers have known change. A new approach to retirement and a redefinition of the second half of life may be the biggest change

yet for this generation. As was explained in chapter one, new concepts of life stages are beginning to develop to recast the outdated and unworkable previous life stage paradigm. There are obvious reasons for this new approach to defining “retirement” and “old age”. A longer life span using the old paradigm of “learn, work, rest, die” simply meant that one would have a slightly longer time to rest. The new Life stage theory instead looks at longevity as part of a more cyclical approach to life, that life is a process of continued rebirth and reinvention (Dychtwald et al. 1989).

Retirement for many active and healthy baby boomers is not something to look forward to, at least how retirement has been defined in previous generations. The gold watch for company loyalty and the new set of golf clubs for the leisurely hours to be spent with fellow retirees on golf courses in sunny Florida were rewards being garnered by the previous generation. But, is this realistic or even desired for baby boomers? The potential negative picture of such a future is illustrated in the following quotes:

America is hurtling toward a situation in which tens of millions of people, arguably the single biggest group in society, and a mighty political force to boot, are about to dominate the scene. At somewhere around age sixty, they will, pretty much overnight, become the elderly, pass out of the working age population, become incompetent and incontinent, bankrupt the health care system, vote for hefty increases in public spending on their retirement at the expense of everyone else, turn the Sun Belt into a giant golf course, and ignite a war that will pit young against old” (Freedman, 2011, p.169).

It (retirement) is nothing more than a deceptively packaged form of age discrimination that propagates the notion that older people should withdraw from productive roles in society. It fosters the perception that older people are a burden to society. Retirement has been packaged as a life goal, something we are supposed to be planning for all our adult lives. But it is actually a type of dismissal. It is a dumping ground. We should all refuse to be dumped. If our society cannot help us be productive, it is time to change our society. Retirement wastes precious human resources and truncates lives for no reason beyond a lack of imagination and a lazy acceptance of nonsensical stereotypes about older people (M.E.L.P, 2009)

The majority of Boomers plan never to retire...they want to keep working as long as they can be productive (Stillman 2002 et al. p. 15, Bridgeworks generational survey).

A 2010 study by Rand Corp found that a sizeable portion of the U.S. population that retires eventually un-retire (Rand Corporation, 2010). Part of this change of mind about retirement is the unrealistic expectation that baby boomers actually expect to continue a quality of life in retirement that they are having right now in the workforce:

They're actually expecting that they can continue spending the same amounts, have the same kind of housing and transportation, and the same kind of good lifestyle well into retirement. No generation up to this point of time had been able to maintain a retirement lifestyle similar to a working lifestyle. Maybe the baby boomers will work longer, stay in the workforce longer, and have an

additional source of income. If that happens, then we may not have as many baby boomers that are vulnerable or at risk (Croker, 2007, p. 263).

These quotes about retirement lead one to understand why new ways of defining life stages may be necessary. The concept and the reality of retirement has changed through-out the generations as life expectancy, work realities, economics and health have impacted work and the end of work. The idea of retirement as something to aspire to has only been in the American vernacular for about 60 years. The life expectancy for men reached 65 years in 1950 (Hicks, 1999). Before that decade, the expected plan was that one worked hard until one could not work hard any more, and then one would die. There was not much discussion about life satisfaction in your older years or how one could give back to society.

The age of 65 was established for retirement over a century ago by Germany's Chancellor Otto von Bismarck when he was preparing his country's first pension plan. At that time, average life expectancy in Germany was 54 (Dychtwald and Flower, 1989, p.265). Given that life expectancy in the U.S. is now over 80, our current retirement age, using the Chancellor's formula, should be 98. The marker of 65 is therefore a fairly arbitrary figure that is based on history, not current demographics. President Franklyn Roosevelt created the current United States social security system in 1935. Life expectancy at that time was 63, so planners of the system were estimating only a few years of retirement and eligibility for old-age entitlements before death. Given our increased life expectancy, this approach obviously is no longer relevant.

The evolution of retirement in the United States and the introduction of social security as a safety net for retirees can be broken down into five distinct periods. The following is a brief summary of these periods as found in the book by D. Costa, *The Evolution of Retirement: An American Economic History* (Costa, 1998).

1. Colonial times to Post-Civil War

In the beginning, there was birth, a very brief childhood, work, and death. In other words: no retirement. If you were alive and healthy, you worked. Work was inseparable from life. If you lived, you worked. That was the American way. In 1850, 77% of men over 65 still worked. Most people worked in agriculture, and farms were family run. When people became too old to do the physical work of farming, usually the farm was in the hands of their children and they provided less physically demanding work for their aging parents to perform. The family, in most cases, took care of the aging parents. The average life expectancy in 1840 was 38. Less than 4% of the population was over 60. There were not that many older people to take care of. By the 1880s however, the agrarian society was changing as more people moved to the city for manufacturing jobs. The urban worker did not have the support system found in the family farm.

2. 1885-1929

The industrial revolution drove many Americans off the farm and into urban areas. Small businesses were increasingly being replaced by larger, more machine driven factories that emphasized efficiency and speed. Machines were fast and the humans that ran them had to be fast enough to run them efficiently. Efficiency experts

were hired to increase production and they realized they needed to get older workers out of the way and hire younger, faster workers. The steady stream of immigrants provided such a labor pool. The problem was, how to get rid of these older workers who did not want to quit their jobs. Mandatory retirement began to creep into the workplace as a way of clearing the way for younger workers. Some work places offered small pensions as incentives for these older workers to leave. But confronted with increasingly common mandatory retirement rules, many workers found themselves forced out of their jobs. By 1920 43% of white males over 60 were no longer in the workforce. Many older workers discovered that receiving a meager and insufficient pension was better than being pushed aside with no pension at all.

3. 1930-1940

The great depression changed America's view of employment. During these times of economic upheaval, there was great concern about the number of unemployed young people. Getting angry, disillusioned young people back to work was a high priority. What stood in their way, many thought, were older workers who hung on to their jobs because of the horrible economic environment. Ageism began to permeate the culture with friction between young and old. Old people were increasingly viewed as tired, out-of-touch, feeble-minded. The world was changing fast, and older people did nothing but complain about it. The future belonged to the young. The old were seen as a burden. The easiest solution to chronic unemployment in the economy seemed to be the retirement of all the older workers who could not keep up anyway. It was their civic duty to get out of the way. The problem with this

approach, however, was that there were few companies with pension programs for older workers forced into retirement. The Social Security Act of 1935 provided the necessary guarantees. One of its main goals was to reduce unemployment by permanently removing the majority of older people from the workforce. And it succeeded. By 1940, 56.5% of male workers over 65 were retired as compared to 42% in 1930.

4. 1940-1975

The selling of retirement. During WW II, the vast majority of workers returned to the work force. There were few if any issues of needing to clear our older workers in favor of the young. Wage freezes were enacted to prevent inflation, and in order to attract good workers companies instead offered benefit packages including health insurance and pension plans. After the war, older workers were again asked to step aside to make way for the returning younger workers. New mandatory retirement laws were enacted. But many older Americans did not want to retire. A 1950 survey found that 60% of workers nearing retirement wanted to keep working. What was needed was a new view of retirement. With this in mind, the marketing of retirement as a great reward for years of hard work was begun. Ads in magazines extolled the good life of retirement and insurance companies bombarded older workers with policies that guaranteed their creature comforts for life. By the 1960's, retirement became a full-fledged industry. Retirement became the fulfillment of the American dream.

5.1975-2013

The American dream of retirement has changed the negative concept of getting rid of unwanted older workers to the positive concept of a great reward for a job well done. By the year 2000, only 17% of Americans over 65 still worked. Continued adjustments to social security requirement and pension plans lowered the percentage of Americans over 65 living in poverty to 10%. But there were problems on the horizon. Corporate America was spending an increasing amount of their resources on pension plans. Most corporations began the process of changing from a defined benefit approach to a defined contribution approach to pension management. This approach simplified and made pension plans much more affordable for corporate America. When the 2008 stock market crash occurred, however, many workers lost a significant amount of their retirement savings. This economic reality plus the large number of baby boomers now reaching potential retirement age has forced the rethinking of retirement as a set event occurring at a pre-arranged age. Discussion now focuses on the question of how our country can continue to support a social security system when the amount of people taking benefits greatly increases and the number of workers paying into the system dramatically decreases?

Change has been a part of the baby boom history. As the historical summary of the 1940-1980's demonstrated, an incredible amount of change has taken place under the baby boom generation's watch. Whether it was civil rights, sexual freedom, women's roles, the church, entertainment, technology, or a myriad other cultural changes, the baby boom generation has been the agent of change. This legacy of change will continue as they now enter the age of traditional retirement.

How baby boomers redefine their second half of life will perhaps be their biggest legacy. Why the change in life stages? What is causing this change in how baby boomers are looking at their second half of life? The literature points to three main causes for this new approach; financial necessity, longevity and a healthy more active life style, and a desire to contribute to the general good.

Financial

When President Roosevelt instituted the social security program, there were 40 workers paying taxes for each retiree. That number has and will continue to shrink. According to Dychtwald, “Neither Social Security nor Medicare was designed to match the size and extended longevity of the baby boomer generation” (Croker, 2007, p. 256). The social security system is based on a “pay as you go” system, meaning the government uses the tax receipts of current workers to fund the benefits of current retirees. During the 1930’s, a concern was voiced by a U.S. senator that we may have too many resources for this system to function smoothly and that it will become clogged with too much money. This is obviously not a concern for the current social security administration. As Dychtwald suggested, size and longevity do not work well for the pay as you go system, and the baby boom generation has both of those components (Croker, 2007, p. 257).

According to Harvard economist Dr. D. Quinn Mills, the collapse of the private pension system has become a major problem for potential retirees. Companies are increasingly backing out of providing pension benefits and health care benefits for retirees. Dr. Mills feels that Wall Street has walked away with a huge amount of

money because of the self-managed 401 (k) plans. “The people don’t manage them well” (Croker, 2007, p.257).

The analysis of our social security finances is a complicated process and is not the focus of this study. The financial conclusion, however, is quite clear and germane to this study. According to Dr. Mills, “Social Security as it’s currently defined is not in bad shape, but it’s going to be handed a huge problem unless baby boomers keep working at some kind of jobs and have an income stream” (Croker, 2007, p. 257).

Dr. Fernando Torres-Gill (2007) professor at UCLA and expert in the social policy of aging, has reinforced the economic necessity for baby boomers to keep employed to maintain an income stream:

The financial necessities of working longer and supplementing public assistance is therefore based on several financial realities. There is a general concern that the social security system will either not be solvent or will not be able to fully fund retirement benefits for the large number of soon to be post 65 baby boomers. This concern coupled with large numbers of baby boomers who have not adequately planned financially for a long, possibly 20 or 30 year retirement period and a desire for many baby boomers to continue living a life style similar to the ones they were used to when fully employed will make some sort of income generating activity a necessity well into the second half of life for baby boomers (Croker, 2007, p. 259).

Health-Quality of Life

There is no question that baby boomers will live longer, healthier, more active

lives. Not only is the 2013 life expectancy 83 years and growing, but baby boomers in their 50's and 60's are as a whole healthier and more active. The new emphasis on integrated medicine with a focus on health and healing rather than on disease and new understandings of the relationship between diet, exercise, stress management and rest are not only adding years but improving the quality and the activity of baby boomers.

A new way of thinking about aging and health issues was proposed by Stanford economist John Shoven. "Our concept of what qualifies as old has become old-fashioned" (Freedman, 2011,p.49). He proposed that instead of over emphasizing outdated markers like 60 or 65, we instead consider measuring life from the end. According to Shoven, using a mortality risk model is a much better predictor of true old age and infirmity. His approach downplays the fears that are rampant in our society of the huge number of graying baby boomers clogging our health care system with costs and our sidewalks with walkers. His analysis reveals that the proportion of those genuinely aged in society is growing only modestly, not nearly as fast as so widely assumed using old models of aging (Freedman, 2011, p.50). This approach emphasizes that the years between middle age and infirmity can and should be active and productive.

Desire to Make a Difference

Four decades ago baby boomers thought they could change the world. They got involved in the Civil Rights Movement by organizing sit-ins and marches. They protested the Vietnam War and the draft. Some started communes and returned to nature as the first earth day was celebrated and environmental concerns were

confronted. Baby boom women battled inequalities in the workplace. This is the generation now looking at retirement and saying there must be a better alternative. For a generation that was brought up by parents who embraced Dr. Spock's child-centered philosophy that gave the baby boomers a sense of importance and power, not making a difference may not be an option. According to the MetLife Foundation's New Face of Work Survey:

A majority of Americans between the ages of 50 and 70 want to benefit their communities by helping the poor, elderly, those in need, and children, or helping to improve quality of life through the arts or the environment. Among those who say they will never retire, nearly two thirds are interested in a service career (MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures, 2005).

The survey also points to the fact that traditional volunteering is not necessarily what the baby boom generation has in mind. Given the fact that in our culture a paycheck is a validation of significance, over half of the baby boomers surveyed were interested in a paying service job, perhaps part time and flexible. The sense of purpose, of wanting to make a difference, may propel baby boomers to avoid make work "envelope stuffing" volunteer work and instead will have them look for positions of significance and leadership (MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures, 2005).

The understanding that life is not endless obviously takes on more significance as one ages. As Steve Jobs said in an address to Stanford graduates in 2005, "If you live each day as if it will be your last, some day you'll almost certainly be correct." Jobs went on in his address to state how important that quote became to

him and he would look in the mirror every morning and say, “if today were the last day of my life would I want to do what I am about to do today?” Daniel Pink in his book *Drive*, which looks at what motivates us, said that turning 60 causes an elevation of purpose defined as, “a cause greater and more enduring than oneself” (Pink, 2009). Pink, speaking about this purpose and the baby boom generation predicted, “When the cold front of demographics meets the warm front of unrealized dreams, the result will be a thunderstorm of purpose the likes of which the world has never seen”(2009, p.145). A need for relevance, a sense of purpose, and a need to make a difference has been a motivating force for this generation. As baby boomers begin to look at living and leaving a legacy, the choices of how to spend these years in the new stage will change the traditional views of retirement in profound ways.

Authors Marc Freedman (Freedman, 2011) and Ken Dychtwald (Dychtwald, 1989) have been active voices in the discussion of new life stages. Their message is that we must relook at how we are packaging our lives. Life is still finite, but how we look at the years between middle age and infirmity must be examined not only for those entering this stage, but for our society as a whole. Phyllis Moen, author and scholar, writing a commentary on the New Faces of Work Survey (MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures, 2005) compared the random numbers in some pre-packaged commodities to our acceptance of a pre-packaged life design:

Employment and retirement also come prepackaged, partly as cultural tradition, partly as a potpourri of rules and regulations. And just as we accept that eggs come in dozens, so too have Americans accepted a package of

institutional, age based expectations. The “package” starts with full-time education in youth, moves to a lifetime of continuous, full-time (or more) employment, and culminates in a one-way, one-time, irreversible exit (retirement) to full-time leisure. This, the myth goes, is the path to the American dream (Moen, 2005, p. 13).

In his book entitled, *The Big Shift*, Marc Freedman (2011) laid out the rationale for this new stage of life beyond midlife. But, according to Freedman, this new stage will not just happen or evolve but must instead be deliberately created to fill a need. “Life stages are social construction projects, there is nothing natural or determined about them. We create new stages deliberately in order to solve problems, to bring more sense to the world, to reflect our deepest values” (Freedman, 2011, p. 132). For example, the new stage of life called adolescence was defined and labeled by G. Stanley Hall in 1904 to help our society begin to deal with the age between childhood and the introduction into the work force in the beginning of the 20th century. Before that time, that “stage” did not exist in American culture. Children were children and at a very young age they went to work and were no longer children. More children delaying entry into the workforce necessitated a new life stage and label.

New life stages do not just occur, but as Freedman suggested, they must be defined and constructed. He suggested ten steps toward creating this new stage. (See Appendix B for complete list of steps) First among them is that we as a culture must begin to think differently about this period between mid-life and old age. Creating

this new life stage will need to be developed intentionally with new ways of thinking and new language to define this new category. Encore careers, national service programs and even gap years for grownups all need to be a part of this new life stage creation (Freedman 2001, p. 135).

This literature review attempted to explore several of the issues relating to the baby boom teachers' approach to end of career decisions. Demographics of this large generation called baby boomers were studied because size does matter as a determinate of generational influence. Next, the history of the baby boom generation was included because, according to the literature, what a generational cohort experiences together shapes who they are and what they believe. Literature was then introduced that explored the baby boomers' approach to the workplace including characteristics that define what they bring to the workplace and what is important for them in creating a conducive work environment. Finally, current literature was reviewed that spoke to the redefinition of life stages to more accurately reflect trends in health, longevity, finances, and a sense of purpose and how these trends may impact decisions to continue working later in life. As a March 26, 2013 article in the Minneapolis StarTribune entitled "Call off the retirement party" stated, "to retire or not to retire is no longer a question for many baby boomers." Whether it is a financial decision or the need to restructure the second half of life to provide purpose and meaning, this change of attitude will definitely impact the teaching profession. Whether it will be a problem or an opportunity will be determined by how the educational establishment deals with this phenomenon.

CHAPTER III

NATURALISTIC INQUIRY RESEARCH METHOD

The overriding questions addressed in this study were, why do baby boom teachers leave the profession of teaching and what changes can be made in the educational employment model to encourage effective, older, more experienced teachers to continue teaching? These questions takes on significance when one looks at the impending teacher shortage due to the massive amounts of potential upcoming teacher retirements in the baby boom cohort and also increased number of young teachers leaving the profession after one-five years of service.

This study used the naturalistic inquiry method, a research methodology that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. This approach, according to Dr. E. Amy Welleford, “requires that the researcher gains a holistic overview of the context under study”. This is done, according to Dr. Welleford, by “intense and prolonged contact with a field of life situation” (Welleford, *Naturalistic inquiry: Methods of qualitative analysis*, lecture 2010). The researcher attempted to capture data from the inside, isolating certain themes and expressions that can be reviewed with informants.

Flexibility and adaptability are keys to a naturalistic inquiry because the direction of the study might change in the course of obtaining new insights and information. Lincoln and Guba (1985) insisted that in implementing a naturalistic

inquiry study, “the design cannot be given a priori, but must emerge as the study proceeds” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.225).

This study had particular meaning because the researcher is an educator who belongs to the baby boom cohort, which was the focus of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) spoke to the importance of the “human researcher” in the data collection in a naturalistic inquiry study:

The human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of differential interaction. All instruments are value based and interact with local values, but only the human being is in a position to identify and take into account these resulting biases (1985, p.39-40).

Erlandson (1993) agreed with this important role of the human researcher by pointing out that the primary research instrument in a naturalistic inquiry is the researcher who becomes the most significant instrument for data collection and analysis (Erlandson, Harris & Skipper, 1993,p.39). In this case, the researcher brought insight and sensitivity to the questions asked because of his profession and his age.

After doing an extensive literature search, the researcher found no significant studies that have tried to answer these questions. It was felt, therefore, that the most appropriate and effective way to gather data was to interview teachers in the baby boom cohort, birth dates from 1945-1964, current ages 50-70. The researcher individually interviewed 20 teachers in this age range, some who have chosen to leave teaching and some who are still teaching, and asked them questions pertaining

to their end of career choices. The researcher interviewed both public and private school elementary and secondary teachers. Data was gathered and sorted to look for themes and trends in the subjects' responses. The interviews were tape recorded to aid the researcher in analyzing the responses. "The purpose of inquiry is to actually provide evidence that impacts practice" (Byrk 2010, p.2). The researcher's goal in this study was to impact practice by providing current educational leaders insights into why teachers leave the profession and what changes could be made to retain this valuable resource in the classroom.

The following are the questions that were used in this naturalistic inquiry study. Under each opinion question the researcher noted anticipated responses with several key words that were used in a coding process. The original questions and the anticipated responses were generated by the researcher in consultation with teachers and administrators who were not interview subjects. The questions remained consistent over the course of the 20 interviews except for the addition of question number four, which asked the subjects to share their career journey. The addition of this question was caused by the desire of the researcher to hear their stories, a moving and meaningful component of this study. There were also several of the anticipated responses that were added after the first few interviews when it became obvious to the researcher that there were responses that were omitted from the original list.

Interview Questions:

1. What is your name and age?
2. What is your current teaching position (or last teaching position and age when

you left teaching).

3. How many years have you taught?

4. Please share with me your career journey.

5. If you are still teaching, barring any unforeseen circumstances...i.e. health issues, school closing, etc., how much longer are you planning on teaching ?

6. What are the reasons you would leave (or have left) teaching?

Anticipated responses: bureaucracy, student behavior, parent behavior, lack of administrative support, creativity stifled, standards/testing, technology, want to leave on top of game, physically tired, desired change, need new challenge

7. What are the reasons you would continue teaching and not retire?

Anticipated responses: financial necessity, enjoy work, enjoy students, no other plans, enjoy community, feel appreciated

8. Do you feel you are as effective a teacher now as you were mid-career? Please explain.

Anticipated responses: (YES) clear priorities, classroom management, know curriculum, understand students/parents, experience/wisdom, continual learning, more patient (NO) physically tired, loss of passion, frustration

9. What changes would help (or would have helped) you stay in teaching longer?

Anticipated responses: more flexibility, financial advantage, administrative support, reduced teaching load, respect of experience, nothing

10. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. What made him/her stand out in your memory?

Anticipated responses: understands students/parents, keeps on learning, clear priorities, passion, fun, likes kids

11. Have you had family or friends give you advice about continuing teaching?

12. Are there significant tasks---i.e. a bucket list-- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement?

Anticipated responses: another career, service opportunities, grand-parenting, travel, leisure, none

13. Was teaching a good career choice for you?

The definition of a naturalistic inquiry requires that interviews unfold “naturally” with no predetermined course or outcome established. The questions were open-ended and were designed to illicit honest conversation that allowed the researcher to compile themes and trends. As in all qualitative research interviews, the line between perceptions of the interviewees and objective factual reality is somewhat blurred. A phenomenological approach, one that examines the perceptions of the teachers interviewed, was used by the researcher. Perceptions define reality for the perceiver. Answers to questions pertaining to major life decisions are often based on emotions and feelings as much as logic and facts. These emotions and feelings are difficult to document. The researcher attempted to give credence to these important factors in the broad summaries and trends portion of chapter five.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The research data for this study consists of transcripts of interviews conducted with 20 teachers. These teachers are between the ages of 55 and 70 years old and are currently employed as a teacher or retired from the teaching profession in public and private k-12 schools. The researcher used a script consisting of 13 questions that are found in chapter three of this document. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the questions served as a segue into conversations around the very meaningful and rich venue of life choices, purpose and meaning. There were emotions expressed and passions revealed that are difficult, if not impossible, to summarize. Expressions of love and concern for their students and the desire to make a difference in their lives were a meaningful part of all 20 of these interviews.

The answers to the thirteen questions are summarized in ten response summaries. These summaries include demographic information, short answers to each of the interview questions and a list of anticipated response key words if applicable. For a more exhaustive treatment of the data, a complete transcript of each interview is included in appendix C. The summaries are numbered and correspond to the numbers on the complete transcript in the appendix. This chapter begins with a summary of the data collected for nine of these ten responses. The one

question not included in the data summary is the career journey, which was an open-ended story response.

Summaries of Data Collected

SUMMARY QUESTION #1

What is your name, your age, your current teaching position or last teaching position, and how many years have you taught?

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Number of Participants: 20

1. Age Range 57-70 Mode 64 Average 63 1/2

2. Gender Female 10 Male 10

3. Public School 14 Private School 6

4. Retired 15 Teaching 5

5. Age when teachers retired. Range 56-65 Mode 60 Average 60.6

6. Grade Level (k-5) 10 (6-8) 5 (9-12) 5

7. Years Teaching Experience

Range: 16 years to 42 years full time teaching

Mode 34 Average 31.2 years

7. Home State

California 4

Minnesota 16

SUMMARY QUESTION #3

If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why?

1. Number of teachers still teaching. 5

2. Current age and years planning on teaching

Respondent #5 age 60 plan to retire age 62

Respondent #7 age 63 retirement plans unknown

Respondent #9 age 60 retirement plans unknown

Respondent # 13 age 58 plan to retire age 60

Respondent #14 age 57 plan to retire age 60

3. Reasons Not Retired- Anticipated Response Key Words Used

5 Respondents

financial necessity to continue: 4 80%

enjoy work 3 60%

enjoy students 4 80%

feel appreciated 1 20%

enjoy community 2 40%

SUMMARY QUESTION # 4

What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

Number of respondents 20

Anticipated Response Key Words Used:

1. Desired a Change	5	25%
2. Physically Tired	8	40%
3. Need New Challenge	0	0
4. Bureaucracy	7	35%
5. Student Behavior	3	15%
6. Parent Behavior	0	0
7. Standards and Testing	10	50%
8. Poor Administration	10	50%
9. Creativity Stifled	9	45%
10. Too Much Technology	6	30%
11. Leave on Top of Game	5	25%

SUMMARY QUESTION #5

What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer?

Number of respondents: 20

Anticipated Response Key Words Used:

1. More Flexibility	6	30%
2. Financial Advantage	0	0
3. Respect for my Experience	12	60%
4. Administrative Support	9	45%
5. Reduced Teaching Load	6	30%
6. Nothing will change decision	4	20%

SUMMARY QUESTION #6

Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career?

Number of respondents: 20

Anticipated Response Key Words Used:

1. As effective

Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%

Reasons why not as effective- 1 respondent

Physically Tired

Reasons why more effective:

Key Words Used:

1. Experience/Wisdom	18	90%
2. Continual Learning	7	35%
3. Understands Students/Parents	9	45%
4. Clear Priorities	9	45%
5. More Patient	2	10%
6. Classroom Management Skills	4	20%

SUMMARY QUESTION #7

Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50.

Number of respondents: 20

Attributes of teacher-Anticipated Response Key Words Used:

1. Understands Student and parents	1	5%
2. Keeps on Learning	2	10%
3. Clear Priorities	5	25%
4. Passion	9	45%
5. Fun	3	15%
6. Likes Kids	7	35%

SUMMARY QUESTION # 8

Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement?

Number of Respondents: 20

1. Did not receive any retirement advice	10	50%
2. Did receive retirement advice	10	50%
advised to retire	6	30%
advised not to retire	1	5%
advised both to retire and not to retire	3	15%

SUMMARY QUESTION # 9

Are there significant tasks, i.e. a bucket list, that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement?

Number of respondents: 20

- | | | |
|--|----|-----|
| 1. Bucket list impacted decision | 3 | 15% |
| 2. Bucket list did not impact decision | 17 | 85% |

Post Teaching to do list: Anticipated Response Key Words Used

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|-----|
| 1. No specific plans | 6 | 30% |
| 2. Service | 8 | 40% |
| 3. Travel | 4 | 20% |
| 4. Grandparenting | 3 | 15% |
| 5. Leisure | 3 | 15% |
| 6. New Career | 1 | 5% |

SUMMARY QUESTION #10

Was teaching a good career choice for you?

Number of respondents: 20

- | | | |
|--------|----|-----|
| 1. Yes | 19 | 95% |
|--------|----|-----|

2. No 1 5%

Summaries of Interviews

Interview # 1

1. Demographic Information- Female- age 64- Retired from teaching June 2013, last teaching position public school 4th grade- taught 22 years.

2. Your Career Journey- After college I taught for two years on a Native American reservation, I then taught pre-school for several years in Chicago. I stopped teaching to have my own children and then I returned and have been teaching in the same district in California.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring? Lots of changes- too much structure brought on by standards so I can't use my creativity.

Anticipated response key words used: bureaucracy, standards and testing, creativity stifled.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? If there were not so many changes every year- new curriculum, new standards- it became overwhelming/all consuming.

Anticipated response key words used: more flexibility, more respect for experience

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, more effective. I have grown as a

teacher through workshops, in-service, working with colleagues. I understand what I need to do to accomplish my priorities.

Anticipated response key words used: clear priorities, continued learning, wisdom/experience

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. He is 58 and still teaching....loves his students and his job, he is creative despite standards. He has fun.

Anticipated response key words used: fun, likes kids, keeps on learning

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, my husband....he saw how hard I worked every day. He told me to stop.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement?

Yes, my husband and I want to join the Peace Corps.

Anticipated responses key words used: service opportunities-travel

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, but I wish it would not have been so all consuming, but it was a great community to be a part of.

Interview #2

1. Demographic Information- male age 63- retired from teaching June 2013- last teaching position public school 4th grade. Taught 40 years

2. Your career journey- I started teaching in 1973 in a very diverse inner city school- that school merged with another and I was at that school until 1993- retired from city school and moved to a suburban school for eight years.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

My goal was 40 years teaching and I made it. Wanted to leave on top of my game and I did.

Anticipated responses key words used: leave on top of game, financial ability.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? None

Anticipated response key words used: None

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes-no question- parent and student feedback confirmed that I was effective. I understood what was important.

Anticipated response key words used: understand student needs, experience/wisdom, clear priorities

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50.

Several, and they were good because of the relationships they built with their students and their energy.

Anticipated response key words used: likes kids, energy

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, some, but my mind was made up.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I want to enjoy life and provide for my family....now in a different way.

Anticipated responses key words used: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, absolutely- If I had it to do all over again I would be a teacher. The feeling you get helping kids is second to none.

Interview #3

1. Demographic Information- Female age 65- retired from full time teaching at 58, now doing very part time evaluation/testing work for district. Taught for 20 years-last teaching position public school 1st grade.

2. Your career journey- I started teaching as a gifted and talented teacher. I also did some work as a hospital and home/school tutor. I ended up in this district (Scotts Valley California) which has been very interesting because of connection to Silicon Valley and have taught here for many years.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

The district made us get licensed for second language learning and we had only one such learner in the building- 9/11 made me realize life is short and I was working all the time- I job shared and my partner really needed a full time job. Standards and testing took fun out of job.

Anticipated responses key words used: bureaucracy, standards/testing, creativity stifled, desired change

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? Politics got overwhelming- regimentation took away creativity- testing greatly interfered with teaching.

Anticipated responses key words used: flexibility, respect for experience, less teaching load

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? I felt I was 1000 times better now than when I started- I took classes, got into technology, kept learning, understood students and what I was teaching.

Anticipated responses key words used: kept learning, understood students, Experience/wisdom

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. Women I worked with, she always had an open mind to try new things- always willing to change her curriculum.

Anticipated response key words used: passion, keeps on learning

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement?

Yes- my husband said I should quit..it took over my life for not enough money.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No.

Anticipated responses key words: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, the choices for women were limited when I graduated-it was good fit- enjoyed kids- summers with my own kids.

Interview #4

1. Demographic Information- Male- Age 68- retired 2009-3rd grade public school- since then have done two long term substitute positions and many day substitute positions- 42 years total teaching.

2. Your career journey- Graduated from Stanford with BA....than masters from Stanford. Taught high school English in New York and in Alaska, back to California where I taught in several districts until I retired from public education and than I long term substituted in a Christian School one year.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

My wife figured out that my pension would not increase if I kept teaching- I also had a bad administration situation-it was not enjoyable. Standards and testing drove me nuts and they kept pushing technology too much. Administration just didn't get it.

Anticipated response key words used: bureaucracy, administration, standards and testing, creativity stifled, technology.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? Standards took the fun out of teaching- textbooks were like cookbooks- tired of political correctness.- tired of paper work and faculty meetings- principal didn't get what was important.

Anticipated response key words used: respect for experience, administrative support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I'm much more patient and understanding- I think I understand what is important- I have wisdom and that is very important. I understand you don't succeed every day.

Anticipated response key words: clear priorities, experience/wisdom, patience

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. Sad to say many good ones I knew were getting out- I remember their confidence.

Anticipated response key words used: none

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, my wife gave me the financial advice-she knew I was not happy.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I love to teach, I'd love to keep teaching. I do have grandkids to take care of

Anticipated response key words used: grandparenting

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, I never regretted the choice- I love being in the classroom.

Interview #5

1. Demographic information- Male age 60-currently teaching 5th grade in California public school- just completed 38th year of teaching.

2. Your Career Journey- I started teaching in the public schools, next I went into administration in a private Christian school, than I returned to the public school as a teacher.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? I want to teach two more years. I want to make it to 40 years of teaching and age 62 works well financially in the California system.

Anticipated response key words used: financial necessity, enjoy work

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?
I'm leaving because I'm physically worn out- it is a very demanding job.

Anticipated response key words used: Physically tired, leave on top of game,

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? If I could reduce my hours- job share with a new teacher.

Anticipated response key words used: more flexibility, less of a teaching load.

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I am better at the relationship piece, and that is the most important thing in teaching-I'm more tired so I don't necessarily

do all that I did when I was younger, but I am more effective.

Anticipated response key words used : understand students, clear priorities, wisdom/experience

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. laid back, calm, I learned a lot from her how to relax and stay calm. She was highly effective, knew her stuff.

Anticipated response key words used: understands curriculum, clear priorities.

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes- have had mixed advice-parents were teachers and told me to retire asap-colleagues say no

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? Yes, I have lots of interests- grandkids-travel-biking-mission work.

Anticipated response key words used: service, grand-parenting, travel

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? It has worked out- when I was in college my options seemed narrow- but this did work out for me.

Interview #6

1. Demographic information- female, age 62- in education 35 years, most as a teacher, a small portion as an administrator. Last year teaching Middle School English in private school. Retired at age 60

2. Your career journey- my husband was in medical school, I had trouble getting a job the first year out of college- moved when he did for residency- taught for 5 years, then consulted for 5- then got a long gig for 16- then did charter school administration and Christian school administration.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?
Some frustration with administration, I also wanted to try some different things.
I had family health care issues that sealed the deal.

Anticipated response key words used: desire change, lack of administrative support.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? something needs to be done to celebrate the creativity and control of teachers.

Anticipated response key words used: respect for experience, administrative support.

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your

career as you were mid-career? I feel I am much better now- I learned how to engage parents positively and meaningfully-didn't know how to do that earlier. I'm much more open to new ideas.

Anticipated response key words used: understand parents, wisdom/experience

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. I know many- they all seem to know not to do the things that are not important.

Anticipated response key words used: clear priorities

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, some, but nothing that convinced me either way.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? I did not have a bucket list that drove me out, but I do want to use what I learned as an educator in other ways now to serve others. I will help out with grandchildren.

Anticipated response key words used: service, grandparenting

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? . Yes...when I left the first time and explored other options, I realized how good it is to be in a great school.

Interview #7

1. Demographic information:- male, age 63, teaches high school mathematics, 30 years at current private school, 39 total years in teaching.

2. Your career journey: taught in rural Illinois 2 years, 6 years in Denmark, 30 years in current school in Minneapolis, 1 year sabbatical teaching in Denmark.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why?

I'm financially unable to retire now, but I also really enjoy my job. I am treated like a professional, given a lot of autonomy.

Anticipated response key words used: financial necessity, enjoy work, feel appreciated, enjoy students, enjoy community.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I have no plans to retire, will keep teaching as long as I am effective. I will leave when I am still on top of my game, but have no plans to leave as of now, unless I win the powerball.

Anticipated response key words used: leave on top of game.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? If they continue to treat me with respect and I can continue to do my job well, I'll keep teaching.

Anticipated response key words used: none

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your

career as you were mid-career? Yes, I better be or I should not keep teaching- workshops and colleague discussions keep me improving, I also have the time now to devote to my profession.

Anticipated response key words used: experience/wisdom, continued learning

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50 . He retired at 58, but kept teaching at the university level teaching adjunct classes- he was so positive about life....kids loved him.

Anticipated response key words used: passion, likes kids

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? My 95 year old mom finally said I made the right decision to be a teacher- friends are retiring because of rule of 90 in public system- I don't have that. No advice...I just keep on going.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No. I love to travel, but I can do that in the summer....I want to keep teaching.

Anticipated response key words used: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes. I see what others do in business and I am glad I am where I am at. I had other options but I am glad I kept teaching.

Interview #8

1. Demographic information: female, age 62- retired at age 60- last teaching position 4th grade public school- taught 38 years

2. Your career journey: Graduated from University- thought “I can be a teacher, I taught Sunday school and liked it” Taught 1st grade –resigned and did my hippy thing, went to Mexico etc. returned to Minneapolis and have been here ever since.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

Every year it was getting more difficult...new math curriculum, new reading curriculum, new active board technology, etc etc....it became too much. The total emphasis on testing took away my creativity. I wanted to leave happy.

Anticipated response key words used: technology, testing/standards, creativity stifled, leave on top of my game.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? I had 34 kids in my class the last few years...standards took away my creativity....couldn't do the units I wanted to do. Smaller class sizes, less meetings, fewer standards.

Anticipated response key words used: more flexibility, less teaching load

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your

career as you were mid-career? yes, I was a good teacher to the end...I kept learning, I knew what I was doing

Anticipated response key words used: continued learning, experience/wisdom

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. I know one I taught with....great attitude....she has 36 kids in her class this year, positive attitude, passionate about education, but she is so ready to be done.

Anticipated response key words used: passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No. It's a very personal thing, People told me, "you will know" and I did know when it was time.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I did not have a plan or task...I probably should have....I always thought I wanted to do something completely different from education. I'm really eager to share all that I have with other teachers.

Anticipated response key words used: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, I loved teaching!

Interview # 9

1. Demographic information: female, age 60, currently teaching middle school art in private school. Has been teaching for 17 years.

2. My career journey-graduated from St. Cloud State....didn't want to be a teacher.

Became a substitute teacher in Marshall, than taught 6th,7th grade science in a Catholic School...worked retail for one year-hated it-started subbing again, eventually ended up at my current school.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why?

I take it a year at a time. The last two years were tough. I almost quit last year, but this year is starting out better...our new principal might help. I really like the kids, it is fun.

Anticipated response key words used: enjoy work, enjoy students.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring? I

will retire when I become irrelevant. As an art teacher, that will happen for me when technology replaces pen on paper- continued speed-no time to think. It also depends on administration. I am physically tired

Anticipated response key words used: administration, lack of flexibility, physically tired, technology, creativity stifled.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? If they let me

keep teaching the stuff I teach. If the climate in school remains positive. I would like to do it a few days a week.

Anticipated response key words used: More flexibility, administrative support, less teaching load.

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? No..I don't have the energy. I'm feeling it may be time to get off the stage....my product is still good, emphasis on technology not my interest.

Anticipated response key words used: technology, physically tired

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. - my 5th grade teacher, first teacher who really got me. She was calm....she read to us every day after recess

Anticipated response key words used: none

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No. I don't talk about this stuff very much. I thought I was leaving last year....just hanging on.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No bucket list, but I always thought I wanted to help people deal with anger issues through art.

Anticipated response key words used: service

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes

Interview # 10

1. Demographic Information: Female, Age 70 -retired after teaching for 32 year at age 64- last teaching position 3rd grade public school.
2. My career journey- I graduated from St. Olaf, went right into a Masters in Education program and after I finished that I got my first teaching job.
3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.
4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?
Two reasons, rule of 90 made it financially viable for me to retire but more important, the emphasis on standards and standardized testing really took the creativity out of teaching ...it was time to leave. I liked technology, but they really overemphasized it....we spent way too much time on it.
Anticipated response key words used: standards/testing, creativity stifled, technology, financial ability.
5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? No question that cutting back on testing would have helped....that is all we talked about...we had meetings to improve our testing. More flexibility to teach to our strengths.
Anticipated response key words used: flexibility
6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? I could not do everything I did at mid-career....I

put in an enormous amount of time and energy, but I was just as effective with kids in the classroom. I learned a lot over the years, how to manage a classroom. I could relate to parents, I understood what kids needed. When you teach for a while you have seen it all, there is a wisdom that is important

Anticipated response key words used: classroom management skills, understand students, understand parents, experience/wisdom, continued learning.

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. My high school English teacher- she inspired me to learn- she told me I could learn. She was a great role model because she was passionate about learning. I wanted to be smart like her.

Anticipated response key words used: passionate

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, I did not talk to many people. I made the decision. I had had enough.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I did not have a list. I have a lot of interests, but nothing drove me.

Anticipated response key words used: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, I enjoyed it. Every day was interesting- never boring, the days flew by.

Interview #11

1. Demographic Information- Male, age 63- retired three years ago at age 59 as public school special education teacher-taught 30 years

2. Your career journey- I graduated from Northeastern University in Chicago with an English degree- was getting a masters in Scandinavian Studies- that didn't work out, so I decided to be practical and get a teaching degree- student taught English, quickly changed to special education-got masters in special education and also got psychologist license.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

Last two years had an incompetent principal- I really became a glorified teachers aide- I couldn't take it any more. No respect for what I knew and what I could do. I was bored, could no longer use creativity to solve problems.

Anticipated response key words used: administration, creativity stifled

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? A better principal who would have trusted and respected me. I'd still be there if I was in a school with better administration.

Anticipated response key words used: respect for experience, administrative

support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I was more effective. Much more credible, more confident. Parents really respected me because of my age and experience.

Anticipated response key words used: understand parents, experience/wisdom

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. I have several people who come to my mind- they were all positive and passionate, team players- involved in union trying to make education better.

Anticipated response key words used: passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, I talked to tons of people about it. I'm a finance guy so I did a lot of planning from that angle. One guy told me....just do it, you can always go back if you want.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? Yes, I knew I wanted to make this film about my grandmother who was a Holocaust survivor. That has been a huge project. I always wanted to try film-making as a career.

Anticipated response key words used: another career

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? ? I don't think I would choose it again. It was just too tough to be creative....there were constant barriers to using my creativity.

Interview #12

1. Demographic Information-female- age 64- retired from teaching seven years ago at the age 57 from private school- taught mainly high school and some elementary art.

Total years teaching-16 years

2. Your Career Journey- I graduated from college in Chicago with elementary education licensure. No jobs, so I was a special education teaching assistant-moved from Chicago to Minneapolis. Worked as a costume designer- started subbing and eventually got a high school teaching job. Stayed there for about 10 years, left teaching but was talked back into teaching at another school for four more years.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I felt very unappreciated. The school where I taught kept adding more to my plate and the administration was very unsupportive. I was physically wearing down, could not take it anymore.

Anticipated response key words used: physically tired, administration

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? Maybe more flexibility in scheduling, maybe an administrator saying.....hey, you've been here a while and we appreciate you, what can we do to make it easier for you.

Anticipated response key words used: more flexibility, respect for experience, administrative support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? I was more effective in my last years of teaching. More at ease with myself, more self-confident. I didn't sweat the small stuff, I knew what was important. I understood students. The experience really helps.

Anticipated response key words used: clear priorities, experience/wisdom, understand students.

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. That would be a college professor I had. He was so passionate about his subject...he was controversial and he was smart.

Anticipated response key words used: passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, I did not talk to anyone about it. I never really thought about the money part of the decision, which was pretty naïve...I just knew I had had enough.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? I had no task-no bucket list-I just wanted to stop telling people I couldn't do something because I was too busy.

Anticipated response key words used: service

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? ? Yes, it worked out well for me. It taught me a lot...I conquered my fear of teaching.

Interview #13

1. Demographic Information: Male, age 58, currently teaching 6th grade math and science in private school. This is his 32nd year of teaching

2. Your Career Journey: Received my bachelors degree from Pacific Lutheran College in Seattle, was a recreational administration major- couldn't get the type of job I wanted. Returned to University of Minnesota and received elementary licensure in one-year program. Substitute taught for a year and than was hired at my current school where I have been my entire career.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why?

I am 58 years old, I want to teach until I am 60. I enjoy what I am doing .

Financially I need to work a few more years, but in two to three years I will be ready to leave.

Anticipated response key words used: financial necessity, enjoy work, enjoy students

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I have decided I want to leave when I am healthy. I want to do other things. I want to spend more time up North at the cabin.

Anticipated response key words used: desired change, leave on top of game.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? I don't think

there is anything that would change that desire. I have made up my mind.

Anticipated response key words used: none

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? ? Yes, I have experienced just about everything there is to experience in the classroom...I know how to handle kids and situations that arise. Experience really helps.

Anticipated response key words used: classroom management skills,

Wisdom/experience

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. That would be my 5th grade teacher. He was tough and demanding, but very creative. Not sure he would have lasted in today's teaching world...he may have been too tough.

Anticipated response key words used: none

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? My wife and I talk about it, and we do have a financial planner. My dad retired at 60 and he had a great time in retirement.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I do not have a bucket list. I would like to spend more time at the lake and I would like to be somewhere warm during the winter, maybe some car travel.

Anticipated response key words used: travel, leisure

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, I am very grateful to God for

leading me to teach and to the school I teach at. I enjoy the work, the kids, and the people I work with. I am very fortunate.

Interview #14

1. Demographic Information: Female, age 57- currently teaching 3rd grade public school- this is her 29th year teaching.

2. Your career journey: I graduated from college with an English major. Got a job in a graphic arts company- hated it- went back and got elementary license- subbed for a year and was hired to teach in my current district

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why?

I will be 60 and will hit the rule of 90 in 2 ½ years. That will also be my 30th year of teaching. I want to make it to the rule of 90 for financial reasons, but then I am done. I am exhausted.

Anticipated response key words used: financial necessity

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I am exhausted. I am ready to leave. The job is enormous and exhausting. There are so many plates you have to keep spinning at all times, and they keep increasing the number of plates. Teaching to standards and differentiating for all students makes it impossible. They raise the bar, yet the students have more needs and are less able and more distracted.

Anticipated response key words used: administration, student behavior,

standards and testing, physically tired, financial ability

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? I can't imagine what would have to happen to keep me teaching longer. Maybe if I could teach just one subject, but that will not happen.

Anticipated response key words used: less teaching load

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? I am more effective now. I am much more patient. I am able to think on my feet and address problems because of my experience.

Anticipated response key words used: experience/wisdom, patience.

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. I worked with several. Creative and strong....they are retired now.

Anticipated response key words used: none

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, my husband and I talk. I have a woman I taught with who has retired, and she says it is great....tells me I have to get out of there.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I really do not have a list. I want to travel off season....I always said I wanted to write a children's book.

Anticipated response key words used: travel

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, it has been hard, I have enjoyed it, but I am ready to leave.

Interview #15

1. Demographic Information: Female age 66- retired 3 years ago at 62.

Last teaching position 1st grade public school- taught 34 years

2. Your career journey: I studied drama in college...my mom said I should get a teaching degree so I could get a job. I taught two years in Michigan, than moved to Minneapolis. Could not get a job so I subbed and worked at a restaurant. I was hired in the Robbinsdale District and have moved around to every elementary school in the district.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I was going to keep teaching, but the new principal said before he came that he was going to get rid of the deadwood....meaning older teachers....bad way to start a relationship. I had 30 first graders, my room had no carpeting so it was noisy, I had several major discipline problems....the first 5 days of the year were a nightmare, so I went to the district office and found out I could retire, so I did!

So many standards...I asked, when can we teach?

Anticipated response key words: bureaucracy, student behavior, administration, standards and testing, creativity stifled.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer?

If the principal would have listened to me....that is all I needed. Less students in my classroom and more support for all the special needs kids. More respect for all the years I had been teaching.

Anticipated response key words: administrative support. respect for experience.

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I was still enthusiastic at the end, but I tempered it. I was very involved with all aspects of my students' lives. I think the teachers learned a lot from me, although some of the newer teachers did not appreciate some of us older teachers because of our age.

Anticipated response key words: experience/wisdom, clear priorities

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. She is very professional and very enthusiastic....she is my age and is still very enthusiastic.

Anticipated response key words: likes kids, passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, It really was my decision....I had one person I talked to, but it was mainly me....I did not even think about the money. I had had it with the principal.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No bucket list....I just wanted freedom to drink my coffee and read the newspaper.

Anticipated response key words: leisure

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, it was a good choice even though I did not receive a retirement party.

Interview # 16

1. Demographic Information: Male 66 years old. Retired at end of 2012-13 school year. Last position 7th grade social studies in private school. Taught 41 years.

2. Your career journey: I grew up on a farm, first member of family to go to college. Graduated and started subbing....also ran a bowling alley....finally offered a part time job which turned into a full time job at school that I retired from.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I was exhausted...I had a horrible last year. I did start hormone therapy which helped. Changing technology really bothered me....every year a new grading program, and I was into technology.....standards and new fads which were really things we had done before but given new names. Because of our principal our school climate was not good.

Anticipated response key words: physically tired, standards and testing, technology, administration.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? If I would have been respected as an individual, if principal had created a better climate, if I would have been physically stronger, if technology decisions were clearer.

Anticipated response key words: respect for experience, administrative support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes I was probably more enthusiastic at the start of my career, but I was not as good a teacher....experience helps. The last year of teaching I second-guessed myself, but that was due to the principal.

Anticipated response key words: experience/wisdom

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. He knew his stuff and enjoyed sharing it with students. He was so cheerful and professional

Anticipated response key words: passion, fun, likes kids

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, I did not seek any advice, I made my own decision. My wife knew what I was going through the last few years.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? I really did not have a bucket list....nothing drove me....I need a little time to unwind and then make some decisions.

Anticipated response key words: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? I am very glad...absolutely...that I was a teacher. I enjoyed most aspects of it...can't imagine what I would have done differently.

Interview #17

1. Demographic Information: Female, age 64, retired at age 60, last teaching position 5th grade public school, 20 years full time teaching plus some substituting.

2. Your career journey: I graduated from River Falls Wisconsin, got a job teaching 2nd grade in a small town in Minnesota. I got married and moved to Minneapolis. Started a family and took some years off to be a full time mom. Went back into teaching as a sub, than job shared, and finally took a full time 5th grade job in the school that I retired from.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.,

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I was physically tired, and I was tired of all the testing. Philosophically, I did not agree with what I had to do. And then they closed my school, which was the final straw....I did not feel like going to another school. The technology was also frustrating for me.

Anticipated response key words: physically tired, standards and testing, technology.

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? The all consuming nature of the job was getting to me. If I had more support in correcting papers...after a long day I would come home and correct all night. The older teachers seemed to be putting in more time than the younger ones.

Anticipated response key words: less teaching load

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I was a better teacher at the end. I had a much bigger tool box to deal with all of the things I had to face.

Anticipated response key words: experience/wisdom, understand students, classroom management skills

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. She retired at 55. She was single, her job was her life...high standards, high energy, great sense of humor, loved kids. She was there from early morning to late evening...she simply burned out.

Anticipated response key words: passion, loved kids

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, my husband said I should retire but I did not talk to anyone about it.....it was my decision.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, not really. I wanted to travel but that was not a driver. I just wanted the freedom to come and go as I pleased.

Anticipated response key words: none

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Teaching was a great choice

Interview #18

1. Demographic information: Male, age 64 retired at 57 ½ . Taught high school science in public high school.....taught for 30 years.

2. Your career journey: Graduated from River Falls Wisconsin, started teaching high school science at Golden Valley High School until it merged with Robbinsdale Schools. I was hired to teach science at Wayzata High School. Had a lot of involvement with state and national science teaching organizations.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

I was getting physically really tired. But I was also getting tired of fighting the bureaucracy. We had overcrowded labs...we needed better technology to do science. I also was very frustrated with the administration's push to always raise the bar. Their priorities were not my priorities. I really needed a change.

Anticipated response key words: physically tired, desired change, bureaucracy, administration

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? I was feeling like

this was not the place for me. I did not agree with the direction. I think I would have stayed if I could have taught less classes and mentored teachers....I would have done that for less pay.

Anticipated response key words: less teaching load, respect for experience, administrative support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? I was a much better teacher at the end of my career. I stopped asking permission and just did what I thought was right. I was very relational with students.....I tried to understand my students. I learned a lot from other teachers.

Anticipated response key words: clear priorities, understand students, Experience/wisdom, continued learning.

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. He was an English teacher in Wayzata. I would take my prep time to visit his class. Everything he did was fluid. Great classroom management, very direct....passionate

Anticipated response key words: passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? Yes, I talked to a lot of people....they would ask, "Don't you like teaching, and I'd say, yes I love it, but I don't have to keep doing it the same way in the same school

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No bucket list, but I'm a compulsive

learner....to be learning is to be happy, and I had many things I wanted to learn and do. I want to serve others.

Anticipated response key words: service

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Teaching was a great choice for me....I would do it again and again. It gave me great opportunities to grow.

Interview #19

1. Demographic Information: Male Age 66 taught high school English/journalism, public school, retired at 57. Taught 34 years.

2. Your career journey: Went to St. Cloud State....was hired part time at Sanford Jr. High, than went to North High School in Minneapolis for 11 years, and than went to Wayzata High School where I taught the remainder of my career.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

Teaching is a craft. When your administrator diminishes your craft, it is time to leave. I asked the principal for his support on an issue, and he refused. He wanted me to leave because I was the ripple in the water, and he liked smooth water.

Anticipated response key words used: administration, bureaucracy

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? Administrative support. If someone would have come into my room and said....you are good, how did you do that? Or if someone would have said, what can I do to help you?

Anticipated response key words used: respect for experience, administrative support

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your

career as you were mid-career? Oh absolutely..I was so much better at the end. I finally figured out teaching was a craft. At the beginning I was teaching for myself...at the end I was teaching for the kids. I worked long hours...I was totally into helping kids learn...I really love to learn

Anticipated response key words used: clear priorities, classroom management, continued learning, understand parents/students, wisdom/experience,

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. The best teacher was a teacher of teachers....incremental, non-judgemental....asked great questions.

Anticipated response key words used: clear priorities

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No, not much...never had that discussion....colleagues told me they wanted me to stay, but never really talked about retirement.

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I never had a bucket list. I want to be actively engaged...I want to make a difference. I would teach again given the right opportunities.

Anticipated response key words used: service

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Absolutely yes....it informed my life...it informed who I am and what I do...Absolutely

Interview # 20

1. Demographic Information: Male age 66, Taught middle school English and French, public school, retired at 56, taught 34 years

2. Your Career Journey: Started college at St. Johns, Transferred and graduated from Mankato State, where I also received my Masters. Wanted to teach out west but was offered a job in Burnsville....took it.....have been there ever since. Was drafted and served two years in the Army and then returned to the same school.

3. If you are still teaching, how much longer do you plan on teaching and why? N.A.

4. What are the reasons you retired from teaching or are planning on retiring?

Financially I was able. I had taught 34 years, I was ready to go. All my friends were retiring, it was the thing to do. Kids were changing, standards were taking away my creativity...it was time to go. The routine was very physically demanding.

Anticipated response key words: physically tired, student behavior, standards and testing, creativity stifled

5. What changes will or would have kept you teaching longer? I don't think anything would have kept me teaching longer. Everyone was leaving

Anticipated response key words: nothing

6. Do you feel you are as effective now or were as effective at the end of your career as you were mid-career? Yes, I was a very good teacher at the end of my career. I had some wisdom I did not have before, that was my only regret for leaving is that I was a really good teacher. I figured some things out too late.

Anticipated response key words: wisdom/experience, clear priorities

7. Describe the best teacher you knew who was over 50. There were some real stars in Burnsville. Everyone held them in awe....not sure there are many of those left....they were passionate about their teaching.

Anticipated response key words: Passion

8. Have friends or family given you advice about decisions regarding continuing teaching or retirement? No...it was just time....

9. Are there significant tasks-i.e. a bucket list- that you wish to accomplish that impacts your decision on retirement? No, I just wanted to slow down. Being on that constant teaching schedule was really difficult...really tiring.

Anticipated response key words: leisure

10. Was teaching a good career choice for you? Yes, at the time it was a good choice. Now with the standards and lack of creativity I'm not sure, but then it was a good choice, not sure what else I would have done.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Ever since the American Social Security program began in 1935, an assumption has been made that the retirement age should be 65. Retirement parties were planned and gold watches were purchased almost automatically as workers approached that magic age. But given the realities of the 21st century, is this assumption good for the individual and is it good for our country and for the economy? Projections show that the U.S. population age 65 and over will increase to 19 % of the population by 2030, an increase from 13 % in 2010. By 2020, approximately one quarter of the American work force will be 55 or older (Associated Press, NORC-University of Chicago, 2013). For many baby boomers who are approaching traditional retirement age, 65 is just another year in an ongoing career and retirement has no set time frame. This movement to extend career longevity does not seem to hold true for baby boomers in the teaching profession.

With the average retirement age of 59, teachers seem to be bucking the trend of working up to and in many instances past the age of 65.

A recent survey conducted by the Associated Press (AP-NORC-University of Chicago, 2013) confirms that the baby boom generation is redefining, either because of choice or circumstance, the concept of retirement at the traditional age of 65.

According to Trevor Topson, director of the AP-NORC Center that conducted the survey, “Retirement is not only coming later in life, it no longer represents a complete exit from the workforce” (AP- NORC, 2013).

Key findings of the Associated Press survey include:

1. The Great Recession has had a marked impact on retirement planning. The average age of those who report retiring before the recession was 57 while the average for those who retired afterward is 62.
2. The line between working and retirement is shifting, with 82 % of Americans age 50 and older who are working but not yet retired saying it is likely or very likely that they will do some work for pay during their retirement.
3. Of those who are currently working, 47% now plan to retire at a later age than they expected when they were 40. Financial need, health and the need for benefits were cited as the most important factors in the retirement decision.
4. The nature of a person's work shapes their view of whether age is an asset or a liability. For example, 28% of people who work or worked in professional services see age as an asset while only 3% in manufacturing hold that view.

The American culture’s view on retirement is shifting. The age

retirement occurs, the reasons for working longer, and the way people are choosing to spend their post career years are in a state of transition. This study looked at the particular career of teaching in K-12 education and how these changes are impacting decisions on teacher retirement. The premise was that not only were decisions being impacted by economics and health, but were also influenced by factors unique to the cohort of baby boomers. The trends noted later in this chapter refer to the unique attributes of the baby boom cohort and how these attributes, in the opinion of the researcher, manifested themselves in the responses to the questions posed.

Broad Summaries from Interviews

Why do teachers retire? There is a time in life when all of us must decide to shift gears and not work at the same pace one did when younger. But most teachers seem to be making this decision well before the traditional age of 65. Is this a good thing for teachers, for students, for the profession of education? Is all the research cited in this study about changes in retirement attitudes and encore careers somehow non-applicable to the teaching profession? There are five broad summary points that the researcher drew from the interview data relating to the uniqueness of the teaching career and the baby boom generation that may impact retirement decisions.

1. Teaching is a very physically demanding profession.

Of the 20 interviewees, 8 mentioned that physical exhaustion was or will be a key factor in their retirement decision. Despite the fact that summer vacation and breaks during the school year are longer than other professions, teaching is physically

wearing. Although the researcher's premise was to look for ways to extend good teachers' teaching careers, there were several of the interviewees who said the strain of daily "being on the stage" was taking its toll and there may not be a solution to that issue.

It is a standard assumption that teaching as a profession is an intellectual pursuit. As the AP survey showed, 28% of people in professional services see age as an asset (AP-NORC, 2013). Yet, until one teaches day in and day out for years on end, the physical strain of the position is an unknown. Several interviewees mentioned that they never sat down from the time they entered the school building in the morning until the time they drove home at night. Combine the physical exhaustion with the mental and emotional stresses of dealing with parents and students, one can see why some teachers decide to leave the profession early for the sake of their physical health.

2. Teachers, especially public school teachers, are positively positioned financially to leave the profession.

The current trend of baby boomers working longer in their careers because of financial needs did not seem to hold true for the teachers interviewed in this study. Almost all of the subjects said they were in relatively good condition financially and were not looking at finances as a driver in their decision to retire or keep teaching. The teachers interviewed had all taught for many years and had either accumulated pensions or adequate 401 K plans to meet their retirement goals. As will be referred to in the trends section in chapter 5, there was somewhat of a divide between public

and private school teachers in retirement benefits, yet most of the subjects were confident in their financial future. There may be several reasons for this confidence. Some mentioned that they had lived “conservatively” all of their lives and had been wise in their retirement planning. People who go into the teaching profession also have realistic financial expectations. The choice of an educational career was not made to become wealthy and therefore retirement lifestyle expectations were realistic and conservative.

3. There is a pressure on older teachers to perform “better than average”.

When women were attempting to shatter the glass ceiling in business management, the common complaint voiced was that they had to perform better than males to overcome stereotypes. Several of the interview subjects mentioned that the bias toward young “cool” teachers was definitely alive and well and added a subtle pressure to their jobs. Many of them had stories of an older teacher who stayed too long and was ineffective in the classroom. There were also incidents cited where the subjects knew of older teachers who shirked their duties, called in sick instead of going on a field trip, avoided confronting troubling parents, and generally did not function as a team player. There was a passion expressed to not want to be one of “those” older teachers. 25% of interviewees mentioned the desire to leave teaching “at the top of their game” as a reason to retire. This passion was almost a curse, causing older teachers to constantly doubt their effectiveness or to work harder than necessary to destroy negative stereotypes.

4. Wisdom and experience do make one a better teacher.

The working environment of a k-12 teacher is obviously filled with young people and high energy. There are some advantages to being a youthful teacher to relate to this high-energy environment. In non-professional terms, there is a “coolness factor” to being a young teacher. That factor along with the added physical energy of a young teacher makes some believe that teaching is a young man or young women profession. 95% of the interviewees, however, stated that their experience and wisdom has made them a better teacher than they were at the beginning or even mid career. These teachers felt they were at the top of their professional performance in their 50’s and 60’s. To an outside observer, the high-energy performance of a younger teacher may be appealing, but to these seasoned professionals, they understood that they were more effective in the classroom because of their experience.

5. Baby boomers are different.

One of the premises of this study was that the baby boom cohort was different than generations before and after. Demographics and history have shaped this large group of people into who they are and what they give and expect from their work. The researcher was struck by the similarities of responses by the subjects, not only in the key words shown in the summaries, but in the tone and contents of the extended conversations. There was a pride expressed by so many of these teachers of the importance of their task. They realized that they had and continue to make a difference in the life of students and families, and that is why they went into this profession. The historical development of the baby boomers placed an emphasis on

working for the greater good. The historical context of this generation did create a cohort of teachers who approached their work with pride and passion. Frustrations with younger teachers who did not share this passion were evident in several interviews. This passion, tempered but not eliminated with age, is what this researcher believes needs to be modeled and mentored into the next generation of teachers. There is an urgency to this task as baby boom teachers, even with efforts made to keep them teaching longer, will be finishing their careers by the end of this decade.

Trends

The purpose of this study was to explore reasons why baby boom teachers are retiring from the teaching profession and what changes can be made to keep good older teachers teaching longer. Before making recommendations for changes that will possibly extend baby boom teachers careers in the classroom, the researcher will first explore trends uncovered during the study based on the twenty subject interviews.

Shared experiences shape a generation. As was stated in the literature review, shared events influence and define each generation, and while individuals in different generations are diverse, they nevertheless share certain thoughts, values, and behaviors because of the shared events (Zemke, Raines, & Fillpczak, 1999). The common themes that were prevalent in the answers to the questions used in this study support this premise. As was stated in the literature review, the baby boom generation, because of its size and its historical context, have created, “ gut level differences in values that involve a person’s beliefs, emotions, and preferences”

(Hicks 1999, p.4). These generational differences became clear to the researcher first as the subjects answered the questions but more over as they shared stories and passions about their teaching careers. The following are some of the most prevalent trends that came to the forefront in these interviews.

1. The need for encouragement and support from administration

It is true that all teachers need to have administrative support. As was pointed out in the literature review, baby boomers' work-life experienced the change from the more control and dominance style of workplace management to one of cooperative partnership between worker and management. Baby boomers want their work to have meaning and the emphasis will be on relationships instead of authority (Finzel, 1989). This emphasis on the human side of the workplace was just beginning as the baby boom teachers entered their careers and became a shaping influence of this generation. The importance of this partnership with management, the feeling that the principal knows me, understands my needs, appreciates what I do and what I bring to the classroom day in and day out, became a clear need expressed in these interviews. Along with the historical roots of this trend comes the obvious fact that even though the vast majority of subjects felt they were better teachers now than in mid-career, as one ages and one begins to think about leaving one's career, a desire to "leave on top of your game" begins to play into the decision process. This need also was borne out in these interviews. Clearly, an administrator's reassurance of effectiveness and value is crucial for baby boomers to continue teaching late in their careers.

2. The importance of respect

The literature review spoke of several group characteristics that shaped this generational cohort. One of these characteristics was the relationship to authority and the fact that this generation questioned authority more than any previous generation. Baby boomers wanted and needed to be heard. According to both Mitchell and Hicks, a major contributor to this relationship to authority was that so many baby boomers had more education than their parents (Mitchell, 1998 & Hicks, 1999). They felt that they knew more than their parents and they should be listened to. Now, as older adults, this need to be listened to and respected was a clear trend in their responses. To be respected as wise and experienced was the centerpiece of several of the respondents' needs. "Been there, done that...please listen to me" was expressed in many different ways during these interviews. The value of wisdom was seen to be lost in some cases because of the need for standardization. The desire to help newer teachers by imparting this wisdom to them through mentoring, coaching, and job sharing was seen as a way to be relevant and respected.

3. The love of teaching

Choose what you love and then do it with all your heart. It was nearly unanimous with 95% of the subjects saying they were glad they chose teaching as a career. The emotional and heartfelt responses to the question, "was teaching a good career choice for you" surprised and at times overwhelmed the researcher. What was also clearly stated was this choice involved commitment, hard work, continued learning, and a desire to improve. The literature emphasized that this generational cohort had a deep identification between who they are and what they achieve

(Stillman et al. 2002). As educators, this achievement is not marked by increased monetary gain or prestigious titles. The subjects shared stories of lives changed and families impacted by their work, and how these were the markers of true success. The long hours and exhaustive pace of teaching was mentioned by almost all of the subjects as part of the profession. Many spoke of contact with students and parents outside of school hours as what really made their work in the classroom meaningful and successful. The term workaholic, first used to describe baby boom workers, (Zemke, et al. 1999) was certainly applicable to many of these subjects. Several interviewees expressed frustration that their younger colleagues did not seem to share their belief that teaching was a job that did not end every day when the dismissal bell rang. One teacher commented that most of the younger teachers doors were closed and they were out of the building at 3:30, something rare for these baby boom teachers. The general consensus was that teaching is an all consuming life calling and that although frustrating at times, their career choice was a wise one.

4. Improving with age

The overwhelming response to the question of effectiveness at the end of their career was positive. 95% of the interviewees felt strongly that their performance in the classroom improved with age and experience. The emphasis on self-improvement and continued education was mentioned by many of the teachers. The wisdom needed to be a successful educator, however, was gained not only by continued education, but by the experience of day to day life in the classroom. Knowledge of student needs, of parent engagement, and of classroom priorities were all mentioned as skill

sets that can only be gained through experience. But what continually was mentioned in their responses was a desire to be a better teacher for no other reason than this job was their life work and they wanted to absolutely be the best teacher they could be. The competition and ambition of baby boomers that was highlighted in the literature review was seen more as a competition and drive to self improve to serve their students than a drive to improve status or finances.

The physical aspect of life in the classroom was a factor in decisions to continue teaching. The daily demands of standing, moving about the classroom, long hours, and preparation and correcting of papers at home after a full day at school were all mentioned not as negatives but as part of the reality of teaching. The majority of the teachers interviewed that were still teaching did express that they are committed to taking care of themselves physically so they can continue teaching. Eating well, exercising, getting adequate sleep, and making sure they used summer to recharge were all mentioned as priorities. As was mentioned by several of the authors in the literature review, baby boomers are healthier than their parents' generation and are making healthy life styles a priority. There are of course health issues that are out of the control of the baby boom teacher, but the trend noted was that the majority of these subjects wanted to do all they could to remain healthy and strong enough to continue teaching and to leave teaching mentally and physically "on top of their game".

5. Frustration points- standards, testing, and technology

The literature review began with a brief historical perspective of the baby boom generation, highlighting the theory that change has been a shaping factor for this generation. The enormous changes experienced by this generation were highlighted by the tumultuous decade of the 1960's, when most political and social norms were being questioned and challenged. This generation of teachers has seen the educational pendulum wildly swing with new trends and approaches to teaching and learning. The literature would point to this cohort's upbringing on a strong diet of change and therefore comfort level and understanding of the need to embrace change. The ironic yet understandable cynicism expressed by the interview subjects towards the new standards and standardized testing was palatable during these interviews. But exploring beneath the surface of these frustration led to an understanding that the frustration was not with the concept of standardization and the need for accountability through testing, but that these requirements took time away from what they strongly believed was the essence of teaching, the relationship between the teacher and the student. The creative part of teaching, the infusion of one's self into the material being taught and the relationships formed through this creative process was being stifled. This frustration was felt by many to be high if not highest on the list of reasons to leave the profession.

The same relationship dynamic is interrupted when technology is over emphasized. There was a clear understanding and acceptance of technology as an important part of learning. When that emphasis became so important and time consuming that screen time took over face time is where many of these baby boom

teachers drew the line. Again, as was evident in the literature, the importance of the relational aspect of the workplace is evident in the baby boom teacher. Educational change was not the issue as much as the disruption of that important personal relationship dynamic between the teacher and the student.

6. Retirement- no desire to take it easy-no bucket lists

One of the premises of this study was that baby boomers will redefine the concept of retirement. As the literature review pointed out, there are many reasons why this redefinition will occur including financial necessities, health and longevity, and the desire to contribute to the general good. These interviewees reinforced the concept that change is coming to the world of retirement. There were very few comments made about the desire to retire and just take it easy. Travel and leisure were mentioned as desired activities, but not as specific reasons to retire. Instead, the desire to use skills and talents to continue to make a difference was an overwhelming priority. This priority was driving some teachers to continue teaching and others to find meaningful activities in their post teaching lives.

There were very few subjects who expressed a plan or “bucket list” for their post teaching life. There were activities they wanted to do such as travel or spend more time with their grandchildren, but none of these were mentioned as actual drivers in the final decision to retire. Because teachers are afforded longer summer breaks than other careers, many of the interviewees had traveled extensively and were not needing retirement to satisfy their travel designs. The desire to make a difference, so prevalent in the literature as a definer of the baby boom generation, was what led

most of these teachers into their profession. As one interviewee expressed, “some people retire to go do something to impact lives. I’ve been doing that my whole career”. To continue to make an impact in a post teaching life was a priority expressed by most of the interviewees.

7. Finances- the main divide between public and private school teachers

This study involved interviewing both public and private K-12 teachers. The passion and commitment to kids and to their jobs as well as the frustrations and needs expressed by public and private teachers were very similar. The pension/retirement plans offered to these two groups was a differentiator that impacted retirement perspectives. Several of the public school teachers remarked that making it to the rule of 90, a combination of age and years teaching, was a goal that kept them teaching. Once that goal was reached, decisions on whether or not to continue teaching revolved around other factors. Private school teachers seemed much more constrained by finances. The private school teachers were all employed in schools that had defined contribution plans, which meant that every year they taught added money to their retirement plans. There were no guarantees how much these retirement plans would generate, so the more one can invest in these plans the better the chances for a financially comfortable retirement. There was no specific amount of years teaching that gave them extra incentive to either remain in teaching or to retire but many did express the need to hang on for a year or two to bolster their retirement accounts. Both groups were clear in their responses that although finances were an issue, their retirement decisions were not about the money. Other factors out-weighted finances

in the final decision to stay or leave the teaching profession.

Recommendations

An article in the Minneapolis StarTribune on October 20, 2013 entitled, “Alive and Working After 65” presented the reasons why extending careers beyond the traditional 65-year retirement point is so essential for the economics of Minnesota. The article’s author stated that, “The greatest threat to output in our state economy may be the drain of people over 65 who no longer work” (Feldman 2013). He asked the question at the heart of this study, how can we keep older workers in the labor force, or bring them back after they have retired? Feldman proceeded to give recommendations to alter Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) pension plans and to look at changes in the Social Security Disability Insurance as ways of financially encouraging longer employment. But what was more germane to this particular study was Feldman’s contention that employers must look for ways to reduce burnout and job strain as well as ways to allow people to “un-retire” (Feldman 2013). The final goal, according to Feldman, is to redefine retirement completely, looking for ways to expand opportunities for older workers to continue to contribute to the economy. Redefining retirement, therefore, is an issue that goes well beyond the world of K-12 education. Economic growth, quality teacher supply, student learning are all impacted by the early exit of good older teachers from the labor force. The following are recommendations for keeping good older teachers teaching longer.

1. Administrators-listen, learn, support and appreciate

The world of education is rigidly structured. Bells ring, students and teachers

move on the minute, salaries are based on steps and lanes as attempts are made to treat teachers equally and fairly. How can we make this world of bells and rules more flexible to meet the needs of the older teacher? As one subject stated in her interview, retirement to me means not having to plan my bathroom breaks and to actually drink an entire cup of coffee when it is still hot.

There are some inherent issues that present themselves when a relatively young administrator is supervising an older teacher. Both parties may feel uncomfortable with their roles. Several of the subjects mentioned the desire to be heard and honored for the knowledge and wisdom gained over the years. A wise administrator will listen to these older teachers and ask them for perspective and advice. Several subjects felt that their younger administrator seemed threatened by their experience to the extent that they were treated unkindly as an attempt to be shown who was boss. I was surprised in the interviews with how loyal and supportive these teachers were to their administrators. They wanted to help them and support them and make them look good.

The cyclical nature of education, a good old idea being given a new name and rolled out like a great new idea, is hard for the baby boom teacher to accept. Cynicism and eye rolling are common reactions to these new rebranded ideas. Again, administrators that honored the experience of these older teachers, asking them their perspective on new ideas and listening to their concerns, created a positive and productive working environment for both parties. It takes a confident and wise administrator, regardless of his/her age, to honor and not to be threatened by the

wisdom and experience of the baby boom teacher.

One interview subject shared that a simple, humane gesture of the principal stopping by her room at the end of the school year and saying that he was glad she was coming back next fall and was there anything he could do as he put together the schedule and other details for next year to make her year work better, would have made all the difference in her decision to return to teach. Instead, the schedule was structured in such a way as to make it nearly impossible for her to physically continue. Several subjects mentioned that seemingly small issues like enough time to go to the bathroom became hurdles for continuing teaching. And, as was mentioned earlier, the need to be recognized and appreciated is accentuated as one is in the later years of teaching. A simple thank you by an administrator will go a long way to keep good teachers teaching longer.

2. A positive school climate needs all age teachers

An interview subject said it bluntly, “our new principal said he wanted to eliminate the cost and the drag of older deadwood teachers. Hearing this started the year off horribly.” A good school climate includes effective teachers of all ages. New teachers bring new ideas and energy from their recent education training, middle age teachers bring stability and focus while older teachers add wisdom. A building with a balance of ages on their faculty and a climate of teamwork and collaboration between these groups serves its students well. It is true that older teachers do cost more than younger teachers, but their wisdom and experience, if used and supported, more than make up for the added cost.

3. Explore part time and job sharing options

The paradigm of working hard until you reach 65 and then stopping work entirely seems to be changing in most professional careers. For example, medical doctors have the ability to cut down their patient load and their office hours to slow the pace of work and yet stay engaged in their profession. There seems to be few opportunities for older teachers to stay engaged in teaching while lightening the load a bit to help deal with the physical demands of the job. Although several of the interviewees wanted a clean and complete break from teaching, most of the interviewees would like the opportunity to stay engaged and contribute on a limited basis. As one teacher shared, “the saddest thing about retirement was packing up my room and putting those boxes in the basement. 30 years of great ideas and I’m not able to share them with anyone”. Education needs to explore and be receptive to a wide range of models that allow older teachers to work part time. There are many scheduling and job sharing possibilities limited only by the ability of the educational establishment to think creatively to keep older teachers engaged in teaching.

For example, one idea expressed by several interviewees was that the final year or years of a teacher’s career could be spent job sharing with a new teacher. The retiring teacher would receive a partial contract and would job share with a first year teacher who is also on a reduced contract. They would structure their week to share the time in the classroom and also have time together in the classroom for the mentor to model teaching. The advantages of this arrangement are many including developing and supporting a brand new teacher through that tumultuous and

sometimes fatal first year and allowing the retiring teacher to use his/her wisdom and experience in the classroom and as a mentor while giving him/her the flexible schedule desired by many older teachers.

4. Solid teacher evaluation

There was a general feeling expressed by several of the interviewees that administrators were looking for them to fail so they could force them to leave and hire cheaper younger teachers. These were, of course, feelings and not factual, but perceptions and feelings do impact a school climate and the performance of older teachers. A remedy for this perception is a clear and transparent review and evaluation system that does allow an administrator to help ineffective teachers improve and if improvement does not happen, allow termination. If this system is unbiased and evaluates fairly all teachers, the feeling that older teachers are being targeted would be eliminated.

5. Post teaching career planning

Most of the interviewees shared that they had few if any conversations with others about retirement. Some had discussions about the financial issues surrounding retirement, but none had any conversations about second career planning or other life planning issues. As was discussed in the literature review section of this study, the encore career/second career movement among baby boomers is bringing new opportunities to this age group. There was little knowledge of these new approaches expressed by the interviewees. Schools could begin providing these learning opportunities for teachers approaching retirement not only as a service to the teachers,

but as a commitment to the greater good of the community. Conversations around these topics of post-career opportunities could also stimulate ideas of how to use older teachers in new and creative ways within the field of education.

6. Explore un-retiring options

Most of the interviewees, whether they were already retired from teaching or contemplating retirement, talked about being physically and/or mentally tired. As has been stated several times in this study, the physical and mental strains of teaching are immense. Thought should be given to allow a teacher to retire for a year or two, and then to re-employ them, perhaps in a part time or mentoring position. The teacher would be refreshed and refocused and the school would gain from getting an experienced veteran back in the system. Some have called this an encore “gap year”, modeled after the gap year some students take before entering college. Some principals have made it a priority to hire retired teachers who after a year of retirement decided they wanted to teach again in a different school or district. These teachers were refreshed, happy to be back and appreciative of the opportunity and their experience and wisdom were valued by their new colleagues. The old paradigm of retirement as a final step needs to be replaced by new language and new approaches. Perhaps the new vocabulary should use words such as refocusing and retooling as we look at new opportunities for re-entering the work force with different parameters.

Implications for Further Research

To enhance the body of knowledge on the specific topics of baby boom

teachers and their attitudes towards retirement, the following topics are recommended for further research. These topics will broaden the research from the specific cohort of baby boom teachers and their views on end of career decisions to the more general discussion of the advantage of an age balanced faculty and how K-12 education can support and encourage teachers to continue teaching longer into their career.

1. Further study on the impact of defined benefit pension plans vs. defined contribution plans on teacher retirement decisions. Are pension plans encouraging teachers to leave the profession at their prime? Would other retirement plans reward teachers more for longer service?
2. Further study on the academic advantages of a well balanced faculty age distribution.
3. Further study into the hiring of younger teachers as a cost saving measure. Factor in costs of hiring and poor retention rates may make mentoring programs using older teachers as well as other ways of keeping older teachers employed more cost competitive.
4. Further study on the impact of other professionals and second career teachers entering the teaching force.
5. Further study on second careers (encore careers) for educators. Because of the variety of skills necessary to be a successful teacher, are these skills transferable to the new world of encore careers?

Conclusion

This study attempted to answer questions about teachers from the baby boom

generation. It looked at what shaped this generation, how that shaping impacted their relationship to the workplace, and how that relationship impacts their decisions as to how and when to end their teaching career. It was based on the premise that good older teachers are of value in the classroom and that the increasing number of teachers leaving the profession at the beginning of their careers and the early retirement of effective baby boom teachers will cause a shortage of quality teachers. Recommendations were given for changes that the researcher felt could make a difference in the retention of effective baby boom teachers.

The results of the study were for the researcher much more than the data collected and the recommendations made. The study began with a quote from President Theodore Roosevelt: “Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” This quote took on added meaning as the research progressed. Through the literature studied and the interviews conducted, the researcher was brought face to face with important life questions that were not anticipated at the outset of this project. The focus on purpose and meaning in life and the place work and career play in that search for purpose became a dominant theme in this study. The twenty teachers that the researcher was privileged to interview shared in their own words how the good work of teaching had given them purpose, and that purpose was more important to them than money or status. Because these teachers had chosen a career with incredible meaning and purpose, the questions of what is next to fill this important

portion of life loomed large in the discussions.

Viktor Frankl, in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Frankl, 1939), wrote about his experiences as a prisoner in a German WWII concentration camp. His writings explored the question of why some prisoners were able to survive the horrible ordeal while others under the same conditions did not survive. According to Frankl, the importance of purpose, of having something left to accomplish in life, was the main component in their survival. "Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life, no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on." (Frankl, 1939, p. 121) For these 20 teachers, their careers had filled them with a purpose to carry on. They also understood, however, that the purpose they felt as teachers needed to be replaced with new purpose for them to carry on and make a difference in their post teaching life.

The definition of retirement, according to the New Oxford American Dictionary, is the action or fact of leaving one's job and ceasing to work. This definition, as was discovered through these interviews, no longer fits with today's world of career and work. Retirement, as defined by the dictionary, will happen one day to all who work. But these teachers who are contemplating or have ended their teaching careers are not ending work. Some will choose to end their teaching careers earlier in life to pursue other passions, others will continue to work in their chosen career as long as they are able while others will take some time to rest and refocus and then strike out in new directions. These teachers, representatives of the large cohort of baby boom teachers, will continue to

contribute to the greater good. As an educator who has been privileged to work with teachers in an administrative role, this researcher has always been in awe of the wide range of skills one must have to be a successful teacher. Our country and our world needs these gifted people to continue to do good work as long as possible. It is hoped that this dissertation in some way will stimulate the conversation of encouraging talented teachers to continue to work hard at work worth doing. There is significant work still left to do.

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APPENDIX A
Major Events and Statistics-1940's-1980's

Major Events and Statistics-1940's

U.S. Population 1940 132,122,000

23.2 % of 1940 population involved in farming

Life expectancy: men 60.8 years, women 68.2 years

1941 Pearl Harbor attacked

1943 Polio epidemic in the U.S.

1945 Atomic bomb dropped on Japan- end of WWII

1946 Dr. Spock publishes his book: *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*

Baby boom begins- Troops return from Europe and Pacific war,

Birthrates jump 25% over 1945.

1947 Red Scare-fear of communism

Beginning of cold war-blacklisting of suspected communists

Important inventions of the 1940's: DDT, DNA isolated, Jet airplanes, LP records,
television sales skyrocket, McDonalds-fast food restaurants

Major Events and Statistics -1950's

U.S. Population 1950 149,188,000

15.3 % of 1950 population involved in farming

Life expectancy 1950: men 65.6 years women 71.1 years

1950 Korean War begins

1952 Polio epidemic expands

1952 Eisenhower elected president

1953 Korean War ends- polio vaccine developed

1954 Supreme Court rules racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional

1957 Russian Sputnik is launched

1959 Alaska and Hawaii become the 49th and 50th states

Important inventions of the 1950's: hydrogen bomb, color t.v., t.v. dinners, Salk vaccine, open heart surgery, Pocket-size transistor radio, stereo records

Major Events and Statistics 1960's

U.S. Population 1960 177,830,000

8.7% of 1960 population involved in farming

Life expectancy: men 66.6 years, women 73.1 years

- 1960 John F. Kennedy elected president
- 1961 Alan Shepard- first American in space
- 1962 Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba
- 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis
- 1963 Advisor troops sent to Viet Nam
- 1963 Martin Luther King "I have a Dream speech"
- 1963 President Kennedy assassinated in Dallas
- 1965 First combat troops sent to Viet Nam
- 1965 Watts riots, followed by riots in Detroit and New Jersey
- 1965 First Gen X'ers born
- 1968 Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy assassinated
- 1968 Nixon elected president
- 1969 Neil Armstrong first man to walk on moon.

1969 Woodstock

Important inventions of the 1960's: Oral contraceptives, lasers, aluminum cans, digital displays, first human lung, heart, liver, and pancreas transplant, integrated circuits

Major Events and Statistics 1970's

U.S. population 1970 204,879,000

4.8 % of 1970 population involved in farming

Life Expectancy: men 67.1 years, women 74.7 years

1970 First Earth Day celebration

1971 Voting age lowered to 18

1972 Last U.S. troops leave Vietnam-bombing of North Vietnam continues

1972 Watergate break-ins, Nixon re-elected

1973 Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns- Gerald Ford appointed V.P.

1974 Nixon resigns, Gerald Ford becomes president, pardons Nixon

1975 American involvement in Vietnam officially ends

1979 American hostages taken in Iran

New Inventions of the 1970's: Floppy disks, microprocessor, space probes, genetic engineering, pocket calculators, CAT scanners, first personal computers for home

use, test-tube baby, minicams, 747's

Major Events and Statistics 1980's

U.S. population 1980 227,225,000

3.4% of 1980 population involved in farming

Life Expectancy: men 70 years, women 77.4 years

1980 Ronald Regan wins presidential election

1981 President Regan wounded by gunman

1982 Equal Rights Amendment fails ratification

1983 First American women astronaut in space-Sally Ride

1984 First women U.S. vice presidential candidate-Geraldine Ferraro

1986 Space Shuttle Challenger explodes killing seven astronauts

1988 Pan Am 747 explodes by terrorist bomb over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all
259 people on board

1988 George H. Bush elected president

Important inventions of the 1980's: Hepatitis B vaccine, MS Dos, IBM PC, Apple

Lisa, Apple Macintosh, CD Rom, Windows software program, High temperature

super conductors, digital cellular phones, Doppler radar

(Hicks 1999) (Mitchel, 1998)

APPENDIX B

Ten steps to create a new life stage according to Marc Freedman

1. Think Differently

We must shake loose dead ideas and old patterns that inhibit our ability to think imaginatively about this period between mid-life and old age.

2. Create the Category

A new definition of success, a new language to establish the integrity of this new stage

3. A Gap Year for Grownups

A time for reflection, retooling, renewal, redirection

4. Highest Education

A blending of vocational preparation, personal transformation, and intellectual stimulation

5. National Service- a chance to give back, to have an adventure, to grow
6. Elevate Encore Careers-rethinking definition of work- change from freedom from work to freedom to work
7. Revamp HR policies- part-time, flex-time, part year, end age discrimination in hiring
8. Individual Purpose Accounts- allow people to save tax free for gap year expenses and other re-tooling expenses.
9. An Encore Bill- re-align social security to encourage new ways of employment
10. Get organized- These changes will not happen without people getting involved and making it happen

(Freedman, 2011, p.135)

Appendix C
Final Interview Transcripts

Interview #1

Female age 64- 22 years in teaching- retired 2013- last position 4th grade public school.

I just retired- this was my last year...I taught for two years on an Native American reservation, then I worked in a pre school.....then I had kids...then I went back to teaching in California and that is where I have been until this June.

I feel like I was more effective now then I have ever been....I learned so much, inservices, classwork, new colleagues...I adapted what they were doing, I think I kept growing, I was always enthusiastic.... I really worked hard

Why am I leavingwell, there are lots of changes right now that I am not excited about. Too much structure, can't be creative..... I'm not saying all the changes were bad, but there were just so many of them....they just keep on coming.....and I'm still healthy and I want to try something else for awhile like peace corps.....My husband and I have had this dream of going in the peace corp when we retire....we should do it now when we are healthy.

If there were not so many changes.....if I could have used my fun units that I could not teach any more because of the standards....at the beginning I could do it how I wanted and you were free how you did it, but now the creativity is gone. I think I possibly would have stayed.....but I do have a lot of things I want to do.

I've mentored a lot of teachers. 4th grade in our school is especially hard year to teach because so many new standards kick in....I've been the lead teacher for years so we always have a new person or two on our team.

I considered being in a program where you mentor new teachers.....they have 16 teachers under your supervision. New Teacher Project.....

J.G. is the over 60 teacher that I think is the best....he seems to have a lot of fun teaching....he has kept a lot of the creativity into his teaching despite the standards. He would have loved to retire this year, but he can't. He really enjoys the students

My husband encouraged/supported me since we are going on an adventure together. I worked 10 hours at school and at least 2 hours at home plus 4 on Saturdays.....it really consumes you..... I loved my job, but it was time to retire....time to try something new.

Being in the peace corp impacted my decision....we figured at our age if we wanted to do something else we needed to retire now. Yes, that was my bucket list.

I'm glad I chose to be a teacher. I wish it had not been so consuming, but it was a great community to be a part of. I have really enjoyed the teaching community I have been with.

Interview #2

Male, age 63, 40 years of teaching, retired in 2013, last teaching position was 4th grade in public school.

My last teaching position was at Meadowbrook elementary in Hopkins. I left Minneapolis schools after 32 years and then went to the Hopkins schools. I taught 40 years, 32 in Minneapolis and 8 in Hopkins. My last few years I taught 4th grade, but I have taught 4th, 5th and 6th grade.

I left Minneapolis because I had a young daughter and I was recruited to Hopkins. I could get my pension from Minneapolis schools and then go to Hopkins and get a salary, so I did some double dipping..... I didn't feel like I was ready to retire from Minneapolis,....I was 55.....so I qualified for retirement from Minneapolis and I could move on.

I felt like I was very effective in the classroom, and why not reap some of the financial benefits? I worked hard. I had the best of both worlds. I was doing what I

liked to do and I was getting financially compensated for what I was doing. It was a good thing.

I started teaching in 1973....I still remember the first year of teaching. My first year was at Irving elementary in Mpls. The school is no longer there, in the south area of Minneapolis. We had a high population of American Indians.....a mix of Afro Americans, Indians, and European Americans.....I was there for three years, then the school merged with Anderson elementary and I moved into Anderson in 1976. I was at Anderson from 76 to 1992-93 school year then to another Minneapolis schoolthen to Hopkins for 8 years.

Why did I retire? One of my colleagues just asked me that. I told her I had been teaching 40 years and I felt after a certain amount of years I felt I didn't want to be a teacher that was obsolete and ineffective. My students' parents said I was not that, but I did not want to become that way. I remember when I was teaching and I saw teachers who were there too long and I said I did not want to be one of those. I wanted to go out with people thinking good thoughts about me. I wanted to go out on top of my game....I wanted to feel good about myself. I wanted to enjoy my retirement. I didn't want teaching to become a pain, something difficult to do. I have seen teachers who were like that. I enjoyed getting up in the morning and going to work everyday. I wanted to keep that in my mind.

Was there anything that the school could have done to keep you teaching longer?

No, I think I had decided my time had come. I was fortunate for the last 8 years to be in an excellent school with wonderful teammates, excellent students, good principal, great students and parents. I promised myself that I would leave on a positive note...I didn't want to dread the last few years of teaching and I didn't...I didn't want my last memory to be negative.

I wanted to make it to 40 years of teaching ...a nice round number. About 3 years before I retired I promised myself if I could make it comfortably to 40 without any bumps in the road I would do that. Things worked out...I feel fortunate it worked out that way.

Do you feel you are as effective as you were...say 20 years ago?

Yes! No question...no question... I judge that by the feedback I was getting from parents, students, colleagues. I don't want to pat myself on the back. I always took a self inventory of how I was doing...You are always going to have some students you don't reach, but all my students and parents were very positive.

I think some of my successes were those athletic juices. I always felt that those athletic skills, that competitive edge, carried through to other parts of my life...not accepting mediocracy but putting forth everything I had into teaching. If something didn't work I would try something else...I kept my eyes and ears open to try and improve on what I was doing, and I think I was fairly successful in what I was doing. I had pride in what I was doing. I enjoyed it. I didn't want to just take up space. I took me three years to get used to getting paid for teaching. I'm getting paid for

something I enjoy doing. I had buddies in other occupations who were miserable...they were just doing it to get paid.

Some of the new standards and technology did stretch me....overwhelm me.....but I promised to myself that if I was going to stay in this job I had to keep up. I didn't want anyone to think I wasn't doing my job. There were a lot of changes in my job and it wasn't easy to keep up, but I had to and I did. Each year it gets a little bit more difficult. But I did not leave because of these changes. I left on top of my game.

My summer jobs were good....I did a variety of things....I enjoyed them, a security guard, a summer school teacher, it was a good break, but one summer I took the summer off which was a mistake because I never worked another summer again. Big mistake....taking the summer off was really nice

The best teacher I knew over 50...what set them apart was the relationships they built with their kids and the energy they put forth in their classroom. They knew what was important. Kids need to buy into what is happening in the classroom...the effective teachers get the students to buy in...the older teachers who stick out in my mind somehow get those students to buy in because of the relationship they build. A pat on the back, attending a game or a recital....makes a difference.

As an older teacher I learned that showing a genuine interest in a child can make a difference in the classroom. Showing an interest in what they are doing outside of school I was the first male teacher most of them had, so when I showed up to an

activity it made a huge difference, and I didn't do it just for the kid, I really was interested and it was really fun and the parents really appreciated it as well when you showed interest in their child.

Teaching was a great choice for me....no question....if I had to do it over again, I would go right back to teaching. Teachers are underpaid, but the feeling you get reaching an individual...helping them fulfill their goal of being a successful adult, is second to none. I feel really blessed to be in that position. I have teachers who I look back at and say they were an integral part of my upbringing....to be a part of some students life like that is amazing, I wanted to do the same things for my students.

We've all had good teachers and bad teachers....I looked at all my good teachers and tried to convey that to my students. I looked at the negatives and said I don't want to expose my students to that.

On the downside, I always got difficult kids. My last year I did not have an easy class. I had several boys who were very challenging. I had to work harder with those boys. My wife said, it's a good idea to have not such a great class the last year of teaching so you wont have regrets in leaving. It was not easy, but my career was so positive that I was able to do fairly well with that class...it stretched me more in the discipline area.

I talked to my brother who was a teacher and my wife about retirement. My colleagues kept saying I wasn't ready, but I had made up my mind

Do you have any big plans in retirement? Any bucket list things?

No, I don't I am just enjoying life. I'm providing for my family in a different way.

I'm taking care of the home stuff, cooking and cleaning....my primary goal is to get my daughter ready and into college. I'm providing in other ways now. The first week back to school I felt okay.....I got a glimpse of retirement in summer.....so it wasn't so bad. When I knew the end was near, I felt I could endure and handle it.

The first year I am not going to commit to a lot of things outside the home. I plan on doing some mentoring and volunteering, but I'll give it some time to settle down.

Interview #3

Female- age 65- Retired 8 years ago- 2005-Last teaching position – first grade public school- taught 20 years.

Since retirement I have been doing evaluation work for the district on a part time basis

I've been teaching 20 years- taught gifted and talented for a while, also did some home school/hospital teaching.....then I got into this district and I have been here ever since.

I now assess second language learners....making sure they are making progress in their second language learning. I enjoy it except for getting up early....it is \$30/hr which is more that I get subbing but less then a full time position. I get to be one on one with kids.....great conversations with kids.....I like it. I did it 4 months in the past.....this year I'm only doing it 2 months

I think I was a better teacher when I was at the end of my career.....I took classes, I kept learning.....I learned a lot about technology....I felt I was 1000 times better then when I started.

I quit because of several things.....some deaths in the family. When 9/11 happened I began thinking life was short and I better enjoy it. Also, the district did this dumb thing....they forced us to get certified in second language learning.....we had only one kid in our school who was a second language learner, but they made us get licensed.

I also had a split contract with another women.....my teaching partner got a divorce and had to have a full time job....only one left, so I let her have it.

I really miss working in the classroom....I miss my families....but I don't miss the politics of teaching. California has gotten so much worse with standards...forced to do testing interferes with what I wanted to do in the classroom. Regimentation took away creativity. Became tedious. Politics got overwhelming.

I was a master teacher...I mentored other teachers. You get a college student who observes you, then you turn classroom over.....a master teacher gets student teachers in classroom. Really frustrated that my student teachers who were male would always get the jobs.....even when they were not good. I'd give them bad recommendations and they would still get a job.

I knew a lot of good teachers over 50.....the one I remember most was a role model....always enthusiastic, always changing her curriculum...always willing and excited to try something new.....open minded.

My husband said I was working way too hard for the money I was making.....he advised me to quit. He said that even though I had a split contract, I still worked full time.

If I would have known I would have worked with my husband.....I would never have quit. (that was a joke.....she became a receptionist at her husband's dental office for a while and hated it)

I didn't have anything I really wanted to do when I retired.

I did enjoy being a teacher.....choices were limited when I was in college, but I chose teaching and it was a good fit. Personal, creative, summers off to be with my own kids.....it worked for me.

Interview #4

Male, age 68- last full time position was in 2009- third grade public school. Total years of teaching 42

still subbing and taking care of grand kids.-

Did a couple of long term sub jobs including one for my daughter, who was on a maternity leave for ½ year. I want to keep doing it until I can't keep walking up the stairs

My career journey. Got a B.A. from Stanford 1968, and a Masters from Stanford 1967-1968 (internship, Blackford High School, San Jose, California, 9th grade Social Studies.

From 1968-69 I taught 10th Grade English, Westbury High, Westbury, NY

And then 1969-71 I went to Alaska and taught at the Covenant High School,

Unalakleet, Alaska, grades 9-12, English, Social Studies, Science, P.E.

1971-79 I taught at Rolling Hills Middle School, Los Gatos, CA. Social Studies & English. I Developed new humanities curriculum for classes: "Heroes and

Heroines"... and "Great People in History" (Campbell S.D.)

1979-2008 Aromas-San Juan school district in Watsonville, Ca. .: grades 4-8,
Humanities (English/History) grade 8... Began writing historical plays for classes,
later published by J.Weston Walch Publishers (2 U.S. History & 3 World History

2008-2009 Twin Lakes Christian School, Aptos, CA Grade 3

2009- Substitute teacher: Twin Lakes Christian School & Baymonte Christian
School, Scotts Valley

My wife figured out that the pension is going to be pretty much the same whether I
kept teaching or not so it didn't seem to make a lot of sense to continue. I also had a
very bad situation with the administration, it was not enjoyable

But right after I retired I got a position in the third grade at a Christian school and I
thoroughly enjoy that I wish I could've continued but they had financial issues and so
they did some consolidating of classes. I was getting a little weary of the
commute... that was draining.

I was kind of getting burned out by teaching in the public schools and the political
correctness of it didn't allow me to do what I wanted to do. Obviously, you really
couldn't talk about your faith and there are times that you really need to do that for
example Two police officers that were killed in Santa Cruz and I was substituting at
twin Lakes Christian school and we stopped and we prayed about it and we prayed
for the families and we talked about how tragic it was..... and you just can't do that

in my old school. I could talk about it in my old school but we certainly couldn't pray for the family. If someone asked me if I was a Christian I could tell them but I certainly couldn't bring that up so that was getting very limiting for me.

There was so much emphasis on standardized testing ...everything was so prescriptive.....textbooks were like cookbooks....you had to follow everything as in a receipt.....standardized tests.. that was getting very tiring as well it took a lot of energy to do that and a lot more paperwork. It really took the fun out of teaching. The mandates of the textbooks also are getting very limited. It is very prescriptive. They read more and more like a cookbook.. do this do that it took a lot of the creativity out of it for me it's unreasonable and if it's boring for me just think how it is for the students

Yes I did do a little bit of mentoring... one really positive experience with a gentleman, he was a former youth pastor and had some very unique talents in the arts area and that was a very enjoyable experience for both of us

You know sad to say when you asked me about older teachers that stick out in my mind I don't have a lot of because it seems like they were always getting out of education. My heroes were always going to be doing different things when I got to know them. The ones that I remember I don't remember by name but I remember they

seem to enjoy teaching and they knew what they were doing they had a confidence about them that I really admired and looked up to .

Yes , my wife gave me some advice. she did our finances and she advised me about the financial implications of keeping teaching versus stopping and she knew that I was not real happy in my position I like the kids but the political correctness of all of it was getting me down there's no question about that

I like to teach I had no tasks I wanted to do more I really do like to teach I wanted to stay in teaching I wanted to perhaps do some more writing on my own but I wanted to be in the classroom. I just love teaching

Yes I'm glad I was a teacher I never regretted it for one minute. Of course there are some things you want to take back to do differently but now I'm glad I chose to be a teacher

Yes- I am a better teacher now then I was at the beginning. One of the things that as an experienced teacher you do is you learn from mistakes. I realized as I look at younger teachers that my concerns is that they have such a concern about whether their students like them or not... you really do have to go beyond that . there's so many more important things to worry about.

I really say I am much more patient... I accept kids more.... I don't get upset... all those things I've learned through my years of teaching. The kids don't get their

homework and you know, yeah you want them to get it in but you realize that life is more than your assignment. I just don't find myself getting as uptight as I usedI'm just much more patient and much more understand. I have gained wisdom.

I've learned that teaching is more like baseball than football. In football you have a game once a week and you can agonize if you lose. You beat yourself up. Baseball is again every day and when you make a mistake one day you realize that tomorrow will be there again and let's see if I can do a better job tomorrow that's comes with experience this important lesson tomorrow is another day.

If you win two out of three games you are doing great.....you don't get a hit every time up to bat.

School districts should come up with part time jobs.....not just teaching....there is so much to do and we have so much to give. Job share with a new teacher.....part time stuff. Maybe I don't have to go to faculty meetings.....faculty meetings drive me nuts...principals forget what teachers have been through during the day.

Interview #5

Male- Age 60 -Currently teaching 5th grade in public schools- San Lorenzo public schools-just finished my 38th year

I was a principal for a few years, but have been a teacher except for those 5 years

After all the teacher reductions, I was 1st teacher hired in district in 15 years

I'm planning on teaching two more years.....40 years.

My journey was that I started teaching in the public schools, left to become an administrator in a private Christian school, then when the district started hiring again I went back to the classroom in a public school.

Am I as effective now as when I was in 40's---YES, but teaching is different now then it was back then. Relationship wise, and this is what teaching is all about.... Curriculum you can always learn, but it is the relationship piece that really matters...allows kids to learn.....I think I am more effective with that....I think my age has really helped that. The only thing that I think is different is my energy level...when I was in my 40s I was not as tired as I am now in the evening, and that

precludes me from doing some things I did in the past, but as far as stuff in the classroom I think I am as effective, but I do not necessarily do all that I did in the past. Yes, I think I am better....my experience helps me a lot.

New teachers feel they have to follow all the rules...do all that you are supposed to do, and I don't think that is always necessary or even the best thing. An experienced teacher is stronger at making decisions about what is important.....this is important and this is not.

Why am I retiring at 62? 1. My energy level, I am really tired at the end of the school year.....physically beat up..... I do exercise and get plenty of sleep, but it is a physically demanding job.... and my wife is retiring this year so that is another reason. The California retirement system has certain break points where it is financially reasonable to retire. Age 62 is one and teaching 40 years is another....so financially this is a good point to retire. I also love to do other things so there are things I want to do that I have not been able to do....I love traveling, I love biking, I love being with my grandkids.....

What would keep me teaching.....If I could reduce my hours. This is what I would like to do, when people my age get to retirement age, new teachers coming in....its a really hard job, you come out of school with not a lot of practical experience, I would love to see a person like me be able to mentor a new person right out of college in the classroom.....they work part time, I work part time.....maybe 70/30 something like that..... then the next year 50/50 the third year 30/70....4th year they are on their own. What I feel badly about is all the knowledge, all the experience, all the tricks of

the trade, will basically stop at one point in time.....one day it will just stop. But if you could reduce your work hours and the other person increase their work hours and you could do this together....that would keep me working. They actually do that in New Zealand (where my kids live)...a lot of jobs do that.

I feel sad.....I watched Judy retire.....she unloaded all of her stuff to a new teacher.....it would have been so beneficial if she could have worked together with that new person.....it really is sad to lose all of that experience just like that. In California they have a way to share a contract, but it is not used very much. You have to get special approval.....but if it were made easy to transfer all your experience in two years that would be great.

I have had experience mentoring new teachers. I have worked with new people coming in. Its been a good experience, but it is always on top of your normal 10 hour day.....One year I met with all the teachers once a week.....I really enjoyed that. We could share problems and solutions.

The best teacher over 50 that I've worked with?? Sally- laid back, easy going, highly effective, I learned a lot from her on how to relax and stay calm...There is a person at our school right now named Lisa, Highly effective in the classroom and knows curriculum.

My mom and dad were both teachers.....they both said retire as soon as you can.....they loved life and loved retirement.....they were with my kids a lot.

The other person is Dick....who says don't retire, we need people like you to hang in there.

A significant task or compelling reason to stop.....spend time with my grandkids. I am sort of patterning my life on my parents. They spent a great amount of time with our kids. We have done some mission work.....my church now has a disaster response mission where they go to places that have short time need.....we may end up doing something like that. We talked about going to New Zeland for ½ a year to be with our kid.....

Teaching has been a good choice for me.....I really enjoy working with kids. In retrospect I didn't know what I wanted to do....I went to college to stay out of the army....no clear directive.....my kids on the other hand researched colleges and traveled all over to check out options. Their options were wide, my seemed very narrow. I wish I could have kept my options open a little wider, but this career has worked out for me. Teaching is a hard job.....I may have done something different.....summer is necessary to recharge.....

Interview #6

Female, age 62, was a principal for a few years but was mainly and English teacher in 6-8 school; I've been in education a total of 35 years...this is my second year of retirement.

I could not get a job right out of college. My husband was in med school so I did not teach the first 1 ½ years....then a long term sub position....then a one year position up north, then two years at centennial high school , then two years at Minnehaha, then I did communication consulting for 5 years....then Minnehaha Middle School for 16 years, then I got my administrative degree....then I was a charter school director for 2 years and a principal/teacher for six in a Lutheran school.

I think I am done with education in the school setting....part of that has to do with my life outside of education....but I have decided there are ways I can use what I learned in education outside of the school.....when I left teaching I left in part out of frustration with administration....I wish I would have done it sooner.....and when I left administration at my last school I did not plan on it being permanent....I left because the situation I was in I couldn't advocate for my teachers the way I needed to.

What could have been changed to keep you going longer? I was only in public education for five years...in public education something needs to be done to acknowledge, celebrate teachers' creativity and control. As an administrator it really had to do with the sphere of influence.....how much influence can you have...I felt I did not have the sphere of influence enough to do what I wanted to do. Finding ways to have more influence would have been important

As I look at teachers I am enamored by the stuff coming out of Finland.....I think we need to do more to demand excellence in teaching and not just in test scores.....the way they pay teachers, the way they respect teachers.

I had a teacher who came to me when I was a principal and she was in tears letting me know that she was doing something different than the curriculum guide, and I said, you are telling me this because why? Because we are supposed to follow it by the book.....

It is that sense of following it by the book.....the lack of creativity and freedom.

I feel I was a better educator now than 20 years ago....much more insight into families and parents. How to engage parents positively and meaningfully. I didn't have those skills when I was younger.

Also, being much more open to doing new things, new ideas, not just what I was taught in college...I think you become more and more effective as long as you are open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.

I've known some darn good teachers in their 50's and 60's.....they don't do the things that are not important.

What I see some schools doing with mentoring programs is that they are pulling the best teachers out of the classroom to mentor....I like the idea of job sharing with an experienced teacher because it keeps them in the classroom.

I did not leave because I had a bucket list or something that was pushing me to leave. At the time it was more frustration over what I couldn't do.....it was not that I had some big things I needed to do.. Now, after I have left, I have some things I really want to do, but at the time it was more of this frustration of what I couldn't do. I felt like education was a great vocation and I loved it, but it was the frustration of not being able to contribute the way I wanted to.

I have talked to a lot of people about whether or not to continue in education- my family issues currently are a driver for me to not go back.

Yes, education was a good career move for me. When I left teaching the first time I explored other options before I pursued administration and I found the unique atmosphere of a school as a place to work....you just can't beat it. Your ability to work together.....when a school is working well you just can't beat it.....teachers

feed off each other....kids bring energy....its a great place to be. Other jobs sounded interesting, but when you looked at them closely teaching was great. Being in a well functioning school is a gift.

Interview #7

Male Age 63- Currently I teach AP calculus, statistics, and computer science. I have been at my school for 30 years and have taught for almost 40. I have no retirement plans.....would like to keep teaching as long as I am effective.

My career journey....taught in a rural Illinois high school for two years, then moved to Denmark for 6 years, then 30 years at my current school....I had one sabbatical year when I returned to Denmark.

I think a lot of teachers leave teaching in their 50's because of the rule of 90, and if you can stop working and make almost the same amount of money, why not. I had a colleague at the U who confirmed that...That is why he left

Where I work I do not have that option, plus, when we went overseas we knew that would throw a wrench into retirement....so, I stay in it because it is a job and I enjoy doing it and I get a lot of satisfaction from it and even if I could retire, I'm not sure I would....I just don't know. I did rehearse last summer because I did not work....I really enjoyed it. Right now my plan is to keep working until I'm 70. I make enough money so I can afford to travel...I only work 9 months a year. When you add those

things plus I enjoy what I do...it is sort of a win-win all the way around. And I chose 70 because social security, assuming it will still exist, it almost doubles between 66 and 70....so that makes that a nice target as well.

What would cause you to leave teaching now....is there anything.....yes, I think if I was told I can no longer teach the classes that I teach...I may be forced to do something else, but I do not picture that happening.....I've never really thought of that. I'm well aware that I have a good situation...I don't have any war stories. I have been treated like a professional, and that is why I have stayed where I am even though I make less money....I have the autonomy to do my job

I am a better teacher now than I was....I better be.....because the minute I feel I am less effective is the minute I should get out.....I have gone to conferences, talked to colleagues, always trying to improve, the day you stop improving is the day you should not do it anymore. The young guys in their 20's and 30's have young families...they are tied up at night, they can't put the time in that I now can....But, having said that, we both have experienced teachers who have hung on a lot longer than they should have.

To do the job right you have to put in the time....I expect that. I'm trying to keep in shape and physically take care of myself.

I can think of one teacher over 50- he is dead now- and he retired at 58 but he kept teaching at the U...taught adjunct classes in college, ump-d-ump at the u....the thing

that always impressed me about him was his positive approach to life. Life is there to live....live it full....kids loved him even though he was older.

My mother always said I should not be a teacher...I need to make more money, she always thought I should be doing something that I make more money, so we would always argue about that. I told her I liked what I do and that was important. It took my mom to turn 90 to understand that job satisfaction is important.

If I had unlimited funds I would retire tomorrow because I would love to do more traveling, but since I don't, I don't have a bucket list. I travel a lot anyway even though I work, the day my power ball comes through we would do some first class traveling, but then after that I would go to Macalaster and teach a class or two. I have the best of all possible worlds. I talk to people about why they retire and they say I'd like some time off....well, I have time off. They say they want to do some traveling, well, I do traveling and I do so sometimes as part of my job. They say they'd like to do something meaningful....well, I am doing something meaningful. If I could cut out my overload and my evening work, I would feel like I am half retired.

Teaching was a good choice for me. I had to make a conscious choice....in the 70's with the birth of the computer industry, anybody who could add two numbers had an opportunity to work in that industry, so I did have offers.. the money would have been better, but sitting in a cubicle all day and the insecurity of not knowing if your job will be there Monday,...I was in engineering, but I chose teaching. The whole corporate culture thing was not for me. I had to make a decision in Denmark whether

to return here or take an industry job in Denmark...I chose to return and be a teacher.
It was the right choice for me and for my family.

Now that my kids are gone, I could maybe return to Denmark....it was a great
lifestyle.

Interview #8

Female- Age 62- Last teaching position 4th grade at Lake Harriet School
retired when I was 60, Taught 38 years. I now work part time at the Hmong
Academy as test coordinator

I went to the U of M.....declared my major my junior year.....

I remember when I made my decision....went out to coffee and a friend said, ok girls,
what are you going to do when you graduate,.....I said I could be a teacher because I
taught Sunday school and I think I was good at it.... When I graduated, I knew what I
was going to do.....it was kind of secure, laid out, for me....I liked that...I taught 1st
grade at Hale school in Minneapolis.....had very aggressive parents.....I went to
principal and asked her what I should do because I had all of these parents
calling.....she said, invite them in and put them to work.. and I did.....and I think I
learned to appreciate parents from the beginning and it was because of Gladys....I
loved teaching 1st grade. But I said am I going to do this the rest of my life?....this
was sort of the hippy era.....the women I taught with had been there 10 years.....10
years, I thought how crazy. I resigned..... So I ended up taking a little leave, so I

started my own business crocheting hats.....went to Mexico.....but I began to realize that I needed more structure..... I ended up getting a teaching job in St.Paul. that's where I learned how to discipline a classroom. I had three students suspended and the principal said to me..... there are teachers in this building who could discipline that classroom.....you figure it out...kind of shamed me....But, I learned how to discipline.....

Went back to school, got my special education certificate, job shared a bit, finally got into Lake Harriett school, thought I died and went to heaven.....I was so pumped.

I loved working with teachers.....collaborating with teachers, teaching a unit and then afterwards talking to teachers about how to do it better. I loved to created an atmosphere in my room that was safe, that was fun, a little competition.....

Why did I retire if I loved it so.. because every year instead of getting easier, it became more difficult, and of course I brought that on myself, ...but so did the district....now we are doing a new math curriculum now a new reading curriculum, now we are going to learn how to use the active board.....and living a mile from school, it seemed like I was always there. I burned out. For two years I thought I was going to retire, but the last August the first day of teachers workshop I looked around and I thought, oh my gosh, what did I sign up for....I knew I couldn't do it,

and I didn't tell anyone including my husband...until November.....then I said this is it.....you know when you know....I was burning out.

So, what can be done to keep people like me teaching?

Class size....I had 34 kids my last four years, that creates a ton more work. Also the testing requirements that came down to us....and now you can't read aloud after recess unless you tie it into this goal and this purpose.....and gone are the days when you could teach the Iditarod and tie it into math and English.....I was put in a regiment, it was killing creativity.....can I still knit.....can I still do stain glass windows....thats me.....

But I will say that I was the best reading teacher I had ever been.....so it did work because of what they gave me..... but when I left teaching I realized how creative it was.....that was my creative outlet.....

I think I was as good a teacher as I ever was in my last few years.....there were several older teachers who were disgusting....one said she would never go on another field trip and always called in sick on field trips.....But it is hard....too many meetings.....

.....

I can think of several teachers over 50 that are really good.....that are still there even though she has 36 kids in her class.....she is good, but so ready to be done...

Any advise on retirement? It is a very personal thing.....all kinds of opinions.....in the end it was totally me.....looking around at the staff meeting thinking why did I do it.....I thought I have to muster up....I can remember MEA and how happy I was to have made it. I tell people...."you will know" and trust me, I knew when it was time.

Did you have things you wanted to accomplish at retirement....No, I thought I would always have projects....I did not have a bucket list.....no plan.....I think it would be a good idea to have one.....If I had a plan, I may not be working part time....

I thought, if I get a job it will be so different from teaching.....people say why don't you volunteer.....I felt half of my job was volunteering.....

Yes, I probably will end up volunteering.....

I had 3 student teachers, two were bombs, the final one was great.....I mentored in other ways.....I helped a neighbor.....a kid just hung out with me in the classroom, he is now on the principal track.....But, I just wanted to teach.....mentoring meant more time and energy.....I just loved to teach.

I am now eager to share.....at my part time testing position I continually talk to the teachers about ideas that I had.....here is what I did for mothers day....etc.....My stuff is still in the basement.....I'd love to use it.....love to share it.....

Yes....I loved my job

Interview #9

Female-Age 60 – currently teaching art in private middle school-

17 years in the classroom I never wanted to be a teacher- I wanted to be a farmer or marry a farmer. I tried to be an art student at St. Cloud state.....most of my instructors were stoned. I met my future husband.....talked to my sister....she said I should be a teacher and so I became one....and it has kept me alive, because I could have made some terrible choices but I am a good middle school teacher and I have good things to say to middle schoolers.

I subbed in Marshall Minnesota and then we moved to the cities and I got a job teaching math and science to 6th and 7th graders at a Catholic School...I had six preps a day and we dissected pigs and had chickens in our room and one time we had a bottle of wine in the teachers lounge and we went there after school to have a “bump”

I had no intention of working in a faith -based school, but I guess the universe had different plans for me. After that school closed I worked retail for a year and that was really gross...I hated it..... then I subbed in public schools but it was so hard....kids lives were so terrible....I told my husband if I didn't quit I was going to get stomach

cancer from all the stress. And then I got involved in the school that my boys went to....Minnehaha Academy....and they opened a new campus in Bloomington and I got the job as a part time elementary art teacher at that campus and eventually the middle school job opened at the south campus and I got the job.

I always thought that I would teach till I was 66 and you would be the principal because it was so much fun....but that changed and the last few years have been really hard.....a lot of hardships.....it really wore me down. And as I approached 60 I didn't realize how hard it was physically and also this big emotional part seems to have taken its toll so the retirement age has gotten closer to 60 all the time.

The reasons I would leave teaching is that I have become irrelevant.....my ideas and priorities were not being listened to. Our meetings were so focused on technology and that is something I do not respect.....I believe there is a place for me somewhere....where there is respect for paper and pencil....I need to find that place.....I would leave teaching because of the increased use of technology....it hasn't encroached on my art world yet, but I see it coming....you don't do studio art with technology. Graphite in a machine is not real....it is real in a pencil. There is something about the tactile stuff I teach. There is also a time and speed element. It really bothers me how much time I have to spend on the computer....administrative stuff....answering emails.....I have a husband and wife....they both emailed me from

their accounts....waste of my time....its the little things like that that get you down and make you grouchy.

Kids are still signing up for art....they find me to be their non alcoholic martini....a break in their grueling day.....I stay in teaching because I absolutely love the kids. I love what they say....how they think.....I am so curious how they turn out....its fun....so many times I want to say to my kids.....how are you going to live your day....what are the choices you will make.... A kid came to me the other day....he was crying....said they changed his medication and he blew an assignment and I hit my head on the locker, and I said to him.....”sounds like you need a beer and a cigar”. And he goes...”how about a non alcoholic beer and an electronic cigar” I told him don’t quit on me....you have to get through 7th grade....it sucks sometime, but you’ve got to get through it. Talking with these kids is so much fun....

I really don’t pay attention to the standards.....I really do my own thing. That’s the great part of where I teach....I write on the board “whats the point”....and we talk about elements of design... if they are not afraid to try new things.....

Are you as effective as you were in younger years?

I’d say no....I’m tired, I don’t have the energy. That’s why a teacher needs to know when to get off the stage. No, I’m coming to my end, I can feel it. But one of the

things I have thought of is team teaching with someone....I still have control of the product but they would be willing to come in a few days a week.

I do believe that we have to have age diverse faculties just like other groups.

I feel I have learned the concept of grace through my teaching years. I didn't grow up with grace in my family, but I have learned grace through teaching with good people.

I have learned to put the velvet hammer down.

Respect for slowing down would help me stay in teaching longer....we don't have time to really think about that because we have to move on to the next thing.

The teacher I remember over 50 that stuck in my mind was my 5th grade teacher, Mrs. B.....she was non-shook about everything....she was built like a sack of potatoes and dyed her hair black.... She seemed like the first teacher that actually got me...that actually liked m....when we came in from recess she would read to us a chapter from Anne of Green Gables.....it was beautiful.....I don't remember her yelling, but she was stern.....

I don't really ask people what they think....but I have had this discussion with other people my age. Since school was so bad I thought it would be easy to leave. My husband and I live simply, so leaving would not be a financial problem. There are days when I feel I am a crappy teacher and I shouldn't teach.

I've always thought that I would like to do something to help people through art...saying something or do something to help people who are struggling.....I want to help people who want to shoot themselves or shoot others because they are angry. I think I can say something to help them see things a different way. I want to do that at school until I feel I am irrelevant.....then I'll do it somewhere else.

Teaching was a good choice.....

Interview #10

Female- age 70 32 years in the classroom

last year taught 3rd grade public school- retired at age 64

I began my educational journey at St. Olaf College as an English Lit major. The day after I graduated I started a Masters program in education because I knew I wanted to be an elementary teacher (MAT) I had one day break....the Masters took me 1 ½ year to complete. I was hired in Moundsvew...taught there for a while...took some time off to raise my daughter, but did most of my teacher in the Robbinsdale school district and that was my last district.

I really have two reasons why I left teaching. One was simple....the rule of 90. I had reached that point where financially it did not really pay for me to keep teaching.

But, I would have kept going despite that, but the testing really made me want to teach. You cannot believe how those tests sapped all the creativity out of teaching.

Whether you were preparing for the tests, giving the practice tests, or the tests themselves, it took an enormous amount of time and controlled what you taught and

how you taught it. Don't get me wrong, I believe that some testing is important, but we have gone so far overboard with testing. I just said enough is enough. And now I talk to my friends who are still teaching and they say it is even worse. There were other things that were getting frustrating, but the testing was the main reason. I just loved the creative part of teaching....the extra projects, the themes...all of those were limited because of testing. It also seemed the last few years that we had more special needs students in our classrooms and less support. One year...and it was only one year... I had an incredible needy classroom with so many students that needed extra help. That was a really tough year.

Back in the 90's was the heyday for my teaching. We had an incredible group of teachers and a great principal who really supported us. We did so many extra things-carnivals, plays, so many extras and we never thought twice about the extra time. My colleagues now say that the younger teachers are not willing to put in the time that we did. They say they will participate in parent conferences, but that's it.....they won't stay after school and do those extras. A group of us who taught together during those years get together every September....this year our principal who is now 91 came to our gathering.....what a great group of teachers. I loved going to work and working together with them. That is what would have kept me going back is working with them and being the creative group that we were, but that is gone. That ability to be creative is gone in teaching. And some of the tests were really poorly written. I had one bright student who asked me a question about a test question...we had strict rules

about helping students so I couldn't answer his question, but I looked at the test question after and I could not answer the question...it was so confusing.

I put everything into my teaching....I worked nights and weekends. My daughter who is now a 35 year old adult, would have been a great teacher but she said, mom, I don't want to work as hard as you did when I was growing up. So, was I as good a teacher at the end of my career as I was in mid-career or earlier? I knew I couldn't keep up the pace that I did earlier in my career but I was just as good in the classroom at the end as I was in the beginning. I really was determined to leave when I was a good teacher. I've heard too many conversations in the teachers lounge about teachers who stayed too long...who should have retired but kept on teaching, and I did not want to be one of them. I went to an open house when my daughter was in 7th grade and her social studies teacher was this older gentlemen who had obviously quit teaching and was going through the motions. His room was a mess, he never gave homework, he had no syllabus for the parents and when we asked what he taught he said....." a little of this and a little of that"....I went to the principal that night and said, take my daughter out of that classroom. Two weeks later that teacher was gone. I didn't want to end like that.

The best teacher I can describe over 50 was my high school English teacher. She was really old....at least I thought she was but she probably was in her 50's....and she wasn't flashy but I remember she was so smart and knew her literature so well that I wanted to learn more so I could be like her. She inspired me to want to learn, and that is what good teachers do. That is what I tried to do with third graders, to let them

know that they can learn and that learning is fun. I can pick out kids in my class the first week who have parents who limit their time in front of t.v. and video games and they are always the best students in class. How clear is that....

I did not talk to a lot of people about retirement. I had a tough class the year before I retired and I thought I don't want to end with that kind of class, and then I had a really good class and I decided that if I was leaving teaching, I wanted to leave with a really positive fun group and that's what I did. So, there was not a lot of discussion of planning....I just decided and It was the right time.

There was no real task that I need to do in retirement. I subbed the first two years and I enjoyed that. I could still see the people I enjoyed working with, I did not have to do any of the extra work or any of the parent meetings or faculty meetings. Oh, those meetings. We would have inservices to talk about how to test better and all we wanted as teachers was more time in the classroom. Having a good principal who knows how to support teachers is so important.....

I did not feel this pressure, but some older teachers have felt that they are encouraged to leave because they are too expensive and a newer teacher can be hired to save money. They felt they were being judged differently. I advise young teachers to not get a masters because they are too expensive to hire. I think we need older experienced teachers in the classroom but some principals want to get rid of them to same money. Isn't that sad.

Yes, teaching was a great choice for me. I always enjoyed getting up and going to work. I miss it, but I really enjoy not having to get up every day.....and the structured

nature of teaching...you have to be there every day.....I really don't miss that. Now the phone rings in the morning and I can do a lot of different things every day. But, yes, teaching was a good choice for me. I worked at a retail shop for a little bit and I remember looking at the clock thinking how slow the day was going, When I taught, the days flew by. Suddenly the day was over and I said to myself, where did the day go. I really liked teaching.

Interview #11

Male age 63 retired at age 61 Last teaching position was special education teacher in public high school- 30 years in education.

My last teaching position- I worked as a power mentor mentoring special ed teachers- I retired in June 2010.....I was a special education resource teachers in a high school providing service....BUT what I was really doing was a glorified educational assistant.....we'll get to that story later....I have taught 30 years....not including the mentoring

I had a bachelor degree in English from Northeastern in Chicago....I moved to the Twin Cities to get a masters in Scandinavian studies....that didn't work out....so I decided to do something more practical and I went into teaching. A couple of reasons why.....I think I had a real bias toward the helping professions...I never thought of business....seemed like something good to do, never thought of pay or pension.....

Did my student teaching as an English teacher, then very quickly went into special ed and got my masters in special ed....it is at that point that I decided to do a dual track and I got licensed as a psychologist. Got my first job in Hopkins and then switched to Minneapolis. I thought of going into school psychology, but I realized that they never really do counseling, they just do testing and write reports so I did not go that route.

I'm passionate about education...it was my life....it was my calling...24 hours a day, I was up in the middle of the night grading projects, looking for money, I never gave it a second thought....that is what I did. It took over everything, and then I got involved in the union.....at one point they paid part of my salary.....

I was in and out of situations in my career in which I felt valued – based almost 100% on the administrator,.....you know as a teacher we don't have control of that...we used to be able to go to whatever building we wanted and follow an administrator but not any more. I had some competent administrators that totally respected me ...they supported me and trusted me and always had my back.....I gave those people 120%....but I also had some very incompetent administrators. 100 % incompetent. Some would not listen to my ideas.....I told one that I could help her create the best special ed program in the state, but she was not interested.

So the last year I became a glorified teacher aide. I went in with a 23 year old teacher and sat in the back of the room and watched my students...."Mr. M, would you get a pencil.....Mr. M, would you open the door? Here I was at the pinnacle of my career

and I ended up like this. Pinnacle of my career I was doing this kind of work. I did this for two years. That's why I left, I was bored.....and boredom is the kiss of death. I was underused, I could have stayed there longer and collected my money, but I was so bored. I couldn't keep doing it year after year.

I don't think my age had anything to do with it.....this administrator was just plain old arrogant....she wanted to be in charge and I was a threat to her. I made a decision to retire. I reached the rule of 90 so I could retire. And what was ironic, the district called me a year later and asked if I would come mentor teachers....thats what I am saying, the system does not know what the hell they are doing. They offered me anything I wanted...they let me work out of the house, they gave me flexible hours, they paid me well, they gave me everything I wanted.....so I went back and I loved the work, but the pace was killing me. Even working out of the home, I went into the classroom, then I had to fill out tons of reports. Typing typing typing so it turned into running around the city, then coming home and type type type....the 20 hours part time job took over my life. So then I finished my year out and they wanted me back again and I said no thanks. I almost went back, but I said no. I gave up 3 years of salary, benefits etc....it has been expensive and I have my regrets,.....some regrets.....

If I would have had a different principal who would have trusted me and respected me, I would have stayed. That is what caused me to leave. My biggest regret is that I did not become a principalI had the opportunity.....I served as a DeanI

should have gone forward ...so I ended up in my career having people who knew less than me making policy. I would have loved to take my ideas and really make a kick ass school. I regret that.

Was I as effective.....yes, I think I was more effective when I was older. I knew more, I had more experience.....parents would come in and view me as a grandparent figure...I had parents coming in their 20's and 30's ...so I think I was more effective, more credibility, more confident.

I have several people who come to mind when you ask if I know anyone over 50 who was effective. They were passionate, loved kids, involved in the union and in bettering education, a team player....I was a team player. If you were my administrator I would disagree with you behind closed doors but then that was it. The person I envision was a team player, no talking behind ones back, no sabotaging, Just like making sausage...

I had the passion to keep going.....but seriously, my bladder had something to do with my leaving. I was supposed to drink a lot of water, and when the bell would ring I would run upstairs to the faculty bathroom and it was locked and then I would run downstairs to the other bathroom and that was locked.... Finally find one...then I'm late to class....thats what happens when you get older.

I can't run like a 20 year old, but I am more effective now than I was then. Education expects you to keep running like a 20 year old. You are not....you need some accommodations for your aging. Full speed or nothing.....I thought about it, but I just can't think about going back to the rat race. I have more knowledge now than ever,,,,,what can I do with it. Mentoring would work, but not the way they had it set up. I would even volunteer to mentor someone. I really helped the teachers I worked with...I didn't threaten them. I didn't evaluate them. You can't mentor and evaluate at the same time.

I talked to a ton of people about retirement. I have a strong interest in finance so I did a lot of planning about retirement. That's what I did for the union. I ran numbers all the time for myself. I talked to a lot of people about retirement. One guy said...just do it, if you made a mistake you can always go back. I wouldn't have done it if I were in a better school....better administration.... I would have stayed but I was pulled away from what I loved.

I knew I wanted to make this movie about my mother and grandmother as holocaust survivors. I wish I would have done this work (film) many years ago. I really like it.

No, I would not do teaching again for a career. It was too tough to be creative. There were constant barriers to using my creativity. I am an entrepreneur and a salesman....I have always been that way...I love selling.....I really would have loved to be a financial planner. They make a ton of money.....not messy.....can do your

own hours....then you can take the money and do the social causes you are passionate about. What kept me in it was the love of kids....then the pension and security kept me in....I was hooked. If they start taking away that security, we may lose these good people. I really wanted to help people when I was growing up. I think it was the period when we grew up.

Interview #12

Female age 64- retired at age 57- secondary art teacher in private school - taught 16 years

My last teaching position was at Providence Academy in 2004-2005 where I taught secondary art. I taught for two years when I graduated, then I subbed for about 3 years, then I took a position for nine years and then Providence.....so I think I taught a total of 16 years.

I started as a teaching assistant in special ed. I had a horrible student teaching experience in Chicago.....42 students in my second grade classroom. I started in Chicago and then we moved to Minnesota and teaching jobs were very hard to find, so I started designing and sewing costumes for a theater company....

I wanted to get back into teaching so I started subbing at Tessarac school . I subbed for a while until a position opened up at another school

The reasons I left teaching were based in the school that I taught. I felt very unappreciated. The school was going through a building program and my art room

did not even have a sink....the custodians were very unkind and got on me for washing my students' brushes in the janitor's closet. I also thought that I would let a new teacher start in the new art room and set it up as they saw fit. There were also a lot of politics that I did not and could not buy into. Also, the technology was getting to me. I spent so much time learning the new administrative software and it really took away from my time teaching. I loved the students and I loved teaching a lot, but it got to the point. And you were expected to do so many extra things. I also was having physical issues caused by spending the entire day on a cement floor, and the President of the school wanted us to wear "dressy" shoes. My legs just ached after each day and I couldn't stand it. I asked if they could put some mats on the floor but they said that was too expensive. I never sat down. I also was getting arthritis in my hands. So I was really tired and I felt why am I doing this to myself. Again, I loved the students and I felt my room was a safe place for students to escape. I had kids eat lunch in my room because it was safe. So, I left.

The next year I got a call from C. S. who begged me to teach part time at Providence Academy. I said no, but he kept bugging me to do it. I had a lot of family issues....taking care of aging parents, daughter getting married. So I said no, but he kept calling me so I said ok....so I started teaching part time-2 classes- but by the end of the year they wanted me full time so I took it. It was an odd place- they were new and they were not hovering over me. I really got to do my own thing. But there were so many preps. I was prepping constantly. But it was too much. I had to drive so far in rush hour. ... I hated the drive. I got really tired of the drive. If I left 5 minutes

later it took me 20 minutes longer. And that school had so much and I wanted to work with poor kids.

I'm not sure what could have been done to keep me teaching. Maybe a little more flexibility as far as scheduling. I wish they would have said...hey, you've been here a long time, how would you like to be scheduled or would you like to go part time or how would you like to branch out.....those questions are never asked..... And there was so much going on with the administration. Or if someone would have said, hey, do you want some mats in your room. The principal would not even come into my room because he didn't want paint on his suit. I was doing so much all by myself, I did an art show all by myself and I got in trouble the next day because I did not put the chairs back around the cafeteria tables correctly. I finally had it. I actually started crying and said I am exhausted...I am doing my best.....I wanted to be respected and appreciated. And those meetings.....oh, those meetings.

I feel like I was a better teacher at the end of my career. I was more at ease with myself. I had experience....I had lived longer and felt more confident. I had encountered this thing before, so I didn't second guess myself. I also did not sweat the small stuff as much as I did in the beginning...I realized and understood what was important.....and that was the frustration at the end. I knew what was important. One of the last meetings I went to at my last school, a teacher said," you know both Anna and Mary had their sleeves rolled up and I told them they shouldn't do that and

one had not the right knee socks.....and I was thinking, what the heck, this is what we are going to discuss at a faculty meeting? Unbelievable.....come on...

When I think of a teacher over 50 I think of Z. H.....he had opinions, he was smart, he probably did stuff that people did not like....but he was passionate about his subject matter...

I did not get any advice from people about leaving. I did not have any discussion about the money part of it. I never did any planning financially. I was so naive. If I would have planned better I would have more money now, but no one advised me to stay on for the \$\$\$. But I was just exhausted...I did not think of the \$\$.

I had no task,,...no bucket list. I just wanted to stop telling people I didn't have time when they would ask me to do something. I guess the one goal I had was I really wanted to do my own art. When you are teaching you can't do your own art and I really wanted to do my creative work. I do agree that we need to use our age segment of our population more. I heard today that baby boom women are really frustrated now because they are having trouble getting back into the workforce....and there is a lot of pressure taking care of parents and grandkids.....

Yes.....teaching was a good choice for me. It worked out well. I was scared when I restarted, but I'm glad I did it. It taught me a lot....I conquered my fear of doing it.

Interview # 13

Male- Age 58 currently teaches 6th grade math and science in a private school

I have just started my 32nd year of teaching

My career journey started by going to college at Pacific University in Seattle Washington, got a recreation administration degree with a business minor...got a job at stripes inc. sports equipment store.....I hated the job, knew I did not want to do that. I worked during college as a community school coordinator and I enjoyed that and I also was asked to coach wrestling and I enjoyed that and I decided I needed to do something different, so I walked over to the University of Minnesota and walked into the education dept and they said they had a program for guys like me that already had a degree called the AAA program, so I enrolled and got certified in one year in elementary education. Subbed for a while and then after two years I was hired by my current school and I have been there ever since.

I am planning on teaching 2 or 3 more years....that is the plan right now....would like to retire around 60. I'd like to spend more time at the cabin, especially on days like this. I would like to be young enough and healthy enough to travel and do other things. I enjoy teaching, but I would also like to do other things. When my dad retired in his early 60's, he was very active and enjoyed retirement.

Not sure what could be done to help me continue.....Maybe if teaching started November 1st so I could be up north this time of year (September)...maybe a ½ year contract November through April would work for me.. there really is nothing in education or where I am teaching that is forcing me to leave. I just want to leave in a few years. ½ time or part time probably would not really help. Maybe 3 day week would make me consider....but part time every day would not help.

I think I am a better teacher now then I was in mid career. With experience you learn how to handle kids...you have seen everything before, really no surprises. As a young teacher you may have more energy and creativity, but experience really helps. Its really nice having some young people in the building to keep us going. They learn from our experience as well so it is a good mix.

The best teacher over 50 that I can remember was Mr. H. He probably would not be a teacher today because he was pretty tough....maybe he would have been fired.... But he provided so many educational experiences that were not in the book. He was tough but he was so creative....I really remember him.

My wife and I discuss retirement and our financial planner, but really nobody else.

My dad was a model and he really enjoyed retirement, he was very busy with a lot of activities. Who knows, I may have to work another 5 years because of finances.

I don't really have a bucket list. We both would like to afford to go somewhere warm during the winter. We really don't want to spend our winters here. I want to spend time up at the lake.

I am very fortunate to have worked where I do. Teaching was a great choice. I enjoy where I work, who I work with, the kids....I enjoy it all. I am very grateful to God for leading me to where I am. I enjoy the summers. I enjoy the start every fall and the end every spring...I enjoy that schedule. I coach middle school baseball and enjoy that.

Interview #14

Female- age 57-currently teaches 3rd grade at a public school

this is her 29th year teaching

I went to school in Seattle. I was originally an English major...I was working at a graphic arts company which I really did not like that. It was so financially based...making money for other people. I went into the same program my husband went into, got a elementary license....did a little subbing and then was hired in the Osseo district and have been there ever since. In fact, I have been in the same school building for 26 years.

I have a rule of 90 date in Feb 2016. When I hit that date I would like to leave, but I can't see myself leaving in the middle of the year so I would wait until the end of that year. I have to make it to that date, but some days I wonder if I will make it to that date. It is a significant milestone to make it to that date. I'll be 60 and I'll have 30 years of service. I want to leave teaching at that time because it has become a more and more and more demanding job all the time and as I get older I have less stamina and it is an exhausting job to try and keep all the plates spinning every day, and they keep throwing more plates at you every day....more plates every day.... We have to

differentiate both high and low and everything in between....need to teach every kid at their level, you could have 30 different reading groups, and reading and math are supposed to be every day...I teach mostly reading and math....and that takes out all the fun stuff. I used to do a lot of fun stuff, but now when you do that you are behind and you are accountable to someone for pretty much everything. This is because of the standards and the testing. It has made a noticeable difference in my teaching. I think it is great to have standards to compare to instead of comparing kids to each other, but there are so many standards and it is so hard to make sure that each kid masters each standards and each kid comes to us with such different backgrounds. It is almost impossible! The creativity and fun has been taken out of it. Fewer students would help and getting additional support from other trained people would help. I'd love to get some legislators to come and spend the whole day with me and see what I do. The pressure for our state to not fall behind is big...we don't want to be a Mississippi..the whole common core movement across states I agree with in theory, but to implement and teach what kids need to know...it's a constant cycle.....data drives what groups to form...this group gets it, this group doesn't...and many in this group have parents who really don't care, they never come to conferences to learn about the problems. And then you are supposed to keep the bright kids challenged. Like I said, there are so many plates to keep spinning and I am pretty good at keeping everything spinning, but I wonder about the quality when I am forced to keep so many plates spinning. Less time, more kids, less stamina from the kids to focus. Some kids are just very distracted. It is hard to get them to see how important this

stuff is. And the standards are so complicated, especially in math...there are so many details to cover. To me, there are just too many standards. Reading is a little more basic, but math is very complicated. There are so many discreet skills. It is a nightmare to keep track of all the data.....everything is focused on the data, you can spend so much time getting the data. Data driven takes away time with kids.....relationships.....which is the most important thing. I do a thing called the lunch bunch where I eat lunch with kids to get to know them better and I have not had one lunch bunch with kids this year because we have meetings and other things we have to do during lunch, and it is already the second month of school....

We don't have a lot of technology, so we do not have a lot of training. We do not have anything like ipads for kids or anything like that. We have one cart of 25 laptops for 900 kids....so you can see we don't use them very much. We do not have much money for technology.

What could change to make me stay past the rule of 90? I would keep teaching if I could just focus on one subject, but that is not going to happen. I could teach social studies all day long, but now I don't even have time to teach social studies. All the liberal arts stuff is being left in the dust.....there is no art instruction in our school and we have never had art specialists in our district. We have music specialists, but no art. We do have computer class but there is very little ability to get kids on a computer. At this point, not sure what would help. If I were reincarnated, I would

become a specialists...like a library specialist and not a classroom teacher. The weight on a classroom teacher is so huge compared to a specialist...they leave at 3:45 without a bag.....they are not accountable to the individual student like a classroom teacher.

I think I am more effective now then I was earlier. I am more patient now. I have had so many different kids that I think I am able to think on my feet and address issues when they happen. I still make mistakes, but they don't bother me as much as they used to. I still make mistakes, but less floundering. I do have a lot more wisdom. Once I get there in the morning its go go and I don't stop, but when I get home I am tired.

I do have a good friend who I taught with who is retired and she is very very happy....she says I will love retirement. She is still very active but she is very happy with her decision. She says you got to get out of there.

The rule of 90 has changed....not sure when that changed but I know people recently hired are different then me. It isn't about the money....maybe it is to get to the specific date...but once there I could work and make more money...but the job keeps getting harder and hard and we are expected to do more and the kids we get are less prepared to do the harder work. They keep raising the bar....some kids come ready to learn, but they are already the high achievers.

I don't have much of a bucket list.....no peace corp or anything like that....I do want to travel sometime other than July or August. It isn't financial, its simply that the job is exhausting. I would like to write a book....maybe a children's book.....

Teaching was a good choice for me. Its hard, but I have enjoyed it. I'll be ready to leave when the time is right....I'll probably sub....but I will be ready to leave.

Interview # 15

Female- age 66 left teaching when I was 62 so this is my 4th year of retirement

Taught 34 years- last position was 1st grade in public school

I was a drama student but my mom said I should go to teachers college because I never tried out for a play, so I did get my teaching license....I taught 2 years in Michigan....then I moved to Minneapolis and I subbed and worked at the Lincoln Dell restaurant, and then I got a call for a 1st grade position at Noble School and every year I was let go and then rehired at a different school....it was great because I got to go to a different school in the district and I knew everybody in the district. One year I taught 2nd and I thought I shouldn't get paid....it was so much easier than 1st grade.....but I've taught 1st grade ever since.

I left teaching because I was going to teach one more year, and a new principal came in and he said before he came that he wanted to get rid of dead wood/older teachers and hire younger, cheaper teachers...more teachers for less money....so that kind of got us off on the wrong foot. Our new principal said he wanted to eliminate the cost and the drag of older deadwood teachers. Hearing this started the year off horribly.” And then they took my carpet away...they had redone the school and forgot about my room....and I found out that the reason they did not carpet my room was because a part time custodian told them he did not want to vacuum half of the room. So they

listened to a custodian over me. That just killed me. And then this principal allowed my class of 1st graders to be over 30. He could have had one more teacher, but he said it was the same number in 5th grade, which makes no sense. That's a whole different ball game. So he would not give us another teacher....so we had 27 students plus 7 extra in the afternoon. So, I had this for four days at the beginning of the school year. Then I also had 5 kids that came from a bad area and they were notorious for bad behavior...I don't know if he did that to drive me away...and then I had a student who was on a special machine that took up a lot of room in the overcrowded classroom....so I called my friend Kay who had just retired and I asked her to come help....she said she couldn't...I told her I was taking a ½ day off on Monday and I'm going to the district center and find out if I can retire. So Monday I went to the office and they said I could retire. So I retired right then and there! It would have been a horrible year. I did not want to deal with that principal. We had to do all this testing.....I said, when are we going to teach? Tests were not quite as bad in 1st grade...but they were there. I think they were trying to weed us older teachers out....judging us.

Was I as effective at the end? I changed a lot over my career. When I started I tried to do it all...I crammed it all in....at 3:00 at the end of the day I would panic and say its time to go.....we were busy to the end.. I was very enthusiastic.....I was still enthusiastic at the end, but I tempered it. I was wiser....I felt like it takes a village....I was very involved with my students' lives. I invited students who were

graduating back for tea and cookies, and I had some of their work from first grade and I gave them a packet of their stuff....and they loved it!... a lot of extra stuff, but they loved it. I sent postcards to them in college....and they loved it, and I thought of it all by myself....it was wonderful. I'm still connected with a lot of my kids. I was still effective at the end of my career. I think the teachers learned a lot from me....

What could have been done to keep me teaching longer....I could have had carpet...which means administrative support....the fact that he would not listen to me really hurt...so I left and I didn't get a retirement party, but that's okay. But I heard so many stories about how awful the year was, but I could not go back there and see that principal.

Best 50+ teacher....its S.A. she has so much enthusiasm...its enthusiasm and being professional. She is my age and still enthusiastic. Loves her students....

I was one of the only older teachers left, and the young teachers did not really appreciate us because of our age....they closed their doors at 3:30...I was there until 6:00....it was a different mindset. Yes, I had one friend who gave me advice, but it was mainly me. I had had it with the administration....I never really thought about the money.....

I really did not have a bucket list...no real driver....it was just freedom. I just wanted to read the paper and drink my coffee. I was used to drinking a cold cup of coffee at

4 in the afternoon after I got it at 7 in the morning because I just didn't have time to drink it during the day. I wanted to relax, but I really did miss the fun of being with the kids. The first week after I retired my daughter got me a job at her golf course driving the beverage cart. It was great fun....and I got tips.....it was unbelievable fun. It was beautiful October and I would say...."I am so happy to be out here" and I don't have to plan when to go to the bathroom....

And then I got a job at the Marsh so I could get free membership.....no mental stress, so much fun.

Teaching was a good choice for me.....when I was young you could be a teacher, a secretary, or a nurse....so I chose to be a teacher.....and it was a good choice. I just loved teaching.....and I just regret that I did not get a retirement party....the young people don't want to participate in those events.

Young people today have a different attitude about work...and the administration was not supportive...so it was time to go. A whole different attitude.....it was a job for a lot of them.....for us it was our life. For them they change jobs all the time...for us it was much more rewarding, and they complain a lot. I was a workaholic. My school work interfered with my own children and my marriage.....I was so tired at the end of the day.....

Interview #16

Male- 66 years old - taught 41 years- last position was 7th grade social studies In a private school- retired at end of 2012-13 school year

I grew up on a farm....was first member of family to go to college- took a couple years at a seminary- graduated and started substitute teaching....ran a bowling alley. After 2 ½ years subbing I decided I couldn't do it anymore....and a part time job opened up....then a full time job and I have been at the same school almost all of my career.

The easy answer of why I left teaching is because I turned 66 and could get social security....the real reason was that I was exhausted the last few years...in fact people who see me now can't believe how much better I look. I was so tired...I couldn't stay awake after school...I had hormone therapy which really helped....I had a horrible year before I started hormone therapy. The reasons why I was happy to leave was that I was getting so tired of changing technology every year...I like technology, but every year we had a new grading programthe constant change really got to me after a while. One other thing....school started focusing on state standards...parent asked "why are we going backwards" standards are always in flux.....the faddishness of things....something gets a new name and then we get all excited about it. I kind of ignored the standards because it was my last year.

I would have had to be physically stronger to continue. I wonder if education is trying to create cookie cutter teachers instead of recognizing our individual strengths. We need to continue to let teachers teach from their strength. Not sure we used the

data and testing to really improve learning.....hard to connect data to the kid.....
respect for individuality of the teacher and continuing changing technology
expectations.

The end of the career was the first time I second guessed myself....and I owe that to
the climate. I was probably enthusiastic at the start of my career, but I wasn't as
good.

Climate is a big part....and for me the principal was not good at creating a climate. If
the climate were more positive I would have been able to stay on longer. We used to
have a principal who had our back and now we have a principal who stabs us in the
back.....

The best teacher over 50the ones like P.S. who knew their stuff, enjoyed their
stuff, and enjoyed sharing it with the students. Cheerful, professional.....

I did not seek anyone's advice about retirement....I made my own decision.....my
wife knew what I was going through the last few years...

I really did not have a bucket list....I did want to play softball all year long and I'm
doing that.....but nothing that drove me. I want to do volunteer work, but that was
not what drove me to retirement. I'm not even thinking of what I want to do....I need
a little time to unwind and then make some decisions. Maybe teach in a mission
school....

I am very glad.....absolutely....that I was a teacher. I enjoyed most aspects of it...to
keep learning in my field. Can't imagine what I would have done differently.

Interview # 17

Female- age 64 I retired when I was 60, last position was 5th grade in the Robbinsdale public school district.....taught 20 years plus some substituting I went to school in River Falls Wisconsin- got a job teaching 6th grade for 2 years, than I moved to Minneapolis and got married....had children so I took a few years off to be a full time mom. Returned to teaching, job sharing a second grade position, then taught 2nd grade for 2 years, than job shared a kindergarten position, also taught adult ed on the near north side...than I got my 5th grade position and have been in the same school for 15 years.

The reasons I left teaching at 60.....one reason was our school was closing which made my decision a little easier.....that was sort of the final reason..the topping on the cake....the whole school closed because of enrollment. That is why I might have subbed after I retired but I didn't want to go to a new school. My husband had retired a few years earlier....and I was tired....the testing was really getting to be too much for me. I didn't philosophically agree with what I was being asked to do. It really gets in the way....children were becoming numbers, their personal history what was going on at home didn't seem to matter, without regard for what their home life was like. They wanted to move from one level to the next....just a number

Yes, I was a better teacher at the end of my career...I had more tools in my toolbox. I was passionate about the kids. The first year I retired I really missed the kids...the playfulness of them.....the interaction with them. I really was passionate about kids. 5th graders were the oldest in the school.....there were so many interruptions in the day.....that was frustrating for me. I think those interruptions really impacted teaching.

I think if I had more support with the paper work that might have helped. The correcting at night really got to me.....after a long day at work. It consumed so much of my life. It seems like the newer younger teachers are not doing it. I don't know if I was inefficient or if I was taking my job too seriously, but I had to do what I did to help them learn. I'm curious if this is a generational thing....the older teachers seemed to be putting in more time.....but I need to work the way I did to be effective. Another part is that I am not technologically savvy. Some of the younger teachers were and they helped me. They picked it up quicker.....we were in-serviced, but it took me longer to pick it up.

The best teacher I knew over 50 wasshe retired at 55. She went to work for Bachmans. She was never married, did not have children, so she was so dedicated. Loved kids, high standards, great sense of humor....and she retired at 55. She was burned out, putting in long long hours. We were all surprised when she left.

No, I did not talk to many people about retirement.....my husband told me I should retire and like I said, my school was closing.....the thought of learning about a new

school system....no, it was my decision. I didn't feel like I was encouraged to leave by my principal....I'm sorry to admit but I did feel I was older and wiser than my principal. I had some experience and wisdom he did not have....so I did not respect him as much as I should have. He used a lot of empty words to praise us, but I needed to know what specifically I was doing well. I think he verbally respected me and my experience.

I did not have a bucket list of things I wanted to do that drove me retirement. I want to travel, but that was not a driver. I just wanted the freedom to come and go when I want and do what I want.

Teaching was a great choice for me.....when we were having a family I was home as a full time mom....financially that was not a good time. My husband taught, he worked in the summer, he coached, and he was going to school....those were rough years.

But when we were both teaching it worked well. We took three-week trips in the summer, great memories....

I'm loving retirement. The first year I was living the teacher schedulelooking at the clock wondering what the kids were doing.....but I'm over that now.

Interview #18

Male, age 64 retired from teaching at 57 ½ was a high school science teacher at Wazata high school....taught 30 years

I did my college undergraduate at River Falls Wisconsin.... Taught a summer environmental course while I was in college..... started teaching in 1972 at Golden Valley high school....great school but it merged with Robbinsdale. It was like a small private school. The community really honored you as a professional. It was a great place to start teaching. I started a chemical health program in Golden valley. If I needed something a parent would volunteer to buy it. I got cut in 1978 due to enrollment.... I met the principal at Wayzata high school at a conference....he told me if I was ever looking for a job call me. So, I did. And I got the job in Wayzata on June 1st of that year....I really got into Cognitive coaching....an A.P. at Wayzata took me under his wing and spent a lot of time with me. I stayed in Wayzata and got involved with a lot of projects out there....got involved with the Minnesota association of science teachers. I really was focused on doing real science with my students instead of just reading about doing science. I became a teacher mentor through a program at the University of Minnesota.....got involved in the monarch butterfly thing.

I was always a little out of step with my department...they were into textbooks and I wasn't. I came up with new ways for students to demonstrate that they knew the material. I gave them a big piece of paper and asked them to show me how all the materials fit together....they really showed me what they knew. I was involved with

a group of people who were studying oceanography.....I advised them to evaluate their students by having them create a fine art demonstration....that was pretty off the radar.

The reasons I retired...I was getting really tired.....the last few years if I did not get to bed by nine I could not function the next day. About 10 years before we had a new principal....a wonderful fellow, great administrator, but had no people skills. And what he didn't know about he simply ignored. We were getting into safety issues with overcrowded labs.....and I was just getting tired of that. I was the science coordinator for the district and I was in the elementary and middle schools. We had engineers from the community and they recommended we outfit our labs with technology....and that all got thrown out. We wanted computers in our labs that we could use at lab stations. Using multi media computers at teaching stations.....but they didn't support these recommendations. I knew all about learning....I had no place to go with it, no one wanted the information....I feel like I would still be in education if I could teach one or two classes a day and mentor teachers....I would have done it for a reduced rate. Wayzata made it difficult.....I couldn't get to my lab during the evening or weekends....I was tired of all that stuff. I felt I wasn't really being respected.

Also, we have a mentally retarded daughter who needed more attention and my wife was full blown in her teaching career, so I felt I should be the one to devote more time to that situation. I was able to do the artist in residence thing and also do the parenting thing with my daughter.

What could have been done to keep me teaching longer? It came such a push to do more, to do better.....and the push to improve was not in the realm of good teaching. We were causing young people to drop out after 4 or 5 years. If there would have been a way to work together with multiple approaches.... But it was so polarized....this was the way it was going to be.

And this no child left behind push....my building principal said he wanted every student in our school to take an AP class. My daughter has a 59 IQ....why should she take an AP class? There was no reason she should take that class....

So I thought, this was not the place for me....so I retired at the semester.

I think my principal was happy....I was probably a pain in the butt.

Two years after that I was hired part time with St. Paul schools working with teachers on a collaborative teaching model.

I was a much better teacher at the end of my career. I stopped asking permission and I just did what I thought was right. I was very relational with my students. I really tried to find out what was going on with kids that were not succeeding. I tried to take the time to understand kids. I was able to give feedback to kids without judgement. I really felt that the newer teachers looked at it as a job.... Almost a sense of entitlement.,. while we looked at it as a calling. I was exposed to some incredible teachers at Golden Valley.

The best teacher over 50 I knew was an English teacher from Wayzata... I would occasionally take my prep hour and go into his classroom and watch him work. Everything he did was fluid and dynamic, but it was in a very structured matrix. He was direct, he worked individually with kids....he had great classroom management skills....watching him really helped me. When I was in 7th grade I had a mentor who was a veterinarian....he let me ride with him on visits.....I couldn't understand why I did so well in my zoology class because of him.

I talked to a lot of people about retirement, and I'd hear these comments....don't you like teaching? And I'd say, yeah, I love teaching, but you don't always have to do it in the same way and in a school. I kind of kept my own council on this decision. I had a lot I wanted to do .

I'm a compulsive learner....to be learning is to be happy.....I get that from people..... I'm thrilled at being an animated being....

Teaching was a great choice for me....I would do it again and again.....it gave me great opportunities to grow....to be able to have a different part of life open up to me through teaching..... and my decision to retire when I did was perfect.....now I'm into my photography and I've been able to continue teaching. I'm teaching a class at St. Kates called seeing nature as a spiritual exercise. I'm teaching several adult classes....and the nice part is that it comes back at you with adults.

Interview # 19

Male- age 66- retired at age 57- 34 years teaching

Taught English, journalism, communications at public high school

Teaching was a three prong adventure

1. know your subject
2. passion for the craft of teaching- how do you do it.
3. Care about kids....care about their growth. I teach them hope for life..

If the principal diminishes any of these....people retire.

I taught from 1969 to 2003....you do the math. I went to Sanford jr. high...Richfield high....college was never mentioned

A counselor asked me what trade school I was going to...

I went to St. Cloud State....started working at Sanford Jr. High School

I student taught at North High...principal at North told me if I wanted a job after I graduated I should call him.

I called....started at North High....taught there for 11 years....I had an administrator diminish my craft, so I left and moved to Wayzata high school, where I finished.

I left teaching....its a long story.....they wanted me to coach girls b.ball at Wayzata.....I did coach at North, it was amazing, all the drugs...tough kids....I had a girl deck an official.....but anyway, I started coaching, and the kids could not understand how you could coach and do other things as well....I arrived much to the

dismay of the Wayzata principal....she did not want me to be hired....she would not give me a new stapler.....long story.....I had 20 staplers the next day.....so my wife asked me if I am teaching for the kids or for her.... They started a teacher of the year program I got it...much to the dismay of the principal.....big ceremony....the next thing she said to me was to ask me to do a musical.....I said sure..... which brings us to why I retired....started a news program in the morning, Don Shelby came to anchor with kids....it was really fun....we did a story on too much copper in the school water....were not too happy with me.....smoking ban on campus, we took pictures of all the parents smoking outside the hockey arena.....lots of hot water.....

A new principal.....emotionally tight....he let me continue to do stuff like that, but then a very well known Dr. in the area...I failed his daughter.....they hired a lawyer to sue me for her failure.....the principal said change the grade....the superintendent said xxx them.....he supported me when the principal didn't...anyway, I had 31 emails from this new drama assistant....I went to the principal and said, you've got to stop it. The principal asked me about the copper story.....I said yes....and he said "have you considered retiring?" wow.....next day I walked in and said I am hanging it up!

So, no question, the principal did not want me.....he did not even thank me....just put his hand on my back and pushed me out the door....so that was it. No respect...I just left, and I retired. I honestly think I would be teaching today if we had a different principal. He was abusive.....He could have gotten rid of me for other things, but I

just think the river was too rolling when I was around, and he would rather have the river be smooth. I think there is an open secret at schools...some administrators don't want people to tell the truth...some do, but some really want to keep things hidden.

A principal once told me.....you are not important....the kids are important.....

What would have kept me teaching longer? One month you get awards and money for your good teaching.....the one thing that would have continued my career if someone would have come in and said.....I watched your class today....how did you do this.....or, if someone came in and said, what can we do to make your job easier.....just someone to pay attention to you.....just someone to listen to me and try and understand

I was so much better when I ended my career. In the beginning I did not look at it as a craft....I was teaching for me, not for the kids. I finally understood the craft.

About three years into teaching an administrator told me....your job is not to fail kids, but to get kids to succeed.....to remove the roadblocks.....I said at the end.....here is my phone number...call me, or I will be in the classroom at 6 tomorrow morning. Classroom management was not an issue for me.....never, never, never.....

I did have some tough time....I was stabbed at North.....beat up.....shot up....can opened once.....my dog was poisoned.....my house was painted.....my lug nuts were removed.....so it wasn't easy without problems.....but classroom management was not an issue. Never a time when I had trouble in classroom. The guy behind

us....grey hair.....his daughter gave me a lot of trouble.....ADHD, but she got drugs for her situation and it worked.

The best teacher.....teacher of teachers.....incremental, intentional, reflective, he'd come in and ask me questions, non judgemental.....

Did I get advice....people told me not to retire. Never talked to many people about it....colleagues said don't retire, but I never had a discussion.

I did not have a bucket list....my to do list is to be actively engaged. I do some coaching of teachers and a principal in St. Paul, but that's about two days a month. I take my camera for a walk as often as possible.....I hunt for birds.....but in terms of doing things.....my wife asked me if I would teach again....I said yes, would I sub....no, its not the same. My bucket list is wanting to make a difference somewhere....to be actively engaged.. no one knocks on your door....you have to actively look.....I would take another teaching job....I think I would in a heart beat. Part time would have been appealing, but not for the same administrator....if the place was respectful. I would have done it .

Absolutely I am glad I was a teacher.....it informed my life....it informed my parenting....it informed who I am....Absolutely.

Interview #20

Male- Age 66- Middle School language teacher -retired at 56

Taught 34 years public school

This is my 10th year of retirement. Not sure why I retired....I guess I could, and everyone else was doing it. No one was teaching past 30 or so years....it just was the thing to do to leave....There were all these kids.....and it was a different world....all my friends were retiring....it was time. I was financially fine....I was ready to go..I was planning on doing it two years before. I had military service and they were talking about giving me teacher credit for that....I taught 34 years...but they didn't

I went to St. Johns University...then I transferred to Mankato and ended up graduating from Mankato, got my masters from Mankato. I wanted to go out West....somewhere exciting....teaching jobs were plentiful...I could have gone to Vegas or California, but my mom got a call from the principal in Burnsville, and she said I'd take it...had no idea where Burnsville was, but I got the job, and I've been there ever since.

I don't think anything would have made me stay teaching longer... when your time was up, it was time to go. I don't regret my decision to go.....it was time. I felt kind of sorry for the people who didn't leave. It was really the thing to do... In my retirement I started a landscape design company

I was a very good teacher at the end of my career. I knew what was important in education...I had some wisdom I did not have before. The methods I developed through the years I didn't know before. I figured out some of these things too late...that is my only regret....because I was really good.

I knew a lot of outstanding teachers.....in the old days, Burnsville was exceedingly lucky in the “stars” they had. They were flashy....they were really good.....everyone was in awe of them.

I did not have any advice to retire....we were doing fine financially....people ask me if I miss teaching, well, it was time to move on. I loved being a parent of a two year old, but you don't want to do that forever.....I didn't want to attend soccer games all my life. Teaching was great, but I did not want to do it forever. It really was physically a lot of hard work...it was very physically demanding....

I did not have a bucket list....I just wanted to slow down. Being on a constant schedule was really hard....it now takes me 3 hours to get going in the morning, and that is a good thing... I'm not on that constant schedule.

I think teaching was a good choice. Not sure I would do it now....it was creative, towards the end with state standards it was getting very uncreative. Not sure I would choose it now because of the standards, but at the time it was a good choice.

