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SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND BURNOUT: THE FACTORS THAT
CONTRIBUTE TO IT AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES THAT COMBAT IT

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY
SYDNI M. FANCHER

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF ART

APRIL 2021

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND BURNOUT: THE FACTORS THAT
CONTRIBUTE TO IT AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES THAT COMBAT IT

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Abstract

This thesis will explore the reasons behind teacher burnout in special education. The field of special education has increased dramatically throughout the years. As more research is being done to determine the various disabilities out there, the need for special education teachers increases. There is a gentleman by the name of Maslach that discovered the term “burnout”. According to Maslach there are three different components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. After researching this topic the four findings that contribute to teacher burnout include: stress management, workplace characteristics, benefits of mindfulness, and identifying the disabilities that affect teacher burnout the most. Stress management focuses on how the special education teacher manages their stress. Workplace characteristics can also play a role in teacher burnout. This could include the special education teacher’s age, how long they have been in the field, and how much collaboration they have with other teachers and support staff in their building. Mindfulness is a tool that special education teachers can use to assist them with burnout. The most common disabilities that are associated with burnout are students with Developmental Cognitive Delay, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Emotional Behavior Disorders.

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Key Terms

Emotional support: Administrators show teachers that they are respected, trusted professionals, and worthy of concern by maintaining open communication, showing appreciation, taking an interest in teachers' work, and considering teacher recommendations.

Instrumental support: Administrators directly assist teachers with work-related tasks, such as providing necessary materials, space, and resources, ensuring adequate time for teaching and nonteaching duties, assisting teachers with parental difficulties, helping with managerial-type concerns, developing forum to support the day-to-day frustration of a teacher of students with EBD (Emotional Behavioral Disabilities), and providing flexibility for consultation time.

Informational support: Administrators provide teachers with information that they can use to improve classroom practices. For example, administrators provide opportunities for teachers to attend staff development, offer practical information about effective teaching strategies, and provide suggestions to improve instruction, classroom management skills and strategies to identify signs of stress and burnout and strategies to alleviate these stressors.

Appraisal support: Administrators are responsible for providing ongoing personnel appraisal, such as frequent and constructive feedback about their performance, information about what constitutes effective teaching, and clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities.

Mindfulness: The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.

Stress: The reactions of persons who feel that external demands are beyond their endurance and result in physiological, psychological, and behavioral changes.

Emotional Exhaustion: The absence of enthusiasm for work and is manifested as fatigue, irritability, and depletion of enthusiasm.

Alienation: Treating people at work with indifference and without human kindness.

Individualized Education Program: A program that is specially designed for each individual student.

Burnout: Consists of three components emotional exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment, and depersonalization.

Professional Development: Learning to earn or maintain professional credentials.

Special Education: a collective term that is used to refer to the individualized education that any student receives when qualifying under one of the recognized special education disability categories.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

History of Burnout

Special Education has become an important topic in the news especially when it comes to the concept of burnout. The concept of Burnout first came about in the mid 1970's by researchers who were in the field of human services and healthcare. These particular researchers defined burnout as a syndrome that first arose in articles through detailed and subjective observations (Chang, 2009). In the year of 1974 a psychiatrist by the name of Freudenberger was observing staff in free clinics. He defined the term burnout as a symptom of emotional reduction and a lack of motive and engagement (Chang, 2009). In the year of 1976 there was a social psychologist who interviewed human service workers about their emotional stress at work. After interviewing the human service workers, Malsach found out that the burnout phenomenon commonly exists in the care-giving and service occupations in which the emotions, motives, and values between providers and clients are the hidden interpersonal context for burnout (Chang, 2009). Researchers have also looked at burnout through the lens of teacher stress and found that special education teachers are the most susceptible to elevated levels of stress and burnout. Throughout history, the work on burnout has been centered on individual traits and organizational components.

In the late 1980's researchers began to examine the work-related components, such as instructor-student ratio, grade level taught, variety of exceptional children taught, and workload. Moving into the 1990's, researchers used theoretical models to assess the synergy of teacher burnout and work environment. Throughout all of the research it is suggested that burnout is generated by extended periods of stress and is associated with the work environment (Chang, 2009).

There are three different components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Letier et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion happens when an individual has drained their emotional supplies and struggles with a lack of energy and fatigue. Depersonalization is the removal of oneself from others. In this research it can apply to teachers who are removing themselves from specific students or co-workers. A decline in personal accomplishment develops from a decreased sense of competence and reduction of one's work. Some signs of a lack of personal accomplishment include; being overwhelmed with work, social disagreement, and inadequate personal resources, and including coping skills. Maslach framework is used when examining burnout with special education teachers. In conclusion, the literature on teacher burnout determined the shift from assessing individual (internal) and organizational (external) components in confinement from each other to examine teachers' individual participation in the context of a transactional component (Chang, 2009).

Now that we have looked at the history of burnout and its components , we are going to move on to some of the ways we can combat teacher burnout. One of the ways we can combat burnout is this idea of mindfulness. Researchers have shown that mindfulness has many benefits to combating burnout. Mindfulness is the awareness that surfaces through paying attention on purpose, in the current moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment (Zimmerman, 2018). Mindfulness has been shown to be identified as a potentially valuable component of teacher education programmes. Mindfulness research is important for individual teachers who investigate ways to handle classroom stress and different teaching methods to cultivate student performance.

Another way that teachers can combat burnout is through mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are meant for first year teachers who just got their teaching licenses. The first year teacher is paired with a seasoned teacher. The seasoned teacher assists the first year teacher with anything and everything. In 1989, The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) endorsed standards for special educators entering into professional training that involved a minimum of a 1-year mentorship during the first year of professional special education training (Whitaker, 2000). The CEC established five targets of a mentorship program for special educators: (1) to facilitate the application of knowledge and skills, (2) to convey advanced knowledge and skills, (3) to assist timely acculturation to school climate, (4) to reduce stress and enhance job satisfaction, and (5) to support professional induction. Administrators also play a big role in special education teachers overcoming burnout. District administrators need to engage in continuous assessment of their special education teachers' job satisfaction in order to equip them with the most effective support.

The Problem

Burnout affects special education teachers. The majority of special education teachers struggle with what their role entails. As more kids are being identified as needing special education support, teachers are not able to handle their caseloads. Ideally, each special education teacher should have approximately 10 students on their caseload. This is not realistic as the majority of special education teachers have 15 students on their caseload. Special education teachers could also experience burnout because they don't feel supported by the administration of the school. In the field of special education there is sometimes role conflict. Role Conflict is the concurrent occurrence of two or more sets of inconsistent expected role behaviors for an individual. Role conflict happens when the person cannot integrate the inconsistency between

these sets of expected role behaviors. Many special education teachers feel that on the one hand they need to teach the students but on the other hand they are supposed to complete evaluations. Special education teachers who are new to the teaching profession are more likely to experience burnout.

Thesis Questions

The following questions will be discussed in this thesis. They are as follows:

- 1) What strategies can special education teachers use to help combat teacher burnout?
- 2) What is mindfulness and how does it connect to special education teacher burnout?
- 3) What factors lead to special education teacher burnout?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Research Process

The primary method of research investigation on this topic included using the internet searches through the search engines on the Bethel Libraries website. Probing to look for materials on Bethel Libraries websites were mainly used to locate academic peer-reviewed journal articles through using key terms to find articles. Articles from many databases were made accessible through the Bethel Libraries website such as EBSCOhost, ERIC, Taylor and Francis Online, Proquest, etc.

In exploring and trying to answer the question of “what strategies can special education teachers use to combat burnout”, the following answers were discovered; mentoring, induction, coping strategies, stress management, prevention strategies.

Mentoring

Studies have suggested that mentoring would be an effective way to help first- year teachers not leave the field of teaching. New teachers should have a mentor during the first few years of their teaching experience. Anderson and Shannon defined mentoring in school settings as a nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less experienced teacher to promote the latter’s professional and or personal development. Mentoring functions were carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protege (Anderson & Shannon, 2000, p. 547).

Whitaker (2000) conducted a study that looked at what beginning special education teachers think makes an effective mentoring program and to explore the impact such programs

have on teachers' plans to continue in special education. The South Carolina Department of Education supplied the researchers with a list of first-year special education teachers that were working during the 1998-1999 school year. 200 first-year special education teachers were selected for the study. There were two phases in this study. The first phase consisted of developing the questionnaire the respondents would fill out. First and second-year teachers were one focus group, while mentors of special education teachers, programs, and administrators made up the other focus group. The researchers ensured that both urban and rural schools, men and women, different ethnic backgrounds, various teacher education programs, teachers working with various disabilities, program models, and grade levels were included. The second phase of the study was looking at the results of the study and analyzing the data.

The procedure of the study was to have the respondents fill out and send back the survey to the researchers. The results of the study showed that of the 200 surveys that were sent out, 170 people returned the surveys completed. 14 of the surveys were thrown out of the study because they were no longer employed and were not first-year teachers. "Of the respondents, 94% were female, 86% were white, and 67% were from small towns and rural areas. 52% of the respondents taught at the elementary school setting, 39% of the respondents taught at the secondary setting, and a mixture of 9% taught at both elementary and secondary settings. 45% of the respondents taught resource models and 55% taught in a self-contained classroom" (Whitaker, 2000, p. 549).

Forms of mentoring were unscheduled meetings and were the most used strategy of support/assistance. Respondents stated the unscheduled meetings were most effective. Some of the teachers and their mentors didn't set up meetings or keep in contact with each other. The majority of the mentors worked in the same building as their mentees. For the mentoring to be

successful, the mentor and mentee need to be in contact with each other at least once a week. The following characteristics were important for the mentor to have: knowledge of special education, personal and professional characteristics, taught in special education the same disability didn't matter. For the mentoring program to be successful, the mentor must have the following attributes excellent in teaching, communicates well, and works on building a trusting connection with their mentee. Part E of the questionnaire included several questions to examine the plans of the first-year special education teacher to remain in or leave the field of special education. Two of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire left before the end of the first year (1%), 12 planned to leave after the first year (8%), 40 planned to leave within 5 years (27%), and 97 (64%) planned to remain for at least the next 5 years. Five teachers indicated they were unsure of their plans (Whitaker, 2000, p. 558).

The results of the study have implications regarding (a) the need for relief for novice teachers, (b) discussion in selecting mentors, (c) the form and content of the mentoring that should be contributed (d) the job of the mentor. There are three primary reasons for mentoring programs which are to help beginning teachers cope with dissatisfactions, disappointments, difficulties of the first year of teaching, to combat high turnover and to reduce attrition, and to improve teacher performance. "There are five objectives of a mentorship program for special educators they are: to facilitate the application of knowledge and skills, to convey advanced knowledge and skills, to assist timely acculturation to the school climate, to reduce stress and enhance job satisfaction, and to support professional induction" (Whitaker, 2001, p. 9).

There were 12 responsibilities that the mentors of the special education teachers have, which include: popping in to check on the beginning special education teacher weekly, setting up longer meetings at least monthly to focus on issues of concerns to the beginning teacher,

including the new teacher to staff members and conforming the new teacher to the environment, setting up for the beginning special education teacher to watch experience teachers, watching the beginning special education teacher and giving feedback, presenting assistance with special education policies, procedures, and paperwork, orienting the new teacher to the school environment and procedures, introducing the new teacher to the available resources, consulting with the beginning special education teacher in connection with discipline, guiding the beginning special education teacher with scheduling, planning, and organization and management systems, and collaborating with the novice teacher linked with curriculum and instruction (Whitaker, 2001).

Induction

According to Leko and Smith, “induction is a phase in teacher development that occurs during the first year of teaching and focuses on novices’ concerns and problems of practice” (Leko & Smith, 2010, p.323). Induction programs can assist special education teachers who are new on the job to embrace the most useful methods. According to Whitaker, “high-quality induction programs include (a) mentoring relationships between new and experienced teachers, (b) targeted professionals development, (c) a focus on at least the first year of teaching, (d) an evaluation component with planned remediation of weaknesses” (Leko & Smith, 2001, p. 7). Lesley Huling-Austin identified five implicit and explicit goals of most induction programs: to improve the teaching performance of novice teachers, to increase the retention of novice teachers during the induction years, to promote the personal and professional well-being of novice teachers, to satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification, and to transmit

the culture of the system and the profession (Leko & Smith, 2001, p. 7). In addition to induction programs, mentoring programs have also been seen as helpful.

Coping/Preventing Strategies

The literature review stated strategies that teachers can take to reduce burnout. These strategies include the following; take a proactive attitude toward work: give praise when earned, look for hope in loss the main focus in teaching is on the students, and adapt the mental attitude. The second group of strategies include: do one's best to turn work into pleasure, split pleasure with pupils, establish positive relationships with other people, and decorate the atmosphere. The third group of strategies satisfies personal requirements which is to take care of yourself; if the teacher is not at their best then they can't teach their students (Yong & Yue, 2007).

There are two organizations that help teachers with coping and preventing burnout: The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD). (Cancio et al., 2018) felt that they had a support group that assisted them with resources, staff development, and camaraderie. It is extremely important that special education teachers who teach in a self-contained classroom would benefit from being a part of a larger community that will help alleviate stress in the teachers' work life.

Teachers have stated that having emotional support from family, friends, and colleagues along with listening to music have been used to alleviate stress and teacher burnout. Research has also shown that teachers who were given enough instructional support to ensure high teaching quality and student involvement, as well as emotional support to oversee students' long-term progress, were more likely to experience decreased work-related stress. Another strategy that has been seen to be effective in building and maintaining relationships with their students. The third strategy is collaborating and networking with teachers.

Teachers have many responsibilities, which is why it is important for them to manage their time, create realistic and flexible work goals, make priority lists, limit bringing work home, and master the "groove" or work. "Managing one time is the key to dealing with stress. An effective way to avoid wasting time and dragging things out is to formulate realistic schedules" (Yong and Yue, 2007, p. 83). Teachers should continue with their hobbies, learn what their specific roles are, learn to say "no" when necessary, utilize their resources, implement proper classroom management strategies, and be flexible with change.

Table 2: Recommendations to Reduce Burnout (Bender et al., 2002)

Smaller classes sizes and smaller caseloads are recommended to school districts to increase retention for special education teachers
Reduction in paperwork for special education teachers is recommendation for school district to retain special education teachers
More support and interaction from colleagues, administrators, and special education coordinators within the same school is recommended to assist in reducing stress and burnout for special education teachers
Observing other special education teachers for professional development purposes is recommended to decrease stress and burnout
Planning periods for special education teachers are recommended for school systems to assist in retention
Mentor programs for new special education teachers are recommended to assist with reducing stress.
Stress management professional development workshops are recommended to assist with reducing stress.
Having a clearly defined job description can assist in reducing stress and burnout.
Providing assistance with special education policies, procedures, and paperwork for novice teachers is a recommendation to improve recruitment and retention
Assisting novice teachers with discipline and classroom arrangement will improve

recruitment and retention.
Orientating the beginning teacher to the school district and school policies and procedures will improve recruitment and retention for special educators.
Proper placement of students with special needs can assist in reducing stress and burnout.

Stress Management

(Ansley et al., 2016) conducted a study that focused on teacher wellness and job performance using stress management. Studies noted within (Ansley et al., 2016) recommended that long due stress leads to high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, and compromises the immune system and produces brain changes that may lead to anxiety, depression, and addiction. High stress is also related to increased rates of absenteeism and attrition in special education.

The study also discovered various coping strategies and tools to help combat teacher burnout. When schools put in place mentor and mentee programs, overall findings have proved that these programs there are reductions in teacher stress and attrition and improvements in teacher efficacy. “A publication issued by the Centers for Disease Control urged school districts to implement wellness programs for their employees that include comprehensive stress management interventions for school staff” (Ansley et al., 2016, p. 178). Luckily, effective coping tools can be self-taught by using excellent informational assets or by hiring experts who train in wellness or stress management (ex: counselors, personal trainers, and life coaches). Clinical studies have recommended exercising every day would have long-term benefits for decreasing stress-related symptoms (Ansley et al., 2016).

The article talks about using a stress management plan to help combat burnout. The objective of stress reduction plans to diminish thoughts and behaviors that intensify stress and

restore these with thoughts and behaviors that improve wellness (Ansley et al., 2016). Before trying to manage the stress, special education teachers need to identify the following: (a) their stress-related symptoms, (b) the tools they would like to use, (c) the goals they hope to achieve as a goal of improved coping tools. The outcome for stress management. Similar to a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Self Directed Stress Management Plan (SSMP) includes specific and measurable goals that are connected to observable outcomes that will help special educators specify his or her growth. These goals can include any wanted outcome, whether based on performance or behavior. Implementation items include social support, contextual factors, resources, and initiation.

Figure 1. Self-Directed Stress Management Plan Worksheet.
(Bahous et al., 2016)

Table 1: Researched-Based Strategies for Stress Management

Type of Strategy and examples	Specific Benefits	Description	Websites with more information and resources	Meta-analyses or systematic reviews with supporting evidence
Aerobic exercise Walking Running Swimming Bicycling Dancing Cardio Fitness	Reduced blood pressure, improved executive functioning, improved mood, reduced anxiety	Any physical activity that increases heart rate, respiration, and perspiration	http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20048269 http://www.fitnesblend.com	Rethorst, Wipfli, and Landers (2009); Smith et al. (2010); Wipfli, Rethorst, and Landers (2008)
Yoga Vinyasa Hatha Ashtanga Iyengar Bikram	Reduced blood pressure, reduced bodily pain, improved mood, reduced anxiety, reduced	A system of exercises that focuses on specific body stretches and poses; also	http://www.yogajournal.com http://www.myfreeyoga.com	Bussing, Ostermann, Ludtke & Michaelsen (2012); Lin, Hu, Chang, Lin, and

Kundalini	general stress	focuses on breathing and mental control; each type varies in style	http://breakingmuscle.com/yoga/what-is-yoga-and-how-do-i-pick-a-style	Tsauo (2011)
Cognitive-behavioral methods Thought replacement Problem Solving Time Management Behavior change Assertiveness training Setting boundaries	Reduced blood pressure, improved executive functioning, improved mood, reduced anxiety	Focuses on healthy thought processes, emotions, and behaviors that promote well-being; reframing mind-set and adopting new mental habits and behaviors	http://cbtselfhelp.net http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/abc.htm	Butler, Chapman, Forman, and Beck (2006); Hofman, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, and Fang (2012)
Mindfulness Training Body scan Mindful Walking Mindful Eating Mindful breathing Mindful listening Mindful observation	Improved executive functioning, improved mood, reduced anxiety	A cognitive-based training, with facilitation, to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment	http://www.free-mindfulness.org/download http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22 https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201303/6-mindfulness-exercises-each-take-less-1-minute	Cavanaugh, Strauss, Forder, and Jones (2014); Goyal et al. (2014)
Relaxation Training Deep breathing exercises Progressive muscle relaxation Guided imagery	Reduced blood pressure, reduced bodily pain, improved mood, reduced anxiety, reduced general stress	Techniques typically led by a facilitator that guide participants to control breathing, visualize	http://umn.edu/health/medical/altmed/treatment/relaxation-techniques http://www.dartmouth.edu/~heal	Richardson & Rothstein (2008)

Spiritual practice		soothing conditions, or otherwise invoke a state of increased calmness	thed/relax/downloads.html	
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1. Identification

A. **Stress-related symptoms.** Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms, often associated with stress, that can be reduced or prevented through healthy coping strategies?

- a. High blood pressure
- b. indigestion/heartburn
- c. Relationship problems
- d. dread/pessimism
- e. Increased heart rate
- f. Problems sleeping
- g. Increased fear/worry
- h. Lack of mental focus
- i. Chronic aches and pains
- j. irritability/sadness/mood changes
- k. Lack of patience/tolerance
- l. tense/feel you cannot relax

B. Selecting strategies

1. **Engaging in regular physical activity.** Choose a type of exercise (or exercises) you will engage in regularly (at least 3 days per week) to improve or maintain health and manage stress.
 - a. Aerobic exercise
 - b. Yoga
2. **Addressing mindset, emotions, and behaviors.** Examine your mindset and how it influences your behaviors and emotions. Can it be improved? If so, choose a strategy to help you develop a healthier mindset.
 - a. Thought replacement
 - b. Mindfulness training
3. **Promoting relaxation and healthy functioning.** List any additional coping skills you will learn to reverse your response to stress
 - a. deep-breathing technique
 - b. Guided imagery
 - c. Progressive muscle relaxation
 - d. Other reflection, prayer, or mediation

II. Implementation

What are some barriers that may hinder your plans to practice these strategies?

What are some facilitators that may help you successfully practice these strategies?

How will you schedule your activities?

<p>When will you begin practicing these strategies? Where will you practice your strategies? Who will help you reach your goals through encouragement, positive reinforcement, or participation? How will you include this person? What materials or resources do you need to acquire?</p>

<p>III. Assessment What is your progress toward your goals? Which strategies have helped the most? The least? What changes, if any, should be made to your plan?</p>

(Ansley et al., 2016).

Factors Leading to Burnout

This research lists a variety of factors that can lead teachers to burnout. There are personal characteristics such as the fact that depressed teachers are more prone to burnout. There are also specific characteristics of the job that increase the likelihood of burnout. These characteristics include: workload, withdrawal from staff and students, and time pressure. Role ambiguity and role conflict are also factors that can lead to burnout. There are three components of Maslach Burnout, which include: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Burnout is much higher in teachers who feel that they are not consulted when making decisions. Burnout is also higher in younger teachers than older teachers.

School Climate

The main goal of the Alvarez & Grayson (2007) study was to gain further knowledge on the most well-known aspects of school climate that relate to the three dimensions of teacher burnout. The three components of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The research question the author's purpose is which subfactors of school climate (student-peer relations, instructional management in the school, teacher-student relations) are most consistent for predicting each dimension of burnout. There are two

consequences of teacher burnout. First, both the teacher and those they work with will experience emotional and physical exhaustion. The second is when teachers experience burnout, students, coworkers, and all of the school environment is profoundly affected.

Teacher burnout can affect each individual differently. Men tend to score higher in Depersonalization across all grade levels whereas women score higher in Emotional Exhaustion and diminished Personal Accomplishment scores (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007). Teachers who have unrealistic goals and a lack of development of professional accomplishments have a higher rate of burnout. There are two factors that students display that teachers say leads to burnout: they are student behavior and discipline problems (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007).

There are contextual factors that influence teacher burnout. Friedman conducted a study that has shown that students who misbehave that include disrespect and inattentiveness foreseen teacher burnout across all grade levels (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007). In addition to those components, work overload, poor career structure, and low salaries are also contributing factors to teacher burnout (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007).

The first goal of the study was to identify the most pertinent occupational stressors with the school environment as they connect to each of the three dimensions of burnout. The second goal of the study is to look at how job satisfaction within the school environment and the chances of teacher burnout. The participants were made up of 320 professionals from 17 public schools in rural southeastern Ohio. Specifically, 64% of respondents were regular classroom teachers, 14% were special education classroom teachers, 20% were classified as “other” teachers and less than 1% were one-on-one assistants (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007, p. 1352).

The instrument that was used for the study was the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environment (CASE). The respondents needed to fill out the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS)

and the Teacher Climate Measure (TCM). The TCM measures follow a 5-point Likert scoring format. The TSS evaluates the degree of satisfaction with each item:

“The TSS consist of 56 items and collects self-report data on nine subscales:

administration, compensation, opportunities for advancement, student responsibility and

discipline, curriculum and job tasks, co-workers, parents and community, school

building/supplies the maintenance, and communication” “The TCM is a 55-item self-

report measure that assesses perceptions of the relatively enduring characteristics of a

particular school environment. The TCM collects data on ten subscales: teacher-student

relations, security and maintenance, administration, student academic orientation, student

behavioral values, guidance, student-peer relationships, parent and community-school

relationships, instructional management, and student activities” (Alvarez & Grayson,

2016, p. 1353).

The procedure for the study started with letters sent to superintendents and principals of five school districts in rural southeastern Ohio. Across the five districts, 17 schools responded that they would participate in the study. 520 surveys were sent to teachers about 60% of the surveys were completed and sent back to the researchers. The questionnaires took about 20 minutes to finish

The results of the study showed that females had significantly elevated scores on the Emotional Exhaustion. The surveys revealed that most teachers stated that Emotional Exhaustion was the highest contributor to teacher burnout followed by depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion was closely connected with the climate factors of parent/community relations and student-peer relations, aspects that relate specifically to working with students and families within the school atmosphere. Women had a higher level of emotional

exhaustion. One explanation for this is that women are more often responsible for both the emotional and physical needs of their family. Female teachers may feel forced to speak about emotional investment through a “double dose” of caring for both the school and their home life causing considerable emotional exhaustion. The second component of burnout personal accomplishment Personal Accomplishment consisted of (a) the amount of delineated sets of policies of the students in the school, (b) the amount of classroom time dedicated to learning activities, and (c) the size of outside interruptions. Lastly, factors connected to teacher relationships with other members of the school system both students and administrators were linked to the Depersonalization factor of teacher burnout (Alvarez & Grayson, 2007).

School climate seems to be a big factor in teacher burnout. Current and previous special education teachers commented that not having backing from administrative personnel, fellow teachers, and parents can influence a teacher leaving the field of special education. Special educators will leave because they don't have the opportunities for professional growth and assisting with making decisions. Based on this research, it appears that environmental factors have a better predictability of teacher burnout over teacher and demographic factors.

Farber (1984) conducted a study that was created to identify motivating factors of teaching as well as stressful ones. The research focused on uncovering specific characteristics of suburban schools and classrooms that affect teachers in either functional or dysfunctional ways. Prior to this research, when a teacher's self-actualization and self-esteem are not satisfied, it will lead to burnout. Other research has shown that teacher burnout is the result of stressors specifically student discipline problems, student apathy, overcrowded classrooms and shortages of available support staff, excessive paperwork and testing, demanding parents, lack of administrative support, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Farber, 1984, p. 325).

In this study, there were a total of 398 public school teachers that were primarily from school districts in Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties of New York. 365 of the participants taught in communities they explained as either “suburban” or “small town”. The group of participants were asked to complete the Teacher Attitude Survey at three different times. Each of the statements was rated on a seven-point Lickert scale for both intensity and frequency of agreement. On a seven point Lickert scale (0= never; 1-2= rarely, 3-4=occasionally; 5-6=frequently), 70% of teachers indicated that they either never felt burned out or rarely felt burned out; 19.4% indicated that they occasionally felt burned out; and 10.3% said they frequently felt burned out (Farber, 1984, p. 327). The results revealed that teachers in the 21-33 and 34-44 year old age show themselves as more burned out and less devoted to instructing than did teachers in the 45-65 year age group. Lastly the results showed that feelings of burnout are crucially connected to teachers’ lack of responsibility to their profession and a lack of satisfaction and gratification in working with students.

There are some limitations to this study. The first limit of the study was that the sample focused explicitly on suburban teachers, and didn’t represent urban or rural cities. The second limit of the study was only 30% of the participants returned the survey completed. This leaves the conversation open as to how to represent suburban teachers. The third limit is that more time was needed to be spent on teacher burnout (two to three years) to get clear information about teacher burnout in suburban cities. Teacher burnout tends to lessen teachers’ desire to continue in the teaching field and lessen the relationship between the teacher and their students. The greatest strategy to dealing with teacher burnout is social support. Future studies need to look at teacher burnout over several years instead of one year.

Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) investigated role conflict and role ambiguity in relation to teachers' levels of burnout. According to Iwanicki and Schwab, role conflict is:

“The simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of inconsistent expected role behaviors for an individual. Role conflict occurs when the person cannot reconcile the inconsistency between these sets of expected role behaviors” Inwanicki and Schwab determine that, “role ambiguity is the lack of clear consistent information regarding rights, duties and responsibilities of a person’s occupation and how they can be performed best” (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981, p. 7).

The study was conducted to build upon the work of Maslach (1978) and Kahn (1978) by evaluating burnout among teachers as it interlinks to the organizational stress part of role conflict and role ambiguity. The study is trying to answer the following question; what is the connection between the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and the anticipated teacher burnout part of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The study also wants to look at teachers background variables of age, sex, martial status, grade level taught, years of teaching training, level of education and size of community in which one teaches?

The instrumentation of the study involved is a survey called “The Teacher’s Stress.” There were four components of the survey. The first component of the survey was background information that focused on sex, age, level of education, grade level taught, teaching duty, class size, size of district, and years in instructing. The second component of the survey was the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The third component of the survey was focused on job characteristics. The fourth component was personal information. The questions in this section include; marital status, salary range, smoking, amount of exercise, caffeine drinking, and future

occupational aspirations. The respondents were also asked to list stressful situations they experienced.

The case for this study was made up of teachers from the state of Massachusetts. The participants were selected from an active membership list of Massachusetts Teachers Association. 507 completed and returned the survey. The researchers conducted follow-up requests to the participants to complete and return the survey.

The organizational stress variables of role conflict and role ambiguity differ in their connection to the three burnout subscales. Role conflict totaled for the most fluctuation in both the severity and repetition scale of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. In contrast, role ambiguity was the only organizational stress variable to explain a powerful amount of fluctuation in the personal accomplishment subscale.

Role conflict occurs when two or more people have sets of uncertain expected performance for the person in their role as a teacher. The lack of the teacher to resolve these contradictory expectations results in role conflict.

Future research should evaluate the capability of such intervention methods to determine the capability if they diminish perceptions of role conflict and ambiguity. After conducting the researchers still had three unanswered questions (1) Why does role conflict explain the most variance in the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales? (2) What types of role conflict affect feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization? (3) Why does role ambiguity explain a significant amount of variance in personal accomplishment, while role conflict does not? (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981, p. 21).

TABLE 1 Subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory

A. Emotional Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.

- 3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
- 6. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
- 8. I feel burned out from my work.
- 13. I feel frustrated by my work.
- 14. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
- 16. Working directly with people puts too much stress on me.
- 20. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

B. Depersonalization

- 5. I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal "objects".
- 10. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
- 11. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
- 15. I don't really care what happens to some recipients.
- 22. I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems.

C. Personal Accomplishment

- 4. I can easily understand how my recipients feel about things.
 - 7. I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients.
 - 9. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
 - 12. I feel very energetic.
 - 17. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients.
 - 18. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients.
 - 19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
 - 21. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
- (Iwanicky & Schwab, 1981).

Workplace Characteristics

The main characteristics that are associated with burnout are: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. Many teachers feel they don't have the support from fellow teachers or administration personnel. Special education teachers also feel that their caseloads keep increasing. With the increasing number of caseloads, resources are less available to special education teachers. The study looked at articles between the years of 1979 to 2013. This study included the following components: individual levels, classroom levels, school level factors, and state or district levels associated with burnout (Brunsting et al., 2014).

This study focused on what factors lead to special education teachers leaving the field of special education. “The following factors have contributed to teacher burnout: age, race, teacher efficacy, certification status; relationships with students and caseload; relationships with colleagues assistance from building administrators; and salary, service delivery system, and job benefits” (Brunsting et al., 2014, p. 205). The authors established a survey that was sent out via mail to special education teachers living in Florida. The participants were split into three groups of special education teachers who stayed, teachers who transferred to another classroom or different school, and teachers who ultimately left the field of special education. The results were as follows current licensure; perceived stress, perceived school climate, and age of teacher were the biggest factors for special education teachers to stay, transfer, or leave. Other factors that were looked at in the study didn’t provide significant results.

Administrators

Leko and Smith (2010) conducted an investigation looking into how to retain special education teachers in the field and what administration can do to help special education teachers stay in the teaching profession. Teachers who are weighing the pro’s and con’s of leaving the teaching field to escape stressful environments, however, administrators can influence a teachers choice to leave the classroom and help lower the rate of teachers leaving the profession. Special education teachers who believe they have strong administrative support are “(a) less likely to leave the field, (b) report feeling less stressed, and (c) are more committed to their jobs” (Leko & Smith, 2010, p. 322). There are strategies that administrators can use that will decrease the likelihood of special education teachers leaving the profession they are: “(a) thinking carefully about school climate, (b) investing in induction, (c) assigning mentors, (d) providing professional

development (PD), and (e) assigning reasonable roles and responsibilities” (Leko & Smith, 2010, p. 322).

Administrators need to look at the school climate when trying to figure out strategies to help special education teachers stay in the field. A school climate should include the following components teamwork, collegiality, and shared agreement making among school staff, while also focusing on student behaviors positively and focusing on heavy workload troubles, can create work atmospheres that allow beginning special education teachers to allocate more time concentrating on their instruction. (Leko & Smith, 2010). Administrators can represent a supportive mindset by making sure that students with disabilities are a part of all school events and designing school schedules that ensure students with disabilities have opportunities to interact with their general education peers throughout their day. Special education classrooms that are clustered away from general education classrooms can isolate both students and teachers.

Induction programs are another strategy that administrators can put into place to alleviate teachers leaving the teaching profession. According to Leko and Smith, “induction is a phase in teacher development that occurs during the first year of teaching and focuses on novices’ concerns and problems of practice” (Leko & Smith, 2010, p. 323). Induction programs can assist special education teachers who are new on the job to embrace the methods that have been shown to be most useful. Setting aside time for beginning special education teachers to mingle with other teachers, specifically special education teachers, may make the new special education teacher feel less excluded. Setting aside the time to ensure beginner teachers have the materials and the necessary supplies will cause less stress. In order to foster school climate and induction, administrators can concentrate on arranging joint planning time to further discussion between

special education teachers and general education teachers. If the two groups of teachers are going to be working together often, their classrooms should be next to each other.

Mentoring is another strategy that administrators can implement to help special education teachers not leave the teaching profession. Researchers have found that teachers improved most when mentoring was unscheduled, flexible, and frequent. Special education teachers should feel free to contact their mentors whenever needed. There should be set time aside for mentors to observe their mentees teaching in their classroom. The mentors need to provide the beginning special education teachers with comments and points of view for instruction. Once the observation is completed, the mentor needs to use a non judgemental, non evaluative approach during post observation conversation with their mentee.

Providing professional development (PD) can assist beginning special education teachers stay in the teaching field. Professional development that is effective allows teachers to explain their students' performance in different content areas, and then work together to design instructional plans that focus on student weaknesses and that coordinate with local, state, and national curriculum standards. Professional development can also assist new special educators achieve information about practical teaching practices and the gen ed curriculum. Lastly, PD periods provide new special education teachers with moments to ask questions and discuss concerns. There are specific topics that professional development should focus on: collaborating with general educators, completing IEPs, working with paraprofessionals, dealing with stress, and communicating effectively with parents and caregivers. Administrators can also see what professional development opportunities are available throughout their district and at other schools.

The final strategy is ensuring that people know their roles and responsibilities. Teachers who do not know their responsibilities or roles can burnout. Paperwork is a large part of teaching and can also allude to burnout. Assigning a large number of students with difficult emotional and behavioral problems can lead to burnout.

Putting everything together there are five different steps for keeping special education teachers. The first step is the principal would schedule time for the beginning special educators to visit the district office to meet other special education professionals. The second step is the principal will select one person for each grade level that would work with both the special education teacher and the general education teacher. This teacher would be in charge of scheduling meetings, learning grade level curriculum, and including students with disabilities. The third step is principal would send out a memo to the faculty and staff including scheduling updates, tips for dealing with stress, upcoming professional development events throughout the district, and gratitude of specific faculties work. The fourth step is the principal will have other staff members cover the special education teachers classes so that the special education teacher can get paperwork done. The fifth step is to have a mentor for each beginning teacher (Leko & Smith, 2010).

Benefits of Mindfulness

There is evidence that mindfulness helps develop effective emotion regulation in the brain (Ortner et al., 2007). The participants of the study were 20 nonclinical trainee mediators who participated in a 10-day in-depth mindfulness meditation retreat compared to a waitlist control group on mindfulness, rumination, affect, and performance tasks for attention switching, sustained attention and working memory. Once the mediation group has increasingly higher self-reported mindfulness, less negative affect, limited depression symptoms, and less rumination in relation to the control group. In addition, the mediation group has significantly better working

memory size and greater ability to sustain attention during a performance task in comparison to the control group.

These findings suggested that mindfulness meditation shifts an individual's ability to apply an emotion regulation approach that enables them to experience emotion selectively, and that the emotions they experience may be processed differently in the brain. This study provides support that trait mindfulness may shift baseline amygdala activity so that delivers a preventive or buffering role in depressive mood. Mindfulness training has also been shown to improve the working memory. This study proposed that eight weeks of mindfulness meditation practice may reshape the ways in which emotions are regulated and processed in the brain. Research has indicated that mindfulness meditation enables people to become less reactive and have greater cognitive flexibility. Evidence indicates that mindfulness meditators evolve the skill of self-observation that neurologically disengages automatic pathways constructed from previous learning and enables present moment input to be unified in a new way (Ortner et al., 2007). suggested that mindfulness meditation practice may help individuals disengage from emotionally upsetting stimuli, enabling attention to be focused on the cognitive task at hand in (David & Hayes, 2011, p. 201).

The next section of the article talks about mindfulness and the interpersonal benefits that people experience. The authors...” found that people with higher trait mindfulness reported less emotional stress in response to relationship conflict and entered conflict discussion with less anger and anxiety” (David & Hayes, 2011, p. 201). Empirical evidence advises that mindfulness protects against the emotionally stressful effects of relationship conflict, is positively correlated with the ability to express oneself in diverse social situations and predicts relationship satisfaction (Davis & Hayes, 2011).

The next section of the article talks about mindfulness and the intrapersonal benefits that people experience. Mindfulness has been shown to heighten functions combined with the middle prefrontal lobe area of the brain, such as self-insight, morality, intuition, and fear modulation (Bigel et al., 2012). There is also evidence that mindfulness meditation has numerous health benefits including increased immune functioning. Mindfulness meditation has been exhibited to improve well-being and reduce psychological distress. There is a new concept called neuroplasticity which is the rewiring that develops in the brain as a product of experience—now explains how daily mindfulness meditation practice adjusts the brain’s physical structure and functioning. Changes in the framework of the brain include thicker brain regions associated with attention, sensory processing and sensitivity to internal stimuli, distinct gray matter concentrations, and thicker brain stems, which may account for positive cognitive, emotional and immunoreactive benefits.

Mindfulness Training

Bernay (2014) conducted a study that focused on examining the effects of mindfulness on the professional lives of a group of novice teachers. Based on anticipating reductions in stress, an improved sense of wellbeing, and increased ability to manage with the needs of individual students, the results of the study declared that mindfulness could be an important part of the initial teacher education and professional development programmes for the participants. The researchers defined mindfulness as “being present in each moment in order to focus attention and be totally engaged with whatever is happening, with compassion, curiosity and openness (nonjudgement)” (Bernay, 2014, p. 59). The college of Naropa University in Colorado has been studying mindfulness and has been shown to promote new learning and personal growth for teacher trainees.

The research questions of the study were: What is the lived professional experience of beginning teachers who have been introduced to mindfulness during initial teacher training? The question has two key components: What effects does mindfulness have on the personal and professional resilience of these beginning teachers in their individual contexts? Can introducing mindfulness lead to greater ability to cope with the demands of the first years of teaching, and possibly lead to improved academic achievement and social relationships for students?

The design of the study involved 43 primary school teachers that were in training to become teachers. The teachers attended the University in Auckland in New Zealand. The participants practiced what the researchers called “deliberate mindfulness” which involved “mindful eating, breath awareness, body scan, sitting meditation, and walking meditation.” (Bernay, 2014, p. 61). The student teachers engaged in one of the practices in each lecture for twelve sessions in their first year of study; eleven in their second year of study and ten in their third year of studying. Each one of the strategies was implemented during their first year of study. Out of the 43 student teachers only five student teachers participated in the study. Each one of the participants wrote in their journals every night during their first year of teaching. The participants were then interviewed one by one after they wrote five entries in their journals. The interviews continued after they wrote five entries into their journals. From the interviews the following was discovered that mindfulness improved their personal and professional wellbeing, their teaching, and their desire to remain in the profession. Participating in using mindfulness the teachers noticed students' needs ahead of time, recognizing their own body language and how it was affecting them and their students, and reduction in stress.

Overall, findings illustrated that participants displayed their greater resilience by using mindfulness. Stress levels were reduced; they were able to focus their attention on lesson

planning and on their students, and more unique in their teaching. In addition, they found they were acknowledging rather than reacting emotionally to the children in their classrooms (Bernay, 2014).

The authors of the study (Bigel et al, 2012) further defined mindfulness as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” The practice of mindfulness involves being present sometimes your mind will drift away and rather it is to promote a clearer awareness of direct moment to moment experience with acceptance and a kindly curiosity which is not hidden by judgements about the experience.

The authors (Bigel et al, 2012) conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a healthy workplace group established that an 8 week training in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) decreased the subjective sense of stress, enhanced the subjective sense of well-being, improved immune function, decreased brain action in regions correlated with positive emotion. In conducting the study the following presented the brain’s neuroplastic nature (its ability to establish new neurons and neural connections), individuals can actively reform their brain structure in ways that promote brain health and develop the quality of one’s life..

The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) Program focuses on mindfulness. According to (Bigel et al., 2012) the CARE “is based on the Prosocial Classroom Model including four broad interventions aims at: (1) improve teachers’ overall wellbeing; (2) improve teachers’ effectiveness in providing emotional, behavioral, and instructional support to students; (3) improve teacher-child relationships and classroom climate; (4) increase students’ positive behavior” (Bigel et al., 2012, p. 295). The CARE program has been presented in many formats: two 2-day training periods; four 1-day periods; and a 5-day intensive retreat. In between

the sessions, CARE instructors provide emails and individualized coaching periods over the phone as members begin to practice and apply learning from CARE into their instructing.

Another mindfulness practice that was included in the study is Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART) in education. “This program is modeled based on the MBSR and includes the following three curriculum ingredients: (1) Concentration, Attention, and Mindfulness; (2) Awareness and Understanding of Emotions; and (3) Empathy and Compassion Training. The training includes 11 sessions over 8 weeks, including two day-long periods” (Bigel et al., 2012, p. 295). The capability to be with students and developing the felt sense in the classroom is a critical benefit to learning and progress and thus a foundational practice of mindfulness training for teachers.

Teaching mindfulness to teachers allows them to develop a personal practice that creates an expanded and more sustainable benefit to the structure of education. Research has shown that programs need to focus on (a) intervention effectiveness, (b) how and why the intervention works, and (c) indicators for whom and under what circumstances the interventions will be successful. It is important to nurture teachers’ inner resilience via mindfulness-based training forms a relational foundation in the classroom for fostering students' age-appropriate mindful skills that, in turn, appear to foster their own inner resilience. Programs that merge the classroom-based strengths of a program such as Mindful Schools or Innerkids with the backing of teachers’ resilience and emotional competence inherent in initiatives like the Inner Resilience Program, CARE, or MBWE will likely broaden the appeal, effectiveness, and scalability of integrating mindfulness into K-12 education (Bigel et al., 2012).

Beers, Jennings, Roeser, and Skinner conducted a study looking at mindfulness training and professional development. Professors who teach soon to be teachers and specialists who

work in professional development have determined three key components of professional education and skills essential for improving teachers' environment teaching: “ (a) subject-matter or content knowledge such as mathematics, (b) pedagogical knowledge concerning how and when to teach the subject matter (e.g. how to teach the concept of a statistical average, (c) developmental knowledge concerning how and when to teach content to students of different ages” (Beers et al., 2012, p.167).

Mindfulness can be explained as including three correlated mental skills and dispositions: (a) focusing on the here and now, (b) looking at the current moment in a positive and clear manner; and (c) receive each moment just as it is without swaying mental reactions or judgements (Beers et al., 2012) Mindfulness practices includes body scans, in which members direct their energy regularly through the body to bring awareness to somatic experience; mediation on the breath to establish concentration; and mediation on present-moment experience to bring recognition to the body, feelings, images, and thoughts and to establish insight and stability with regard to all components of present-moment experiences.

The components of mindfulness skills to the specific demands of teaching is backed throughout by weekly meetings consisting of group mindfulness practice and discussions of practice, by listening to recordings of assigned home mindfulness practices, and by homework assignments in which teachers are encouraged to use the skills of mindfulness to some aspect of their teaching and report back to the group. The mindfulness training model of development of teacher's mindfulness and related habits of mind such as “tolerance for uncertainty, attentional focus, cognitive flexibility, and emotion regulation, improves teachers' occupational health and well-being” (Beers et al., 2012, p.170). Using mindfulness training heightened health and well-being among teachers could lead to greater occupational engagement and satisfaction and less

teachers not showing up for work, job burnout, healthcare use and not coming back to teach because of the stress and burnout. Figure 1. Shows the logical model of hypothesized mindfulness training effects on teachers, classroom environments, and students (Beers et al., 2012).

(Emerson et al., 2017) conducted a study looking at how to teach mindfulness to teachers. The authors of the study used Jennings and Greensberg logic model which proposes that Mindfulness Based-Interventions (MBI's) work specifically to assist teachers to see greater self-awareness and monitor stress reactions. When teachers engage in MBI's the results are decreased stress with bouts of increase in emotion regulation and self-efficacy. The goal of this study is to summarize the current research evidence exploring the success of MBI's for (1) reducing teacher stress, (2) supporting gains in emotion regulation and self-efficacy as bouts of effect, (3) mindfulness and self-compassion as instruments of action.

Articles that the researchers found useful were sent to teachers if pupils ages 5-18, the teachers taught in either mainstream or special education classrooms and evaluated as a component of teacher stress, self-efficacy or emotion regulation. The studies focused on models of mindfulness that already existed. The articles specifically incorporated core experiential mindfulness practices during teaching sessions and at home practice. The studies had to be able to be delivered across multiple sessions of teaching and included home practice materials. Out of all the studies that were examined, the researchers only included 12 of the articles. According to Emerson et al., (2017), "the quality of each paper was assessed for each qualifying study: publication details, design, MBI details, and population details. In addition, relevant data were collected across four areas: (i) teacher stress, (ii) self-efficacy, (iii) emotion regulation and (iv) mindfulness and compassion" (Emerson et al., 2017, p. 1138).

Eight week programmes based on MBSR and/or MBCT were evaluated in six studies. A modified version of MBSR programmes involving the Stress Management and Relaxation Training (SMART) in Education was exploited in three studies. The SMART program was delivered during 36 hours of contact time spread over 5-9 weeks. The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) is a mindfulness-based programme specially created to foster teacher wellbeing, motivation, and efficacy. CARE was exploited in four studies involving four daylong sessions were delivered over 4-5 weeks.

There were 49 effect sizes, ranging from 0.01 to 2.12 that were created on the effects of a MBI on teacher stress, including psychological and physical symptoms, perceived stress and/or burnout. Focusing on the component of stress and the symptoms of anxiety and depression across studies, 44% of reported effects were significant. There is a strong correlation between MBI's and emotional regulation. The studies conducted that focused on emotional regulation showed teachers had a more balanced emotional regulation when using the Mindfulness Based Interventions. Through participation in mindfulness practices an individual may see improvement in mindfulness (decentering, regulation of attention) and self-compassion that show a more useful emotional regulation method and expanded professional self-efficacy and ultimately reduced stress (Emerson et al., 2017).

In Summary, we have discussed the literature that is available. In the next chapter we will focus on how to apply the literature to special education, the limitations and implications of the research and why the author chose to research this topic.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

Burnout has been around since the mid 1970's. The concept of burnout started out by looking at individual characteristics. As research developed, burnout started shifting to workplace characteristics. Currently the idea of burnout focuses on both the individual characteristics and the workplace environment. Maslach framework is the current framework that is used when looking at burnout. There are three components for the framework: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion focuses on when an individual has drained emotional supplies and struggles with a lack of energy and fatigue. Depersonalization is removing yourself from others and not feeling valued. Lack of personal accomplishment is the feeling of not being successful at the job.

One of the ways to combat burnout is mentoring. Mentoring is when you have a seasoned teacher who has been in the field for a long time mentoring a first year teacher. Mentoring has been defined as a nurturing technique in which a proficient or more experienced person, serving as a role model, coaches, supports, reassures, advises, and befriends a novice teacher to boost the latter's professional and or personal development. The mentor's job is to check-in with the novice special education teacher weekly, setting up meetings once a month to focus on areas that the novice special education teacher is struggling with, introducing the novice special education teacher to other teachers in the building both gen ed and special ed, and observing the novice teacher and giving them feedback.

Another way to deal with burnout is this idea of induction. According to Leko and Smith "induction is a phase in teacher development that occurs during the first year of teaching and focuses on novices' concerns and problems of practice" (Leko & Smith, 2010, p. 323). There are

five objectives: revamp the teaching practice of beginning teachers, to heighten the retention of novice teachers during the induction years, to develop the personal and professional safety of beginning teachers, to comply with assigned requirements in connection with induction and certification, and to spread the culture of the system and the profession.

A third way to deal with burnout is coping and preventing strategies. There are three different groups of strategies. The first group of strategies focuses on having a can do mindset in relation to work, provide praise when acquired, see the anticipation in the loss, the central focus in teaching is on the students, adjust the mental mindset. The second group of strategies focuses on doing one's best to change work into enjoyment. The third group of strategies provide personal specifications. There are two organizations that can help teachers cope and prevent burnout: Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD). In conclusion, mentoring, induction, and coping strategies are ways that we can combat burnout. Mindfulness is also a tool and program that can be used as a coping strategy.

One of the factors that can lead to burnout is school climate. When looking at school climate there are subfactors that we need to take into account: student-peer interactions, instructional administration in the school, and teacher-student interactions. Current and prior special education teachers stated that not having support from administrative personnel, fellow teachers, and parents affect a teacher disappearing from the field of special education. Special education teachers are more likely to leave the profession if they don't have opportunities for growth and assisting with making rules for the school.

Another factor that can lead to burnout is role conflict/role ambiguity. According to Iwanicki and Schwab, role conflict is "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of of

inconsistent expected role behaviors for an individual” (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981, p. 7) and “role ambiguity is the lack of clear consistent information regarding rights, duties and responsibilities of a person’s occupation and how they can be performed best” (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981, p. 7). Some potential techniques for decreasing role conflict and role ambiguity create clear lines of authority within the school management, evolve clear teacher job descriptions, include teachers in the creation of realistic systemwide as well as individual school targets and intentions, include staff in the teacher draft and evaluation procedure, equip teachers and administrators in conflict resolution strategies, and formulate efficient teacher support groups.

Workplace characteristics and administrators can have an impact on teacher burnout. Special education teachers feel that they don’t have the support from administrators and their caseloads keep increasing with less resources available to them. “The following factors have contributed to teacher burnout: age, race, teacher efficacy, certification status; relationship with students and caseload; relationships with colleagues assistance from building administrators, and salary, service device system, and job benefits” (Burnsting et al., 2014, p. 205). Some of the strategies that administrators can use to keep special education teachers in the teaching field are (a) deliberating carefully about school climate, (b) adopt in induction resources, (c) designate mentors, (d) implement professional development, and (e) allocating reasonable roles and responsibilities. There are five steps that administrators can take to help ensure their special education teachers don’t leave the profession. The first step is the principal would allocate time for the novice special educators to meet and talk with other special education professionals. The second step would be for the principal to choose one person for each grade level that would collaborate with both the special education teacher and the general education teacher. The third

step would be the principal would send out a memo to the faculty and staff including scheduling updates, strategies for dealing with stress, upcoming professional development events through the district, and gratitude of specific faculties work. The fourth step is the principal will have other staff representatives cover for special education teachers giving them an opportunity to get paperwork done. The fifth step is to have a mentor for each novice teacher.

Professional Applications

I chose this topic because I wanted to learn what causes burnout and how to manage burnout. As a first year special education teacher, I wanted to not experience burnout. Prior to working at my current school, I worked at another charter school in a setting three ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders)/ DCD (Developmental Cognitive Delay)room. This was by far my biggest challenge. I was all of the sudden in charge of 12 students with various degrees of ASD and DCD with no support, which felt intimidating. Many times throughout that experience I felt emotionally exhausted. I think it was a blessing in disguise that I didn't get offered the position for the school year 2020-2021.

At my current school, the mentors are assigned to first year teachers. This is helpful in navigating a new building, new staff, and being in a pandemic situation. I would like to continue to have a mentor available to me as I continue to grow as a special education teacher. The special education department provides us with a mentor that specializes in special education. I have used this resource many times to get advice on how to write IEP's during a pandemic or just to have a listening ear. The great benefit is that we can do what they call an "SOS" call meaning we can get help as soon as possible.

In researching this topic, I found some great strategies to use to not get burnout. The first strategy is making time for myself with the things that I like to do. For example, this would be cross stitching. Another strategy that I would use is talking to fellow special education teachers.

Limitations of the Research

When researching the topic of burnout, there were many articles, journals and books that discussed the reasons for burnout. These articles were specifically about the factors that lead to burnout and the ways to combat burnout, however there is not much information about mindfulness training or what specific disabilities lead to special education teachers getting burnout.

Another limitation of the research is that many of the studies didn't originate in the United States. The studies usually started in Europe. Europe and the United States structure their school systems differently. In order to get better information about teacher burnout we need to have studies conducted in the United States. It would be beneficial for researchers to research teacher burnout in each state. There also is not enough research done on which specific student disabilities lead to burnout. In order to effectively eliminate burnout, we need to find out which disabilities are most likely to lead to teacher burnout. Once we have figured out which disabilities have a higher rate of teacher burnout we can focus on them.

Implications for Future Research

Researchers have suggested that we do some investigating on providing a better understanding of interventions and coping tools to eliminate teacher stress and burnout. We also need to look at how current special educators are managing with pressures that are connected to

their jobs, and if they are using healthy or unhealthy ways for coping with stress. Another topic that we need to look into is the repercussions of stress and coping strategies for stress seem to change with age and licensure. Focusing on the idea of mindfulness and how it pertains to teacher's education, is also important. We should continue to explore the following questions: How can reappraisal help teachers to rejuvenate and restore their energy? What are the appraisal processes in teachers' emotional arousals? What are the processes involved in emotion regulation? What are the different processes used when regulating different emotions, such as anger and frustration? What are the most effective coping strategies in dealing with anger and frustration?

Reason for Topic Choice

I first heard the term burnout from Dr. [Peggy McCormick](#) - Bethel University. I was taking one of her classes and she stated that she experienced burnout. I thought to myself, if a seasoned special education teacher can experience burnout then could I, a novice special education teacher, also experience burnout.

I started my second round of student teaching at an elementary school in Cologne Minnesota. The particular classroom that I was working in was a federal setting three ASD/DCD classroom. There were a total of 12 students. Once I finished my student teaching in October I was hired as a full time special education teacher under the condition that I would have a mentor teaching supporting me. That exactly didn't happen. The mentor teacher decided to leave in December. Fortunately, the school hired another special education teacher to support me in the classroom, however she didn't start until February. For the month of January, I had 12 students

and 8 paras to manage. I started to see how burnout could become a real possibility. This is when I decided to research burnout for my thesis topic.

Conclusion

Burnout has become a major concern for special education teachers. There are three components of burnout, emotional exhaustion, lack of personal achievement, and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion happens when an individual has drained emotional supplies and struggles with a lack of energy and fatigue. Depersonalization means removing oneself from others, particularly from students with whom teachers have to collaborate in the work of their jobs. A decline in personal accomplishment develops from a decreased sense of competence and reduction of one's work. Some of the factors that can lead to burnout are workplace characteristics, administrators, school climate, role ambiguity and role conflict.

There are some tips and strategies that we could use to help combat burnout. The first strategy is mentoring. Mentoring is where you a seasoned special education teacher coaching and guiding a novice special education teacher. The second strategy is mindfulness. Mindfulness is a tool that special education teachers can use that focuses on breathing and meditation. The third strategy is using coping and/or preventive tools.

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