LEGISLATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY: EFFECTS ON K-12 TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

Shelly Annette Robinson
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LEGISLATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY:
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by

Shelly Annette Robinson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Approved:

August 2007
The University of Southern Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

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August 2007

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of five public school elementary teachers in a southwestern state required to meet mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and to determine if the Act impacted their job satisfaction. A case study research design was conducted between November 2006 and February 2007. Data was collected through observation, interviews, which were tape recorded, and documents. Data was analyzed by using categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, pattern establishment, and naturalistic generalization. Results indicated that: a) teachers do what they think is best in their classrooms regardless of the NCLB Act; b) buffers, such as collegiality, relieve the stress of expectations and requirements imposed by outside influences; c) teachers tend to teach to the NCLB Act test; and d) job satisfaction is unaffected individually by the NCLB Act.
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to tireless teachers everywhere.

Of you the growing mind demands

The patient care, the guiding hands,

Through all the mists of morn.

And knowing well the future’s need,

Your prescient wisdom sows the seed

To flower in years unborn.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes
National Educational Association
February, 1893
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A special thank you to the school district and the five teachers in the school system who were the participants of this research. Their cooperation and helpfulness made the research plausible and rewarding.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their love and support. Without you I may have given up a long time ago. If I have inadvertently omitted any person deserving of my thanks and gratitude, I beg forgiveness for the oversight and humbly wish for their forbearance.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....................................................................................................................ii
DEDICATION .................................................................................................................iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...........................................................................................iv
LIST OF TABLES .........................................................................................................vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................1

  Purpose of the Study
  Questions
  Significance of the study
  Research Design
  Limitations
  Definition of Terms

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .................................................................10

  History of NCLB
  Challenges of the NCLB Act
  The Intensification Theory

III. METHODS .........................................................................................................33

  Ethical Issues
  Instrumentation and Procedure
  Analysis of the Data
  Verification of the Findings

IV. FINDINGS ..........................................................................................................40

  Profiles of Individual Teachers
  Guiding Main Question One
  Guiding Main Question Two
  Guiding Main Question Three
  Second Interview Questions
  Summary

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LIST OF TABLES

Table
1. Participant characteristics.................................................................43
2. Teacher duties in a typical elementary-school classroom..........................46
3. Teacher responsibilities other than teaching.............................................47
4. You must not teach to the test – Activities directly related to NCLB........51
5. Impact on job satisfaction......................................................................57
6. Doing what is best for the students.........................................................77
7. Buffers that alleviate pressure in teachers..............................................79
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Preparing students for the future is the responsibility of individuals who choose teaching as a profession. Teaching students the skills they need to compete in the adult world has always been considered an honorable and worthy calling; however, many have become disillusioned or dissatisfied with the profession since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Since the beginning of compulsory schooling in America, there have been impositions and requirements placed upon teachers from outside sources such as school boards, state legislatures, and the federal government. Working within these imposed regulatory requirements causes some teachers to lose hope of having the freedom to do what is in their opinion, best for their students, and they resort to one of two actions to ameliorate their discomfort: 1) they continue to work while experiencing job dissatisfaction, or 2) they quit the profession.

Background of the Problem

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was an effort to hold American teachers and public schools more accountable for learning outcomes. The law outlined a plan to improve education in the United States by focusing on four elements of compulsory education: a) improving teacher accountability for student achievement; b) increasing freedom for states and communities to choose methods to improve accountability; c) encouraging educators to use proven educational methods; and d) offering more choices for parents (United States Department of Education, 2001). The accountability element of the NCLB Act relates to added expectations placed upon classroom teachers.
Teachers who leave the field shortly after receiving licensure and during the first years of teaching have caused a significant teacher shortage in many states. Research has shown that good teachers make a significant difference in the learning accomplishments of their students, as opposed to mediocre teachers, who significantly impact overall learning in a negative manner. If novice teachers leave the profession before they have had time to develop their instructional skills, their vacancies are often temporarily filled with unlicensed individuals (Bobek, 2002). Wright (2005) conducted a phenomenological study in which she interviewed seven certified teachers in Idaho. She sought to understand the experience of teaching elementary school in an era of legislated accountability. Wright reported that the participants of her study did not feel “valued, trusted or respected as professionals,” and she found that most teachers in her study questioned the basic philosophy of the NCLB Act (p. 17).

The NCLB Act impacts parents, children, teachers, administrators, and taxpayers. Dever and Carlston (2006) found that many administrators who deal with the assessment mandates from the NCLB find its requirements create varying degrees of unrest in the profession. They reported that assessment implementation in the primary grades has generated what some call “job dissatisfaction.” In addition, professional educators indicate that they are not being properly informed about the NCLB Act, and that the pressure to succeed placed on them and the students they teach takes precedence over their best professional judgment.

In an attempt to increase school accountability, the NCLB Act focuses on standardized tests, thus affecting how teachers teach (Dever & Carlston, 2006). Some teachers believe this has narrowed the curriculum, and that math, science, and reading,
the only subjects being tested under the mandates of the NCLB legislation, has led to over-focus on these subject areas. Teachers are also concerned about the effect of academic pressure and testing on English language learners and special needs children. Many teachers feel that “the spirit of NCLB was admirable, but the law is not achieving its intended goal” (p. 1). In addition to legislative imposed mandates and growing job dissatisfaction, top-down decision-making also has a role in teacher job dissatisfaction. Teachers have long resented “top-down decision-making” in their school districts (Knight, 2000, p. 9), and the resulting lack of job satisfaction has serious implications for teacher retention. Wright (2005) comments:

A complicating factor in this current climate of change is that my participants feel that the system of change, as mandated by NCLB, is fundamentally unjust to both students and teachers. They believe that the weight and value placed on a single test score diminishes what they do by reducing their teaching efforts to superficial numbers. Under threat or pressure to produce uniform outcomes when there are obviously so many different factors that affect students’ performance, my participants are left feeling frustrated, powerless, unfairly judged, not only by administrators, but also by the general public (p. 174).

Wright (2005) further sympathized with her participants by expressing concern that it must be “demoralizing to work in an educational climate that not only refuses to acknowledge the complexity of teaching, but also uses governmental power and control in the form of money and public humiliation as a stick to enforce its agenda” (p. 174).

Despite negative feelings regarding the NCLB Act, Wright (2005) was able to find five aspects of the Act that she felt were positive for teachers and students in her
study: a) some teachers in her study set higher standards for all students due to the pressure of testing expectations; b) the majority of participants in the study felt the test data helped them plan, differentiate instruction, and pinpoint students' academic weaknesses more accurately; c) they used test data in a timelier manner because testing companies were providing better data-analysis and reporting tools; d) teachers were thinking more critically about their practice; and e) teachers were collaborating more with colleagues to plan instruction (p. 180).

Simon (2005) conducted a qualitative study in which she sought to answer how feeder elementary schools respond when middle and high schools fail under the NCLB Act. Simon interviewed administrators, teachers and parents to inquire about their understanding of the Act and how they felt about the law. Parents were found to have the least knowledge of the Act. She found that administrators had the best understanding of the law and could see merit in it. Teachers did not seem to have a working knowledge of the Act or the consequences for not meeting it. Simon stated, “Despite this weak and often inaccurate understanding, the majority of teachers in both buildings held the strong opinion that the law is unfair, unrealistic, and unnecessary” (p. 60). The teachers who knew the most about the NCLB Act gave credit to newspapers and websites as the sources of their knowledge and reported that their school districts were weak in informing them of the guidelines and consequences of the NCLB Act. The teachers in this study expressed concerns that the NCLB Act was preventing them from focusing on the needs of the children they taught, and impaired them from teaching as a result of the “stringent timelines and what they [viewed] as excessive testing” (p. 61). Simon found
the teachers to be “frustrated and unable to teach in ways that they valued within the
district’s assessment-driven accountability system” (p. v).

Purpose of the Study

With NCLB implementation in public schools, teachers are being held to high
levels of accountability. This study explored how five public school elementary teachers
experienced teaching under the mandates of the NCLB Act during a typical day in the
school year, and how their experiences affected job satisfaction.

Questions

According to Ingersoll (2002) and Inman and Marlow (2004), job dissatisfaction is
the reason why 50% of teachers leave the teaching profession. The primary research
question of this study was: What impact does the implementation of the NCLB Act have
on five elementary school teachers on an ordinary day in a southwestern state, and how
does it impact job satisfaction? This study evaluated job satisfaction with the following
three key questions:

1. What activities do five sample elementary school teachers engage in on a typical
day?

2. Do any of these activities directly relate to or are they required by the
   implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?

3. Do expectations of the No Child Left Behind Act impact job satisfaction?

Significance of the Study

Even though recent studies have gathered the thoughts of teachers concerning the
NCLB Act, research has not been conducted that investigated the impact of this
legislation on the job satisfaction of teachers. Consequently, this study was constructed to
fill this gap in man’s knowledge by investigating the impact of the Act upon the satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, of five teachers in a typical school district.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the experiences of five public school elementary teachers in a southwestern state when they were required to meet mandates of the NCLB Act, and to determine their job satisfaction. The goal was to seek an understanding of teacher experiences of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, to document demands made on the five teachers involved in this study by the Act, and to examine ways the expectations impacted their job satisfaction. The study took place between November 2006 and February 2007. Permission from the University of Southern Mississippi’s Human Subjects Review Board was obtained before conducting interviews, as well as permission from the Superintendent of the school district in which the study took place.

Participants

Five teachers were selected from a school district in a southwestern state that consisted of a high population of Hispanic students, several Title I schools, and a population of low-level socio-economic families. The school district was comprised of ten elementary schools. The study incorporated work with a gatekeeper, an assistant superintendent, and the principals of five elementary schools, with one teacher participant from each. Participants included only individuals who had experience teaching under the NCLB Act. Each participant held a valid teaching license. Tenure of the teachers ranged from four through eighteen years of experience, and consisted of three females and two males.
Instrumentation

According to Creswell (1998) there are four basic types of data collection used in qualitative research: a) observations; b) interviews; c) documents; and c) audio-visual devices. Video records were not permitted in this study, but observations, interviews, and documents were used, and interviews were tape-recorded. An observation protocol was established prior to commencement of the study. Descriptive notes of teacher activities during the day were recorded, including researcher observations. An interview protocol was established prior to two semi-structured interviews of the participant teachers. The first interviews were conducted before classroom observations were made, and second interviews were conducted after observations were concluded. An e-mail protocol for sent and received electronic messages was established, and one day during data collection was designated as appropriate for such exchanges.

Procedure

Initial interviews were held for approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and the results were tape-recorded. A second interview was held for approximately the same length of time, verification of the results of the initial interview was made, follow-up questions were asked, and the results were tape-recorded.

As data were collected, the documents were coded for three main areas of study concomitant with the research questions already itemized. Following the research of Creswell (2003) and Merriam (2002), verification of this qualitative study was ensured by: a) triangulation of data in which the researcher used multiple and different sources to provide corroborating evidence; b) member checking involving taking data back to the participants so they could judge the accuracy and credibility of the account, and c) long
term and repeated observations at the research site were made to check for
"misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher or the
respondent" (p. 202).

Limitations Several limitations affect the data in a qualitative study. This study was
limited by the following consideration:

1. The participants may have exaggerated their answers to the questions, skewing
the results.
2. Participants may have misunderstood the questions.
3. The researcher may have inadvertently implied by look or body movement that an
answer was acceptable or not acceptable.
4. The school district may not have an unbiased environment either for or against the
NCLB Act.

Definition of Terms

Accountability System

"Each state sets academic standards for what every child should know and learn.
Student academic achievement is measured for every child, each year. The results of
these annual tests are reported to the public" (United States Department of Education,
2001).

Achievement Gap

"The difference between how well low-income and minority children perform on
standardized tests as compared with their peers" (United States Department of Education,
2001).
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

The minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year (United States Department of Education, 2001).

Pressures

The compelling influences with regard to expectations from outside.

Rigorous Scientific Research

A term used in the No Child Left Behind Act that refers to evidence that has been proven using scientific research. The government has established a "What Works Clearinghouse" to provide a central, independent and trusted source of scientific evidence on what works in education for parents, educators, policymakers and anyone else who is interested (United States Department of Education, 2001).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

History of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

The No Child Left Behind Act contains four components: (a) stronger accountability for student achievement; (b) increased freedom for states and communities; (c) encouragement of educators to use proven educational methods; and (d) offer more choices for parents (United States Department of Education, 2001, p.1). Each state is required to formulate a plan of action and submit the plan to the United States Department of Education for approval. The stronger accountability system requires states to describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students achieve academic proficiency. “Schools that do not make progress must provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring or after-school assistance, take corrective actions, and, if still not making adequate yearly progress after five years, make dramatic changes to the way the school is run” (United States Department of Education, 2001).

The NCLB Act, recognizing that each state is different, gives the fifty states more control over how federal funds are spent. Grant programs give states and school districts greater flexibility to choose the types of teacher professional development they feel will help raise student achievement (United States Department of Education, 2001). School districts in each state are encouraged to use research-based educational programs that have been proven effective through “rigorous scientific research.” Schools that use such programs receive federal funding to support said programs (United States Department of Education, 2001). Finally, the NCLB Act gives parents more control over their child’s education. Parents are now allowed to choose another school if their child attends a
school that needs improvement or is considered unsafe. Free tutoring and other programs are provided to students attending schools that need improvement. School districts also have to provide information to help parents make informed educational choices for their children (United States Department of Education, 2001).

*Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965*

In 1965, President, Lyndon B. Johnson introduced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provided aid to schools educating underprivileged children. The ESEA was part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty (Hanna, 2005). Hanna commented “The Senate approved ESEA on April 11, 1965 without proposing a single additional amendment. Within two years following the passage of ESEA, the U.S. Office of Education’s annual budget for some 27,000 school districts jumped from $1.5 billion to $4 billion, marking the federal government’s definitive entry into public education.” The ESEA continued until the 1970’s when a failing economy limited federal spending on education. ESEA went through several reauthorizations in the 1970’s, which mostly focused on the use of Title I monies.

In 1981 with the election of Ronald Reagan, the economy began to recover and education came under scrutiny once again. Even though Reagan was against expanding the federal government’s role in education and even campaigned to have the U. S. Department of Education abolished, he assembled the National Commission on Excellence in Education to report on the quality of education in the America. The Nation at Risk Report of 1983 came from this meeting and reported that the schools in America were second-rate at best. The Nation at Risk report called for a core curriculum and national standards for secondary education. Reagan was opposed to this idea, and called
for each state to establish its own academic standards, which lead to a diversity of education goals across the nation. Reagan drastically cut back federal spending on education and left the responsibility of education on the states (Shreve, 2005). The Nation at Risk Report recommended the following:

We recommend that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundation in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) one-half year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended in addition to those taken earlier (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

*The National Education Summit of 1989*

In 1989, George H. W. Bush was elected president of the United States and called for all the governors from each state to attend the National Education Summit. Six broad educational objectives came from this meeting and were entitled America 2000 (Shreve, 2005).

a) By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn; b) The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent; c) American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship,
further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy; d) U. S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement; e) Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and f) Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2006.)

President George H. W. Bush created the National Education Goals Panel to monitor and report on the progress made by each state in meeting the six goals. Before this plan could be implemented, William Clinton, governor of Arkansas, who was in attendance at the National Education Summit helping set the six goals, defeated Bush and become the next president of the United States. Clinton continued Bush’s ideas, and in 1994, enacted the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 and Goals 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). “The lesson that many policymakers and analysts took from the 1994 Reauthorization was that federal dollars needed to be tied more explicitly to measurable gains in student performance” (Rudalevige, 2003, p. 64). This would lay the foundation for the consequences states now face if not making adequately yearly progress. Not one of these acts before NCLB had any consequences associated with them and was ultimately ignored by every state.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

In 2001, George W. Bush became the 43rd president of the United States and introduced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was a culmination of the previous educational laws since 1965. The NCLB became the first educational reform
act to have consequences for noncompliance. Schools not complying with the guidelines of the NCLB Act would have federal funds taken away, and administrators’ and teachers’ jobs could be in jeopardy, making this law potentially the most controversial educational law ever.

Educators and administrators complained that the NCLB Act had unrealistic expectations and unattainable goals by expecting every child to be a reader by the year 2014 and by not leaving a single child behind regardless of the circumstances. United States Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings (2005) disagreed that the goals were unattainable. “In spite of a few state politicians who insist it can’t be done, teachers and students in classrooms across America say it can. Our children and teachers are meeting the high expectations we’ve set” (p. 2). Spellings took a firm approach on school districts not complying with the NCLB Act and fined Texas $444,282 in April 2005 for failing to release test scores in a timely manner from schools not making adequate yearly progress. Additionally, Texas was fined for not meeting the deadline of informing parents of their right to transfer their children out of struggling schools (Hoff, 2005).

Texas was not the only state having federal funds taken from them because of the NCLB Act. The District of Columbia had $120,000 taken away because the standardized tests in the district were not in compliance with the state’s content standards. Georgia lost $783,000 for the same reason. Minnesota lost $112,000 because the state used attendance data rather than test scores to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status. Some states such as Utah may forfeit the monies made available to their district by not participating in the NCLB Act. Utah risks losing $76 million in federal funds if it goes
forward with a new law that ignores the NCLB Act (Center for Public Policy and Administration, 2005).

States have complained that the United States government has not fully funded the NCLB Act, therefore placing more burdens and financial anguish on struggling school districts. In 2004, Hardy pointed out that the “NCLB cannot become an unfunded mandate: The law itself forbids it” (p. 1). On April 20, 2005 the National Education Association and eight school districts in Michigan, Texas, and Vermont sued the Department of Education for violating the portion of the NCLB Act that says states cannot be forced to spend their own money to meet the law’s requirements. The NCLB Grassroots Organization reported that 47 of 50 states were in some form of rebellion against NCLB Act (Aaron, 2005). Three states, Utah, Colorado, and Connecticut were in full-blown revolt over this piece of legislation.

Challenges to the NCLB Act

There are several areas on which states are currently challenging the NCLB Act. Most states have considered legislation to opt out of the NCLB Act. States want legislation that protects them from using state funds to implement and maintain the requirements of the NCLB Act. Litigation by many states represents the second form of rebellion. “Lawsuits filed on behalf of school districts have asserted that the NCLB Act is an unfunded mandate, that provisions of the NCLB Act conflict with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and have presented challenges to the NCLB Act’s requirements for testing English language learners” (Aaron, 2005, p. 1). Many states are opting out, asking for waivers and exceptions as a third sign of rebellion. Illinois has
several school districts that have given up Title I money, “therefore relieving themselves of any obligations of the NCLB Act” (Aaron, 2005, p. 2).

Fourteen states have conducted cost study analyses to determine the financial burden of implementing and supporting efforts of the NCLB Act. States estimate the funding gap to be upwards of $108 million per year at some local levels. Studies by nine states, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania, predict 75% to 90% of schools by 2014 will be labeled as failing to meet AYP.

Even with all the complaints, recent reports show that the NCLB Act may actually be working. “Of the 49 states surveyed by the independent Center on Education Policy last year, 36 reported that student achievement was improving. The 314 school districts surveyed said they were providing more instruction for low-achieving students and more professional development for teachers” (Ripley & Steptoe, 2005, p. 4). The long-term Nation’s Report Card by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results released in July 2005 showed elementary school student achievement in reading and math at all-time highs, and the achievement gap closing. The United States Department of Education (2006) released the following concerning nine-year-olds in America:

(a) There’s been more progress in reading for nine-year-olds in the last five years than in the previous 28 years combined; (b) America’s nine-year-olds posted the best scores in reading (since 1971) and math (since 1973) in the history of the report; (c) African American and Hispanic nine-year-olds scores in reading and math reached an all-time high; and (d) Achievement gaps between Caucasian and
African American nine-year-olds and between white and Hispanic nine-year-olds in reading and math are at an all-time low (p. 1).

Because of the flexibility of the NCLB Act, other states such as New York and its Chancellor, Rudolph F. Crew, have made a separate district of the ten worst performing schools and had mandated smaller classes, intensive staff training, and a uniform curriculum. As a result, this district has “outperformed other low-achieving city schools on the New York state reading tests” (Gewertz, 2005). The President’s Advisory Commission on Education Excellence for Hispanic Americans (American Whitehouse Initiative, 2006) supports the NCLB Act:

By 2013-2014 states are required to achieve 100 percent proficiency on reading assessment. For states to meet this goal, they will have to focus their energy on Hispanic children. The Commission strongly supports full implementation and full enforcement of the No Child Left Behind Act, and challenges states and school districts, within five years, to increase the percentage of fourth graders reading at, or above, proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 30 percentage points and meet, or exceed, the annual measurable objectives defined in each respective state’s accountability plan (p. 1).

Professional Organizations Assess the NCLB Act

Professional associations for educators are also weighing in on the debate. In 2004, The International Reading Association (IRA) (2005), together with 26 other child advocacy organizations, published a joint statement on the No Child Left Behind Act. In this statement by the IRA, several concerns were expressed. Corrections in the following areas were listed as being “necessary to make the Act fair and effective” (p. 1): a)
overemphasizing standardized testing; b) narrowing curriculum and instruction to focus on test preparation rather than richer academic learning; c) over-identifying schools in need of improvement; d) using sanctions that do not help improve schools; e) inappropriately excluding low scoring children in order to boost test results; and f) inadequate funding. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) expressed the fear that mandated assessment tests in kindergarten and primary grade classrooms (grades 1-3) could lead parents and policy makers to set unrealistic academic goals for five and six-year-olds (Blaustein, 2005). According to Blaustein, the NCLB Act has “inadvertently affected the basic developmentally appropriate expectations of the early childhood curriculum” (p. 1). The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) is concerned about the pressure NCLB is placing on children and how educational practices are no longer developmentally appropriate. The ACEI published the following statement in 1991 regarding standardized testing but is still applicable today (Perrone, 1991):

The fact that test scores are increasing is no longer causing much celebration. We have evidence that the curriculum is becoming a matter of worksheets, workbooks and skills; higher order thinking skills and deeper levels of understanding are being sacrificed, reading for meaning is being set aside; the arts are becoming nonexistent; exploration of real materials, the science and mathematics of the world, isn't being 'risked'; and time for play, what most teachers and parents understand to be the work of children, is being seen as a frill (p. 1).

Organizations such as ACEI, IRA, and NAEYC are concerned with the effects of the NCLB Act on children; however, much controversy surrounds the NCLB Act because
it is the first educational law passed by the United States federal government that is enforcing consequences for not following its guidelines. Since the requirements of the NCLB Act have been gradual, states are just now beginning to feel the effects of the law.

Highly Qualified Teachers Required by the Act

The NCLB Act requirement for highly qualified teachers acknowledged the strong link between teacher quality and student outcomes and “seek to ensure that all students are taught by highly qualified professionals” (Edwards, 2005, p. 1). Under the NCLB Act, a highly qualified teacher is defined as an individual possessing a “bachelor’s degree; full state certification, as defined by the state; and demonstrated competency, as defined by the state, in each core academic subject he or she teaches” (United States Department of Education, 2001). The first requirement is clear-cut, but does not specify in which field or area the bachelor’s degree must be. This allows more freedom for the second and third requirements. States can allow alternative certification and may clarify how a teacher becomes certified. Certification requirements vary greatly from state to state. The NCLB Act requires no training in teaching skills or pedagogy for middle and high school teachers, allowing a person who wishes to teach high school math to take a test and qualify just by passing the exam (Harris, 2004). “The NCLB Act regulations represent the first time the federal government has established specific criteria for teachers” (Edwards, 2005, p. 4).

Stronge and Hindman (2003) maintained that the single most influential factor in any school is the teacher. With the NCLB Act holding schools more accountable for the students they produce, principals more than ever want to hire the best teachers they can find. Teacher quality has been identified as the most important school-related factor
influencing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Edwards, 2005; Kozol, 1991; Villarreal, 2003). Hanushek (1992, 2005) further concludes that having a good teacher or having a bad teacher can equate to one grade-level difference in yearly academic growth. Teacher effects are additive and cumulative and low-performing students benefit most from effective teachers. Teacher effectiveness is viewed in two ways, the qualities teachers possess, and the outcome of student performance (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Edwards (2005) examined the relationship between the NCLB Act’s “highly-qualified” teacher policy and research on teacher effectiveness. According to Edwards (2005), the NCLB Act supports the idea that content knowledge takes precedence over pedagogical knowledge:

The research provides evidence that it is a mistake to believe that one or two criteria, such as emphasis of NCLB on subject matter, can define a teacher as highly qualified. The research reveals that multiple factors are involved and that teachers with a combination of attributes, including knowing how to instruct, motivate, manage, and assess diverse students, strong verbal ability, sound subject matter, and knowledge of effective methods for teaching that subject, hold the greatest promise for producing student learning (p.7).

The November 2006 edition of Educational Leadership dedicated the whole issue to the topic of No Child Left Behind. With the reauthorization of the NCLB looming, Scherer (2006a) of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development had three concerns: (a) testing the wrong linchpin, (b) the definition of ‘highly qualified’ and (c) a broken accountability system. Regarding testing the wrong linchpin, Scherer (2006a) believes educators know better ways to increase learning, by “providing a
diverse, rich curriculum that goes beyond the tested subjects” and by “using multiple measures to inform instruction and determine proficiency” (p. 7). Scherer (2006a) also goes on to report, “Not one state met this summer’s deadline to place what the law defines as a highly qualified teacher in every classroom” (p. 7). The broken accountability system “hinges the evaluation of an entire school on one test score average from one group of students at one grade level” (p. 7).

Side Effects of the NCLB Act

In the November 2006 issue of Educational Leadership, Cawelti (2006) looked at the side effects of the NCLB Act. He reported three side effects from the law. One side effect Cawelti reports is a skewed curriculum. “Schools end up narrowing the curriculum because they are under considerable pressure to show adequate yearly progress in reading and math” (p. 64). A second side effect would be discouraged teachers. “Assessment results often discourage teachers who have worked hard to close achievement gaps with their students” (p. 65). The final side effect is a numbers game. “Each U.S. state defines ‘proficiency’ somewhat differently, and these definitions rarely line up with how proficiency is determined at the national level” (p. 65). Cawelti suggests creating a balanced diet, providing real help, and restoring the balance of what is being taught. “One of the worst-case scenarios that could result from an unbalanced curriculum is a generation of youth who have good ‘word attack’ skills but who know little and care less about important facts, events, and concepts in history, science, and the arts” (p. 67).

In the November 2006 edition, Scherer (2006b) of Educational Leadership asked the question, “How has no Child Left Behind Act affected you, your students, or your school?” (p. 48) Participants responded through e-mail. Some of the responses included

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Michael Flake, a science teacher in Indiana: “If a student at one school has a well-funded and well-equipped science classroom and a student at another school has no lab tables or basic equipment to learn science effectively, then how can we hold all students and teachers to the same standard?” (p. 48). Terese Benefield, a school counselor from Georgia replied, “Education is more than a test score; it’s about instilling a moral purpose that encompasses an appreciation for lifelong learning and social responsibility” (p. 49).

Stephen Schwartz of Delaware, former assistant superintendent stated, “By 2010, most schools in the United States will be ‘under improvement’ and once again public education will take a hit, despite the excellent work done under tough conditions with a continually changing student body” (p. 50). Robert Bassett, a special educator in California, claims: “Special education is doing better under the strict regulations of NCLB, and even with the legislation’s problems, it’s a great step toward the end we wish to attain; setting the next bar to measure our schools’ and students’ progress” (p. 50).

The Intensification Theory

Teachers are increasingly asked to do more and more each year. These demands are referred to as "calls to change" (Ballet, Kelchtermans, & Loughran, 2006). Even though these demands are made in the name of improving the educational system and helping children, they can distract teachers from doing the essence of their job, which is to teach children. “Teachers appear to be confronted by a situation whereby they experience greater responsibility for their work, and yet less control over the manner in which their work is conducted” (Ballet, et al., p. 2).

In an attempt to explain the “call for changes” that teachers face, Apple (1986) conceptualized the Intensification Thesis, which states that teachers are experiencing a
growing external pressure from law makers and society and in return are being asked to accomplish more and more tasks of diverse nature without adequate time and/or resources. “It has many symptoms, from trivial to the more complex – ranging from being allowed no time at all even to go to the bathroom, have a cup of coffee or relax, to having total absence of time to keep up with one’s field” (Apple, 1986, p. 41). The strain of these demands results in “de-skilling” and “deprofessionalization” of teaching itself. Ballet et al. (2006) explained deprofessionalization as teachers’ professional activities becoming increasingly reduced to executing decision by others and deskilling as the loss of professional skills. Hargreaves (1992) stated “teachers’ work is portrayed as becoming more routinized and deskilled, more and more like the degraded work of manual workers, and less and less like that of autonomous professionals trusted to exercise the power and expertise of discretionary judgment with children” (p. 87-88).

Ballet et al. (2006) quickly pointed out that the intensification theory is “more than working more hours, more than having to manage additional and diverse tasks, more than an increased number of administrative duties. More specifically, intensification theory concerns the struggle with the experience that one’s professional self as a teacher is at stake” (p. 5). A teacher’s professional self comes under attack when the teacher feels he or she is unable to do “justice to the pupils’ needs” (p. 5).

Ballet et al. (2006) reexamined Apple’s (1986) theory and refined three areas of concern. The first area refined states that teachers experience “a compelling call to change” from many sources, such as lawmakers, administrators, parents, and students, but also from the internal conflict to achieve pedagogical perfection (p.3). Second, Ballet et al. (2006) asserted that the impact of change is not pre-determined, but is a process of
negotiation and adaptation by the teacher. Third, three working conditions served as buffers for the call to change: a) a working consensus; b) collegial relationships among team members; and c) the role of the school principal. Working consensus refers to a “set of implicit and explicit norms, rules and conventions between members of the (sub)team about what counts as ‘good education’ and which conditions are necessary for it” (p. 9).

The buffers themselves may contribute more pressure on the teacher. Ballet et al. assert that teachers may feel obligated to be loyal to the working consensus, colleagues, and the principal, that in turn adds to the pressures teachers are experiencing. Lastly, Ballet et al. (2006) argued that the impact of intensification affects teachers differently, but ultimately impacts the way teachers think of themselves personally and professionally. The reactions to these “calls to change” are not always negative as some teachers respond in a “creative and pro-active way to the demands and expectations” (p. 2). The teacher may even get caught up in a “web of loyalties” in which he or she feels torn between loyalties to colleagues, as opposed to doing what he or she feels is right for the students (p. 2). When a teacher tries to obey all calls to change, such as the external ones (expectations of law makers and parents), as well as the essence ones (doing what he or she feels is right for the student), the workload for teachers is greater and the pressure to be a “good teacher” mounts, creating the “Intensification Theory”. In other words, teachers do what they are told, and if what they are told to do does not match what they feel is best for the students, teachers will do both. Doing both causes extra or double workload for the teacher and this in turn leads to the Intensification Theory.
Dever and Carlston (2006) uncovered a perfect example of the Intensification Theory while interviewing several teachers. The following exchange occurred among three teachers:

T1: We don’t teach anything that is not tested anymore.
T2: There’s no science, we don’t teach a whole lot of science anymore.
T3: We don’t teach science; we don’t teach social studies.
T1: We teach reading, writing, and math, what ever’s (sic.) on the test; that’s all we have time to teach. You do all other things...
T3: You sneak it in. I sneak it in! (p. 12).

Admitting to sneaking in the subjects that are not tested demonstrates teachers’ willingness to do what they feel is best for the students, no matter the cost. This is an example of teachers’ personal-self coming in conflict with the working consensus or doing what they think other teachers are doing. Teachers know that they do not have time to teach the extra subjects, but feel their students need the information regardless. Apple (1986) maintains that teachers accept these added responsibilities and work longer hours because it makes them feel more professional. “Since the teachers thought of themselves as being more professional to the extent that they employed technical criteria and tests, they also basically accepted the longer hours and the intensification of their work that accompanied the program” (p. 46). In Dever and Carlston’s (2006) study, teachers reported feeling it justified to be held accountable for the students they teaches but “felt that restricted control over their actions in their own classroom created an unfair condition for accountability” (p. 1).
Many teachers have expressed concerns about teaching to the test. “Research and practical experience show that teachers and principals indeed pay attention to what is tested and adapt their curriculum and teaching accordingly” (Herman & Dietel, 2005, p. 26). In Hargreaves’ (1992) study, one teacher described her experience, as working “quickly and efficiently so that she could include creative supplementary lessons once required lessons were finished” (p. 89). Hargreaves stated the teachers “own sense of professionalism, together with parental pressures for additional effort, propelled them to increase the quantity of lessons taught” (p. 89). “Teachers also reported that in this era of high-stakes testing, they often teach to the test and feel compelled to spend valuable instructional time preparing students for testing” (Dever & Carlston, 2006, p. 5). The teachers in this study believed that the NCLB Act had definitely changed the way they spent instructional time.

Impact of the Act on Teacher Job Satisfaction

Brown (2005) contended, “Teachers belong to a noble profession that is not entirely understood by the public” (p. 640). In research pertaining to teacher job dissatisfaction, several complaints by teachers have appeared repeatedly. Teachers complained mostly of isolation, work before and after school hours, clerical and other duties besides teaching, and not being treated professionally. In a case study, Brown interviewed two “new” old teachers over a three-year period. These two women were referred to as “new” old teachers because they had not begun teaching straight out of college, but had other life experiences before beginning their careers as teachers. The two teachers in the study reported feeling isolated. “Isolation takes on many definitions in that
these teachers were isolated from fellow teachers, counselors, auxiliary staff, and the administration” (p. 643). One participant in Brown’s study complained of the isolation:

...hard for me to get used to the four walls of my classroom all day long. A teacher cannot even go to the bathroom, have a decent lunch time, [or] talk with other teachers. In my other jobs, we were always talking and collaborating. I was in a cell with class after class of over twenty-five students guided by their changing hormones (p. 642).

Another complaint reported by Brown (2005) was long working hours. “That first year was too hard. What was I doing wrong? I would be in my classroom on the weekends, after school, [and] before school” (p. 642). The two participants in Brown’s (2005) study felt they had too many other things to do besides teach. One participant stated, “My role as an educator is to wear many hats. I mean, education is just one of the many things that we do” (p. 644). The other participant stated, “The administration wanted this and that, my team needed to take care of discipline, we had to organize field trips, the list never stopped and this had nothing to do with curriculum. I hated this. I honestly thought the main focus of my job would be on student learning” (p. 641). The two also felt, as teachers, that they were not treated professionally:

I am just a number on the scheduling board to be moved around to suit the needs of the schedule. It affects us as teachers. First semester I was becoming more and more depressed. I finally knew that the cause of this depression involved me not teaching any of my favorite and well-prepared academic areas (p. 645).

Teachers have long resented “the top-down decision-making” in their school districts (Knight, 2000, p.9). Teachers feel they have no control over the changes that
take place. Teachers would like to be asked for more contributions to educational decisions, especially those that affect their jobs. Knight’s study was conducted before the NCLB Act and looked specifically at middle school and high school teachers.

Job dissatisfaction constitutes the reason why half of teachers leave the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2002). Much of this dissatisfaction is the result of too much paperwork and too much emphasis on preparing students for standardized tests. Other reasons for dissatisfaction with the teaching profession are that teachers at most schools “must schedule all breaks, sign in and out of the workplace, have limited access to the school building unless the children are present, and conduct bus duty, ground duty, hall duty, and lunchroom duty” (Inman & Marlow, 2004 p. 611). Marlow and Page (2004) made a tongue-in-cheek comparison between the teaching profession and the medical profession saying, “imagine a pediatrician being asked to supervise her waiting room between medical consultations” (p.28-29). Elementary teachers have to prepare for several different subjects, supervise students during lunch, recess, and bathroom breaks as well as during transition times between special classes such as physical education, library, music, or art classes.

The teaching profession differs from any other profession in three areas that usually relate to career satisfaction (Chapman & Lowther, 1982). Those areas are: a) feeling challenged by their work; b) having autonomy in carrying out tasks; and c) feeling adequately rewarded. Teachers are often cut off from their colleagues and have reported experiencing isolation instead of autonomy in their classrooms. The challenges of the job are limited because, year after year, the same things are taught even though the students
may be different. As far as being rewarded, raises are only given with seniority and often a pay scale reveals the bleak future of pay raises to come.

Overcoming these negative aspects of the teaching profession takes resiliency. Bobek (2002) states, in order to be resilient, teachers must possess five attributes: a) teachers must have relationships with individuals that support and understand "the trials and tribulations of teaching" (p. 203); (b) teachers need competence and skills in the area or subject they teach: "To develop resilience, new teachers must be lifelong learners, willing to venture into areas that may challenge their current views of themselves and their practices" (p. 203); (c) teachers need to experience personal ownership and advancement in their jobs: "Resilience may be enhanced for new teachers if they experience a sense of ownership in their careers as they solve problems, make decisions, set goals, and help students" (p. 204); d) teachers need to feel a sense of accomplishment: "Teachers' steadfast efforts to guide the development of young people are often overlooked or taken for granted" (p. 204); and e) teachers need to possess a sense of humor: "A teacher who cultivates a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at her own errors has an excellent medium for releasing frustrations." (p. 204). Humor can also help diffuse stressful situations in the classroom.

*Retaining Qualified Teachers*

Retaining qualified teachers is a concern for most school districts. As many as 50% of new teachers leave the teaching profession within 5 years, with higher numbers leaving from impoverished schools (Bobek, 2002, p. 202). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that after 1 year of teaching, 11% of new teachers leave the profession and another 10% leave after their second year. After 3 years, 29% more leave, and 39% leave the
teaching profession after 5 years. Such a high turnover rate is attributed to: a) low salaries; b) poor working conditions; c) student discipline problems; d) lack of support from school administration; e) poor student motivation; and f) lack of teacher influence over school wide and classroom decision making (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; LoCascio-Creel, 2004; Millinger, 2004).

Wolf (2002) found that 20% of teachers in her study of 100 participants felt dissatisfied with their jobs, and this high percentage could affect morale. The low morale of fellow employees could result in job dissatisfaction. Teachers are not the “seven hours a day, nine months a year” professionals that society believes they are (Wolf, 2002). Teachers complained of time restraints and interruptions of the learning environment (Cockburn, 1994). The study by Cockburn was informative, but limited because the researcher did not spend any time in the field conducting observations and triangulation was missing. The study was also conducted before the NCLB Act came into effect.

Wolf’s study (2002) examined the time expectations placed on teachers and the amount of time spent after school hours to complete tasks needed to be an effective teacher. This study only looked at surveys, and a log filled out by the participants, and did not examine what actually happened in the classroom. The study was also conducted before the expectations of the NCLB Act of 2001 were in place. Ballet et al. (2006) reported teachers as not having control over time during the school day and beyond. “The constant preoccupation with work that continues beyond school hours results in far-reaching consequences for personal life” (p. 6). Teachers often spent time at home grading papers, preparing lessons, and other things associated with the job of a teacher. Another look at time pressure placed on elementary teachers is needed to fully gauge the
effects of the NCLB Act on the teaching profession. Research has been conducted to explain why teachers make a career of teaching and stay in the teaching profession until retirement, but research is missing when it comes to detailing the duties of a public school elementary teacher and the recent expectations brought by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Discontented Teachers

Resentful and discontented teachers are often present in the profession. Teacher behavior is affected by the conditions in which they work (Knight, 2000). Many teachers feel they have “no life” and feel a sense of being “drowned by the demands on their time” (p. 21). Their planning time is “seldom available for planning since teachers need to meet with other teachers, track down information on students, or talk with parents either on the phone or in person” (p. 21). Therefore, much of the planning, grading papers and other preparation are completed at home or after school hours. Knight (2000) reports five causes of resentment in educators: (a) a history of interpersonal conflict with other teachers; b) a historical belief that professional development is impractical; c) a feeling of being overwhelmed by the tasks they need to complete as teachers; d) resentment about the top-down decision-making in the district; and (e) anxiety about changes taking place in their schools. The theme that was of particular interest to this study was that teachers felt “overwhelmed by the tasks they need to complete as teachers” (p. 9).

The issue of teacher job dissatisfaction is important because “substantial research evidence suggests that well-prepared, capable teachers have the largest impact on student learning” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 7). Much research has been conducted on the problem of teacher job dissatisfaction and the causes for the high turnover rate of teachers.
within five years of entering the teaching profession. This qualitative study explores in depth of expectations placed on teachers by the NCLB Act and how these expectations impact job satisfaction.

Teachers in the United States are experiencing a new call to change with the NCLB Act. This study is the first to be conducted since the implementation of the NCLB Act to see if added duties and responsibilities from NCLB impact job satisfaction.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study used the lens of a Socially Constructed Knowledge researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Neuman, 2000). According to Creswell (2003), Socially Constructed Knowledge claims individuals “develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (p. 8) and these experiences led this researcher to “look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas” (p.8). This researcher relied as much as possible on participants’ views of the situation being studied to seek understanding of teachers’ experiences under the expectations of the NCLB Act, to document demands made upon teachers involved in the study, and to examine ways such expectations placed upon teachers impacted their job satisfaction. The NCLB Act is a major education issue because teachers are held to a higher level of accountability now than ever before.

This study explored the expectations and impacts public school elementary teachers feel they experience on a typical day in a typical school year. The NCLB Act impacts parents, children, teachers, administrators, and taxpayers. What teachers are expected to accomplish on a typical school day impacts job satisfaction, teacher retention, and student performance. Not since the NCLB Act was implemented has a researcher looked into the classroom to explore a typical day of the public school elementary teacher.

A case study research design was chosen to explore the expectations of administrators and legislators on public school teachers. The study was conducted from November 2006 to February of 2007, at which time saturation of data occurred. Data
analysis began once the first piece of data was collected and continued until the data began repeating. The Coordinator of Recruitment and Retention for the chosen school district agreed to serve as gatekeeper for the study. She coordinated with the superintendent's office for the approval of the study and the selection and availability of participants to be interviewed and observed. The Assistant Superintendent of the school district agreed to allow the study in her school district, but would not allow this researcher to video record in the classroom as she felt this would be an invasion of the privacy of the students in those classrooms.

Purposeful selection of the site and the participants was made. The site and participants were chosen according to Creswell's dictums to “understand the problem and the research questions” (Creswell, 2003, p.185). Using purposeful, typical sampling (Creswell, 2005, Merriam, 2002) this researcher attempted to determine what takes place in a “typical” or “normal” day for elementary teachers working under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Typical sampling was used in that participants and the site were “typical” to those unfamiliar with the situation. The setting of the study was in a school district in a southwestern state that consisted of a high population of Hispanic students, several Title I schools, and a population of low socio-economic families. The school district was comprised of ten elementary schools with plans to build two more in the next year to accommodate the growing population of the community. Students in the district who participate in the free or reduced lunch program range from a low of 2.3% at one school to a high of 47.6% of the student population at another. Working with a gatekeeper, the assistant superintendent, and the principals of five different schools, one teacher was interviewed from five different schools in the district. This researcher also

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observed each teacher's classroom for one full day. The research sites consisted of two classrooms from the higher socio-economic level, two from the middle socioeconomic level, and one from the lower socio-economic level.

**Ethical issues**

Permission from The University of Southern Mississippi's Human Subjects Review Board was granted before the first interview or observation for the study was conducted (Appendix A). Written permission was obtained from the school district in which the study was conducted (Appendix B). Each participant was fully informed of the intent of the study and the manner in which the study would be conducted. The participants were asked for their consent to pursue the study using the information that was provided by them through interviews, document retrieval, and observation of each participant's day. The participants were asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study (Appendix C) and were informed that they might withdraw at any point during the study. To preserve anonymity of the participants and the school, the name of each elementary school in which the research was conducted is not mentioned herein, and each participant was given a pseudonym (Table 1). To protect the identity of the state where this study took place, a state mandated test will be referred to as the "STATE test" and the curriculum framework set forth by the state will be referred to as the "Framework".

Participants were chosen to include individuals who had experienced teaching under the NCLB Act. The participants in the study were five elementary school teachers employed in a public school in a southwestern state. Each participant held a valid teaching license and was currently employed at a school in the district where the study took place. The participants had various years of teaching experience. The experience of
the teachers differed from zero to five years experience, five to ten years of experience, and ten plus years of experience. The participants consisted of three female teachers and two male teachers. Both male teachers worked at two of the higher socio-economic schools. Participants included Kelly, Leigh, K.J., Ann Joy, and Chris.

Instrumentation and Procedure

Maximum variation was used in collecting data for a case study in which various forms of data were collected and important common patterns were identified. This study began with individual interviews with each participant. A semi-structured interview (Appendix D) was used and the participant's answers were tape-recorded. The participants were interviewed once, before the classroom observations occurred, and again after the observations had been concluded using a second semi-structured interview (Appendix E). The interviews were roughly 30 - 45 minutes in length. The first two participant interviews were transcribed within twenty-four hours to ensure an accurate recollection of each, and of the body language of the participants. The other interviews were transcribed within two weeks of the interviews.

All of the interviews and observations were verified through participant checks to corroborate the interpretation of the information gathered. Anecdotal notes documented administrative demands, clerical duties, discipline issues, teaching, and any other demands of the teachers' time. Protocols were established and followed throughout the data collection process to include field notes (Appendix F) and interviews (Appendix G). Each participant was asked to document a specific day for e-mails sent (Appendix H), and received (Appendix I). The data were collected to see what requests of the teachers'
time was made as part of a teacher’s typical day. Notes from parents that the teacher received on the day of observation were also noted, but not collected.

Analysis of the Data

Generic steps in data analysis as outlined by Creswell (2003, 2005) can be blended with specific research design steps to maximize the ideal situation for data analysis. Case study research involves a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues. According to Merriam (1998) analysis of the date should be done simultaneously with data collection.

This researcher used the “generic steps” outlined by Creswell (2003) in analyzing the data for this study. First, this researcher “organize[d] and prepare[d] the data for analysis”, interviews and field notes were transcribed and reviewed to sort them into different types of information. Second, all collected data were reviewed to determine the “general sense” of the data collected (p.191). Third, the coding process was used to look for ways to “chunk” information together (p.192). Fourth, the coding process was used to “generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis” (p. 193). Fifth, a “narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis” (p.194) was written. Finally, the meaning of the data collected was interpreted as it related to the Review of Literature.

Stake (1995) supports four forms of data analysis in case study research: a) categorical aggregation; b) direct interpretation; c) establishing patterns; and d) naturalistic generalizations. Categorical aggregation is the process researchers use to seek a collection of occurrences from the data, looking for issue-relevant meanings to emerge. In direct interpretation, the researcher pulls the data apart looking at a singular occurrence
and drawing meaning from it before putting the data back together in a more meaningful way. Patterns were established between two or more categories of data, examined for the relationship between the data, and broader themes were established in which existing data belonged. Naturalistic generalizations became results of the study that could be applied to other similar situations.

As the data were collected through observations, it was coded for three main areas of study: a) demands made on the teacher to perform a certain duty; b) relationship to the NCLB Act; and c) teachers’ feelings about the demands and impact on job satisfaction. The information collected was compared to the interview data for verification.

Verification of the Findings

Creswell (2003) and Merriam (2002) suggested the following strategies to ensure verification of qualitative studies: a) triangulation of data in which the researcher uses multiple and different sources to provide corroborating evidence; b) member checking involving taking data back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and creditability of the account; c) long term and repeated observations at the research site to check for “misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by researcher and informants” (Creswell, p.202); d) peer examination to provide an external check of the research process; e) a participatory mode of research as the researcher participates and experiences the setting to understand the phenomenon and confirm or deny the informants’ accounts; and f) clarification of the researcher’s bias to allow the perspectives of the researcher to be known upfront (Creswell, 2003).
Member checking was employed in which ongoing communication between participants and the researcher occurred to confirm the interpretations of the data. The researcher stayed in the field until saturation occurred.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

The following findings were compiled from interviews and observations of five elementary teachers in a southwestern state. The answers given by the participants are verbatim, and grammatical errors were left in for authenticity purposes. Researcher commentary is limited to the participants’ words, which speak for themselves.

Profiles of Individual Teachers

Profile: Ann Joy

Ann Joy is a fourth grade self-contained teacher. She has been teaching 18 years in which she has taught music, second, third, and fourth grades. The school in which she is currently employed was classified for this study as a middle socio-economic school. The school’s population participating in the free or reduced lunch program is 14.6%. The ethnicity break down is 82.6% of its population as Caucasian, 8.2% Hispanic, 5.7% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3.5% classified as other. One of her sons attends third grade at the school where she teaches. Her husband is a great help to her, but is often out of town because of his job, so on many occasions Ann Joy has to take her younger son to daycare before she makes it to school with her older son. For the observation day, she informed this researcher that she would not be at school until 7:45 a.m. because her husband was out of town and she had to get her son to daycare. On days when her husband takes her younger son to daycare, she arrives at 7:30 a.m., which allows her more time to prepare for the day before her students arrive at 7:50 a.m.
Profile: Chris

Chris is one of the two male teachers participating in the study. He is in his fourth year of teaching. The first year he taught a self-contained fifth grade classroom. His second and third years of teaching he taught departmentalized science and social studies. This year he is teaching fifth grade science. During this study, Chris and his wife experienced the birth of their first child, a daughter. Chris is a proud father and has many pictures on his computer to prove it. During the second interview he showed the researcher a black and white picture of his daughter lying in the palm of his hand on his outstretched arm. He said it was his favorite. The picture was very touching and of professional quality.

The school in which he is employed is classified for this study as a higher socio-economic school. Of the school’s population, 4.2% of the students participate in the free or reduced lunch program. The ethnicity of the school is 90.5% Caucasian, 4.0% Hispanic, 3.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 2.3% classified as other.

Chris is also the head wrestling coach for the high school in the district. He leaves his job after school and travels to one of the two high schools for wrestling practice each day. The practices usually last to 7:00 p.m., and the meets are held on Fridays and Saturdays, some of which require travel and overnight stays.

Profile: Kelly

Kelly is a second grade teacher. She is in her tenth year of teaching. She taught kindergarten for six years and second grade for four years. She has expressed a desire to go back to teaching kindergarten because that is where she feels she belongs. She is also pursuing an administrative degree and hopes to be a principal some day. She is the
mother of two small children who have not entered elementary school at this time. Next year, her daughter will be entering kindergarten. Her husband is a firefighter and he works 24-hour shifts. She is employed at one of the lower socio-economic schools in the district. The school’s population consists of 36.6% of the students who participate in the free or reduced lunch program. The ethnicity of the school is 58.9% Caucasian, 29.4% Hispanic, 8.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 2.8% as other.

Profile: K.J.

K.J. is a male teacher at one of the higher socio-economic schools. He is the only male teacher at his school. His wife teaches at the same school. He is the father of two small boys. He has taught 15 years as a sixth grade science teacher. He is also the assistant wrestling coach for the high school, and therefore, his after school schedule is similar to Chris’ schedule.

The school’s population in which he is employed consists of 2.3% of its population participating in the free or reduced lunch program. The ethnicity of the school is 92.5% Caucasian, 4.2% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, and .8% classified as other. The school is situated in a community of large expensive homes on sprawling acreage. K.J. has not always taught at this type of school. He worked previously at a school that had a high population of disadvantaged children. He organized a program that exposed the children he taught to events that he felt the children would not ever be able to experience because of financial difficulties. He loves where he teaches now, but often thinks fondly of the children he used to teach.
Profile: Leigh

Leigh is a fifth grade math teacher. She has been teaching for five years. She taught fourth grade self-contained her first year, fifth grade self-contained her second and third years, and the last two years as a fifth grade departmentalized math teacher. Leigh is planning to get married in March. Her fiancé works for the school district in which she is employed, but he is not a teacher. Leigh has a passion for animals and has even considered going back to school to be a veterinarian. She is currently employed at a school classified as a middle socio-economic school. The school’s population participating in the free or reduced lunch program is 15.8%.

Table 1. Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Ethnicity/gender</th>
<th>Years of Experience/Current Assignment</th>
<th>Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>Caucasian/Female</td>
<td>18 years/4th grade self-contained</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>Caucasian/Male</td>
<td>15 years/6th grade science</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Caucasian/Female</td>
<td>10 years/2nd grade self-contained</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Caucasian/Female</td>
<td>5 years/5th grade math</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Caucasian/Male</td>
<td>4 years/5th grade science</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guiding Questions

According to Merriam (1998) a case study is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation, and the meaning of it for those involved. Some teachers were interviewed during their conference times and others after school. The same eight questions were asked of each participant, using a semi-structured format. As the data...
were collected through interviews and observation, it was categorized into the three

guiding main-questions of the study:

1. *What activities do five sample elementary teachers engage in on a typical day?*

2. *Do any of these activities directly relate to, or are they required for the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act?*

3. *Do expectations of the No Child Left Behind Act impact the job satisfaction?*

More specifically, information was coded into three categories that corresponded to the guiding main questions: a) demands made on the teacher to perform a certain duty; b) relationship of duties to NCLB Act; and c) teacher’s feeling about the duties and impact on job satisfaction.

Guiding Main Question One

*Demands Made on the Teacher to Perform a Certain Duty*

This researcher spent one day in each participant’s classroom to observe what happens on a typical day. During these observations, anecdotal notes were taken of activities that filled the day. Each participant was also solicited to share, during the interviews, what he or she did on a typical day in the classroom. Each participant was asked: *“Start from when you arrive at school to when you leave at the end of the day and describe what a typical day is like for you as an elementary teacher.”* After the observations and interviews, information was coded into seven different themes (Table 2).

Interviews confirmed observations in the classrooms; however, only one teacher during observations in the field mentioned the STATE test to her students. The STATE test is the standardized test given to all students in grades three through twelve. During a
writing lesson Ann Joy conducted, she shared a written essay with the students that would be graded two out of three points. She reminded the students to do a better job than that on the STATE writing test. The second interview with each participant revealed that the district was in the middle of giving The Benchmark test. Benchmark tests are a released STATE test given to the students to predict how they might perform on the upcoming STATE test to be given in February. Any student not passing the Benchmark test would receive extra help in class, in before-or-after school tutoring, or be referred to a Reading Specialist if the problem was in reading.

Each participant was asked: "What demands other than teaching do you feel are required of you?" All teachers mentioned paperwork, grades, and entering grades in the computer. All teachers mentioned they felt as though they wore many hats and felt that they had more responsibilities than just teaching (Table 3). These responsibilities were not part of the job related to the NCLB Act. These were additional responsibilities that the teachers did because the students needed these things from them.

Sub-Question 1: Kelly

Kelly believed she is often required to perform duties of a diagnostician or a reading specialist. She also felt pressure that she may not be adequately trained to perform those duties successfully.

As a classroom teacher everything falls on your shoulders. I mean you have to identify [students] if you think there is any problems, so in a way you are like a diagnostician and you're like a reading specialist and you are like everyone combined into one body. And I feel the pressure of that because I don't feel I have the training adequate to identify those needs of the kids.
Table 2. *Teacher duties in a typical elementary-school classroom*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Types of Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Getting ready for a lesson, getting out or putting up supplies, setting up equipment such as overhead projector, adjusting the heat, closing a window blind, checking email, grading papers, entering grades in the computer, and checking attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing</td>
<td>Looking at a rash, writing a note to the nurse, asking about the child’s weekend or birthday party and having conversations of a personal nature with a student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Correcting children verbally, asking them to change their behavior card or giving a student a conduct mark in his or her behavior folder, giving them the look or taking a child to the office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Escorting students to and from specials (i.e., P.E., Art, Music, or Library) the restroom, or other places around the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Questions</td>
<td>Any question asked of the teacher to include academic or personal questions such as “May I go to the bathroom or my locker?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Anything the teacher did instructionally, such as reading a story, teaching a lesson, going over homework, or assisting a student with an assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruptions</td>
<td>Anyone walking into the class such as a parent, another teacher, or school personnel that interrupted the flow of the class. This also included telephone calls from the office staff or other faculty members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-Question 1: K.J.

K.J. believed he wore many hats as well. He believed his job included being a counselor, a parent, and a policeman.

I feel we do quite a bit of counseling. I don’t like to say we are taking the place of a parent, but you know there are certain issues and things like that. You are giving them information, encouragement. You are giving them something [to help] them through a crisis which could be ‘I’ve left my lunch on the bus or you know, my parents fought last night, or I think I’m moving to another school now.’

So you know you deal with quite a bit. I think I am kind of a policeman in a way. You know, making sure kids are following the school rules. Not running up and down the hall and jumping up.

Table 3. Teacher Responsibilities other than Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>counselor, a parent, and a policeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>diagnostician or a reading specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>counselor, a mother, and a nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>emotional supporter and role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>safety supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Question 1: Ann Joy

Ann Joy believed part of her job was to be a counselor, a mother, and a nurse.

You often feel like you are not just a teacher, you are a counselor. You are a mother. You help solve their problems. You know I feel like that in my

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classroom if they are not emotionally prepared for the day then their learning is
going to come second. We have things in here to keep them from visiting the
nurse to try to save time. You know a lot of times a band-aid is going to fix a lot
of things.

Sub-Question 1: Leigh

Leigh felt her job was not only to teach the kids academically but also
emotionally.

My philosophy is I’m not only responsible for teaching them academically I am
definitely also responsible for them as far as emotionally and I just take care of
these kiddos and make sure their needs are met. They come to me and say they
are hungry. I haven’t had breakfast so, I feel like that is kind of part of my job
too. I hope I am a good role model for them.

Chris felt he had to make sure the children were safe at all times along with many
other things.

Sub-Question 1: Chris

I think it is just part of the job when you teach. I mean you are constantly, it is
not just about teaching it is also about watching them at all times making sure
they are safe at all times. You know making sure that all their needs are met and
they are not harming other students; that they are not harming themselves - that
type of thing.
Guiding Main Question Two

Relationship of Duties to the NCLB Act

The third question asked was: “What part of your day is devoted to teaching to the NCLB test?” Not one teacher believed he or she taught the test. Some mentioned that teaching to the test occurred in before- or after-school tutoring, but not in the classroom. No evidence of the teaching to the test occurred during observations. Each school apparently handled after school or before school tutoring differently. The district pays the teachers with Title I monies in the upper grades one-and-one-half hours to tutor after school, which is the equivalent to $30 per week. A student who qualifies for this tutoring is considered at-risk by certain criteria. A student who has failed the STATE test in the past, a student who has failed a Benchmark test, a student seeing a reading specialist or language science teacher, or a student who is failing reading or math in the classroom would qualifies for extended day tutoring. Extended day tutoring is from 3:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m., paid for by Title I monies as specified by the No Child Left Behind Act. Students are provided with bus transportation home if they normally ride the bus. Their parents pick up the students, or the students walk home. Other tutoring takes place before or after school as well. This tutoring is separate from extended day tutoring.

The students are dismissed from school starting at 2:50 p.m. After-school or before-school tutoring occurs between the time the students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m. or until 3:45 p.m. or from 7:45 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. At the discretion of the classroom teacher tutoring is offered to those students the teacher feels may need the extra help.
All teachers felt they did not teach to the test, but felt they had to teach the format of the test and strategies to take the test (Table 4). The activities in Table 4 were the activities teachers engaged in as a direct result of No Child Left Behind.

Leigh did not feel she taught to the test, but felt she should teach her kids a basic understand of math concepts. She did say that the children needed to be aware of the STATE test format.

I try not to be a real big ‘teach the test’ type of teacher. Now of course you have to teach them the format and get them acquainted with the format of the STATE test, which I usually pull in the springtime. Tutoring is when I try to do that more because those are the kids that really need it. We have a STATE test based workbooks [used during tutoring] that we work through and then I will probably start pulling in the STATE test formatted type questions, multiple choice that looks like the STATE test questions with them. But as far as the STATE test in my classroom, I would say I don’t do a whole lot of that because to me that is not how you teach math. I try to teach just an overall understanding of the math...not just the algorithms...which is basically the STATE test.

Sub-Question 2: Kelly

Kelly believed everything that the kids learn from kindergarten through third grade was preparing them to pass the STATE test. She also believed that good teachers are always preparing their students to pass the test, but stated she did not teach the test.

I don’t teach the test. I mean, I guess every part of my day if you want to put it to teaching a test because I think everything we teach kindergarten through third grade is part of, to the test. I don’t feel so comfortable saying that there is one
time of the day because everything is building that to the STATE test. I think good teachers...everything they do is devoted to the test. It is building their endurance, their knowledge towards the test.

Table 4. You Must Not Teach to the Test – Activities Directly Related to NCLB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Example of Meaningful Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>There are times where you have to teach kids strategies on how to take the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>And as long as I am teaching the STATE FRAMEWORK that I am told to teach and expected to teach by the district, I should have it covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>I think that the test is taught through our objectives. I think the part of the test that is not and what we have to practice with the kids is the bubbling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>It is built into the curriculum based on the State Framework but I do think we need to teach test taking strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>The STATE test is a standardized test and I feel that the students should be introduced and be given many opportunities to get used to and understand the format of the test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Question 2: K.J.

K. J. had the same sentiments as Kelly. He thought everything he did was helping prepare them for the test. He stated because he does not really know what is on the test that he is making sure he is teaching them what he needs to be teaching them which is the State Framework.
That is kind of hard, because I think everything I am doing is helping to prepare them to take the test, but not knowing really what is on that test, I am just making sure I am teaching them what I need to be teaching them. What the Framework say.

Sub-Question 2: Chris

Chris believed he did not have to teach to the test because the curriculum was aligned so that if he taught the curriculum, he would cover what was going to be on the test.

I don’t teach actual test strategies until later on in the year. I mean our curriculum is set up where it automatically teaches to the test. I teach our curriculum and then towards the end of the year because they have reading, math, and science [STATE test] at 5th grade, they are getting ready for the reading test. We are a month; a month and a half out from the reading test, which you know, tutoring starts up heavy when you get closer to it.

Sub-Question 2: Ann Joy

Ann Joy does not feel she teaches the test either, but believes she should teach the test format.

I teach my kids. I don’t teach the test. I make sure the SF is covered well enough that I am going to cover myself for whatever comes on the test. Now if you look at my math, my reading, and my language time, I’ve got that block in the morning. So 3 hours and 15 minutes if you look at instruction time. I would have to say this is the time I spend working on those areas, not teaching the test. Now, do they need to learn format of the test? Yes, so I do take some time to make sure
they understand, choosing the correct answer using strategies, but I feel like the strategies I teach them are good for every day activities and not just the test.

In the second round of interviews each participant was asked: “Do you feel teaching to the test is not necessary because it is built into the curriculum?”

Follow-Up Question: Chris

It is not completely unnecessary. There are times where you have to teach kids strategies on how to take the test. There is a difference between doing experiments, doing lessons, and then being able to apply that to a test format. I mean there just is.

Follow-Up Question: K.J.

Yes, well, I would like to think that all the testing that we do is generated by our Framework and the test is geared to see how well the kids understand what they have been taught. And as long as I am teaching the Framework that I am told to teach and expected to teach by the district and the State, I should have it covered.

Follow-Up Question: Ann Joy

I think that the test is taught through our objectives. I think the part of the test that is not and what we have to practice with the kids is the bubbling. I think if you teach the kids good strategies and skills when they are working on an assignment as far as you know, verifying their answer, looking for different ways that you can solve a problem. If you teach those higher level thinking skills in your everyday lesson, then that covers a lot of the test taking strategies that you tend to teach the STATE test anyway.
Follow-Up Question: Kelly

It is built into the curriculum based on the State Framework but I do think we need to teach test taking strategies. So if you teach all of your State Framework, if you teach those you will cover your basis, but you still need to take...instruct on how to take the test because it is a test of endurance and even the smartest kids, they need to know how to decipher because my experience has been that there is always some tricky questions on there and they need to know strategies to get through the test and to work through those tricky questions. So, I think that is still a little bit of both. I don’t agree with it, but I think you have to do it.

Follow-Up Question: Leigh

I have mixed feelings on “teaching to the test”. I do believe that if a teacher is teaching the curriculum then the students should be mastering the objectives. However, the STATE test is a standardized test and I feel that the students should be introduced and be given many opportunities to get used to and understand the format of the test. True problem solving is not sitting down and working word problems on a paper, rather it takes place outside of a classroom amongst society. This is the exact reason why students need exposure to the STATE test method of “problem solving” because it is not what they are used to. In my experience, the place where many students get stuck on the STATE test is not in knowing how to do the concept, but rather not knowing what the question is asking of them. The wording can be very different from what they are used to in their daily lives. I think you have to balance teaching the objectives in a true real world manner with giving the students opportunities to practice the STATE test formatted questions.
Guiding Main Question Three

*Job Satisfaction as Related to NCLB Requirements*

Several questions were asked to investigate impact on job satisfaction. Two questions focused on the positive aspects about the job of a teacher. One asked about the most satisfying part of the job. This question was asked to see what inspires the teachers to keep teaching. The other question relating to positive things about the job was who supported him or her in the job of a teacher. The remaining two questions pertained to negative facets of the job. The participants were asked what they found unsatisfying about their job, and to see if they had ever considered changing careers (Table 5).

Three of the participants that were asked: **"What is the most satisfying part of your job?"** They responded by stating being with the students was the best part. Chris' answer was simple and to the point. He stated, "Interacting with the kids." Leigh and Ann Joy elaborated a little more.

*Sub-Question 3: Leigh*

Like I said, it kind of goes back to me just really loving the kids that I work with and trying to bond with them and help them. Very satisfied whenever I feel like a kid can trust me and come to me and talk to me and hang out with me.

*Sub-Question 3: Ann Joy*

Being with the kids...their little personalities are each so different. You laugh with them, you get upset with them, you cry with them. You know, just being with the kids is the best part.

The other two participants, K. J. and Kelly reported different satisfying aspects of the job. K. J. expressed that having an excellent reputation, as a teacher was very
satisfying. He enjoyed the younger siblings of the students he taught saying they could not wait to be in his class. Kelly found it satisfying to touch kid's lives, watch them grow, and make a difference.

Sub-Question 3: K.J.

There are things in the classroom and things in the hallway. There are things in the community. You know seeing people or knowing people or encountering people that are genuine and you know they appreciate what you do for them and their kids and things like that. That is very rewarding.

Sub-Question 3: Kelly

I guess the most rewarding part would be the growth that you do see and just to know that you've made a difference. You touch their lives. When someone touches your life, you never forget them.

To explore another positive aspect of teaching, each participant was asked: "Who do you feel is your best supporter in coping with the job of a teacher: Other teachers, principal, spouse, parents, students or other? Please explain your answer." Four out of five participants felt that teammates were the best supporters because they dealt with similar situations with the same students. The theme of teammate as a teacher's number one supporter emerged from this question.

Kelly believed that her husband was her best supporter because he listened to her. She did feel like her teammates were her supporters when something at school upset her and she needed to talk through it.
Table 5. Impact on Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaningful Statements</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Examples of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfying Part of the Job.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Interacting with the kids.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Just really loving the kids that I work with and trying to bond with them and help them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>Just being with the kids is the best part.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>Seeing people or knowing people or encountering people that are genuine and you know they appreciate what you do for them and their kids and things like that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>I guess the most rewarding part would be the growth that you do see and just to know that you’ve made a difference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporters: Teammates # 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Definitely teachers, my peers ... the teachers I teach with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>Who I get most of my support from is my teammates because we deal with the same kids.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>I think it will be my team.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>You can discuss options for situations that arise with other teachers in the building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsatisfying Part</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time is Scarce.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Being departmentalized, the time issue is so hard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>Probably the lack of time I have to work with my peers and to work with my teammates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>And to complain about something that takes my time, that is just petty stuff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Time consuming [paperwork].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>You don’t have time to sit there and analyze everything they do for every student.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changing Careers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>No, Pretty much all I wanted to do [was be a teacher].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>I love teaching but part of me feels like I...I always wanted to become a veterinary and I never did.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.J.</td>
<td>Yes. The number one reason is money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>Yes. I say my second job would be a nurse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Yes. I am pursing my administrative degree.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Sub-Question 3: Kelly

My spouse. He is a fireman and I am a teacher and we live our lives the way it is with him working 24-hour shifts. We have to be very supportive of each other but not just at home. He is my biggest fan. He listens and supports and we have been through this for 10 years and been married 8 of them. So he is not blind to what’s going on in education. He is more educated than a common person that doesn’t listen to a teacher ever night. But he is my biggest fan and support. That makes a difference when you know you are supported at home. Also, out of the six people on our team, there are four of us that are very close. We know we can go in and vent and that makes a difference.

Follow-Up Question 3: Leigh

Definitely teachers, my peers ... the teachers I teach with. My team mainly, you know are the ones that work really closely together. And like I mentioned the 6th grade math teacher. She’s...me and her have become very close. She is probably my strongest supporter. So we go to each other a lot with things.

Follow-Up Question 3: K.J.

Teacher wise ... I mean who I get most of my support from is my teammates because we deal with the same kids.

Follow-Up Question 3: Ann Joy

I think it will be my team. There are two ladies on my team and the good thing is that I know that I can trust them. I can tell them anything and it is going to stay with our group. We give each other advice. We help each other through difficult
situations, personally and professionally. I think that is an important part of the job, because I feel like as an educator you need a sounding board.

*Follow-Up Question 3: Chris*

Other teachers and spouse. Other coaches. You can discuss options for situations that arise with other teachers in the building. And the same goes for coaching. If it is a situation I need help with on coaching, something I haven’t encountered before, something like that usually somebody whether it be a teaching situation or a coaching situation will give me input on how to handle the situation. You can all help each other out when another parent situation arises, or anything. It can be anything to do with traveling or pretty much any situation that arises out of the ordinary.

To get the teachers to look at their jobs in a different way they were asked: “*What do you think about this comparison between the teaching profession and the medical profession saying, “imagine a pediatrician being asked to supervise her waiting room between medical consultations?”*” At first, this question apparently took the participants by surprise and several admitted they had not thought of the differences in the two professions. Once the question was understood and reflection taken, some interesting thoughts emerged.

*Comparison Question: Leigh*

Although teachers are professionals and have a college degree and much training, I feel society doesn’t view us as professionals in the way they view doctors, lawyers and businessmen. I think if you told a pediatrician to supervise their waiting room between medical consultations, they would laugh at you and say,
‘What, are you crazy? That’s not my job, that’s not what I went to school for.’ I think this comparison really puts a great perspective on the job of a teacher because our job consists of so much, including supervising our students while educating them. It is not easy to teach, supervise, manage, diagnose, complete paperwork, and many, many, many other tasks all at once, but that’s what teachers do on a daily basis. We don’t just babysit! You hear all the time that teachers are nothing but babysitters. This is so frustrating to me because it couldn’t be farther from the truth!! Wow, I could really get on a soapbox about this!!!

Comparison Question: Chris

I think it is just part of the job when you teach. I mean you are constantly, it is not just about teaching it is also about watching them at all times making sure they are safe at all times. You know making sure that all their needs are met and they are not harming other students. That they are not harming themselves, that type of thing. I guess in comparison to a pediatrician, the parents come in and they will tell them what is wrong with their child or if it is just a check up. They will go through the check up and they are done. We don’t teach a lesson and then okay we are done. ‘Go to your discipline person or the person that watching you while you are working on your stuff.’

Comparison Question: K. J.

I think from an educational standpoint, a teaching standpoint, we are asked to step out of our role quite often and supervise, work with the kids in between the classes. You have to deal with instances [like the one] that just happened that are
not teaching related whatsoever and the fact is I don't see the pediatrician having
to do that. Their main focus is what they have been trained to do. Our main
focus, we do what we are trained to plus a lot of other things along the way. But
basically we are not prepared for or we have on the job training on how to deal
with that. I've honestly never thought about it until you asked that. You go back
to a doctor and the doctor is not taking our blood pressure, our temperature, and is
not necessarily asking us what is wrong. That is all being done prior to him
entering the room and then he has got the chart and sees the blood pressure is fine,
the pulse is this...this...this...and decides it is some allergy issue. By the time
you see a doctor he is already to the meat of the question...why you are there.

*Comparison Question: Kelly*

Hum...it is kind of funny because it is exactly what they ask teachers to do. I
touched on that last time with lunch. We get a 30-minute, duty free lunch, by law,
but by the time you leave your classroom and walk your kids through the line,
which I stay with them until every child gets through the line. By the time I get
back down here, that is 10 minutes of my lunch gone. Then you have to be there
right on time because they are back to back to back, so basically I get about a 15
minute lunch by the time I walk them through and get back and take care of
everything else...so. It is demanding. I don't think you would have many
pediatricians that would tolerate that kind of expectations, but as teachers I guess
we don't have a choice.
Comparison Question: Ann Joy

I think that they are not asked to do all the extras. They would not be asked to watch their waiting rooms. I think they have more respect than we do. I think they are valued more than teachers are valued. I feel like we tend to be the low person on the totem pole. I think our salary indicates that. You know, really who is creating the doctors? It is the teachers. And so I think there is not as much value as the teacher, when people looks at a teacher and someone in the medical field. They see the person in the medical field as being brighter, smarter, you know. I think because we work with kids and I think anyone that works with kids, they think well you don’t have to know much to work with kids.

Since the No Child Left Behind Act was the focus of this study, and the teachers had no control over what was decided for them to do in relationship to the NCLB Act, they were asked: “If you disagree with a decision that “comes from above” as not being in the best interest of your students, how do you handle or cope with this situation? For example, spending a whole day practicing filling in answers in preparation of the test for kindergarten students.” All participants stated they would do what they were told, but would voice their opinion by talking to the campus administration. Ann Joy did state that she would shut the door to her classroom and do what she knew was right for the students.

Compliance Question: Leigh

Well, um, being at this school, my principal and my assistant principal are both awesome and are very hands on as far as being there for you and being very supportive. They’re also... I wouldn’t classify them as micro-mangers at all.
They very much trust you. You know believes in you. If you think you need to do this, then that is what you need to do. When situations like that come up, I just go to them and talk to them. I feel comfortable with them.

*Compliance Question: K. J.*

Well, I'm kind of a rule follower. So, I would do what I am told. If I feel real strongly about it, I will voice my opinion on that, but that won't prevent me from doing what I am supposed to do. I may say 'Hey, I'm not comfortable doing this, but this is what I'm suppose to do, so I am going to go ahead and do that.' I will do that. I've never been in a situation where I flat out refused to do something.

*Compliance Question: Ann Joy*

I would try and do what they are requiring of me, but I would definitely have to make some adjustments. You know, I feel like, you know again some of this is expected of us that a lot of time we agree with doing it and you shut your door and you do what is best for your kids. And if the principal were to ask me, I would be honest with her. I would tell her that I don't feel like this requires that much time. I know my kids better than they do and I looked at my group. I would be honest with her and tell anybody that asked me what I actually did. I think a good educator looks at their kids and makes adjustments for that kind of thing that comes down from above.

*Compliance Question: Chris*

If it comes from my boss I mean I guess I would just do it. I don't guess I have much control over that. I guess I could discuss other options with her and try to
figure out a different solution if I didn't think it was beneficial to them. Our Administration is pretty good about ... it would be a comfortable situation.

**Compliance Question: Kelly**

I would definitely go through my chain of command and I would discuss with my team and team leader our concerns. Depending on the team leader, that team leader then goes to the administrator on campus and so you have pros and cons. Say listen, this is what we are giving up to do this. We are giving up instruction time to prepare for a test. You know the value of it. I guess it would depend on the decision of the administrator on campus. I believe once you get to the administrator of our campus, unless it is a serious offense, or something major, you don't really have any other ground to go on to go to Central Office. They have too many issues to deal with you know over there.

The participants were also asked: "*What is the most unsatisfying part of your job?*" Time was the number one complaint. Leigh believed not having enough time to teach was the most unsatisfying part of her job. K. J. felt he did not have enough time to collaborate with other science teachers in the district. Ann Joy felt parents complained about petty things that took her time to complete. Chris and Kelly were not fond of grading papers and entering them in the computer, but also complained about time.

**Satisfaction Question: Leigh**

Probably right not one of the things that I am struggling with is ... having like I mentioned being departmentalized the time issue is so hard and that's definitely a frustration for me. I don't feel like I have enough time to teach ... to teach them and teach them the way I need to be teaching them.
Satisfaction Question: K.J.

Probably the lack of time I have to work with my peers and to work with my teammates. The lack of control we have over that because of all the other non-teaching things that get in the way sometimes.

Satisfaction Question: Ann Joy

I would have to say parent complaints. You know, it just seems like parents expect so much from you and you know. I think a lot of times they don’t realized how much we give. And to complain about something that takes my time, that is just petty stuff.

Satisfaction Question: Chris

The least is just doing some of the actual paperwork that is involved; you know grading and entering grades and stuff like that. [It’s] time consuming.

Satisfaction Question: Kelly

The paperwork. I mean grading papers is a pain. Because if you think about analyzing each paper and getting the whole point of why you do independent work, and each teacher has to have 15 grades per subject per 9 weeks. You don’t have time to sit there and analyze everything they do for every student.

The last question asked related to job satisfaction: “Have you considered a profession other than teaching, and if so, why?” Four of the five participants said they had thought of a different career. Chris said all he ever wanted to do was be a teacher. No one stated they considered other occupations because of being dissatisfied with the teaching profession. Reasons given for contemplating leaving the teaching profession

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were money, pursuit of other interests, and moving up in the education field such as to become a principal.

*Other Profession Question: Leigh*

Probably my one passion other than teaching is animals and part of me...I love teaching but part of me feels like I...I always wanted to become a veterinary and I never did. And there has been several times that I have actually thought about okay...quitting and going back to school and becoming a vet. I have a big passion with animals and so that definitely plays with my mind.

*Other Profession Question: K.J.*

Yes. The number one reason is money. Once I started having a family, you know, me knowing that I will always have to work and my wife knowing that she wants to work. I knew that would be my life, you know, what we chose to do with my career and how much I enjoyed my career, it made it very difficult. A lot of soul searching on what I really needed to do because I would have loved my wife to stay home with our boys and um...you know I go through that often. I mean regardless of how good I feel about what I do here at school for kids and stuff and how happy I am with it. It comes up that I need to do something else. I know that is the worse thing that could happen to me in my opinion. My father-in-law told me once that...he is a corporate man and made a lot of money, and things like that. He mentioned once about putting a price on enjoying what you do, you know. He said for twenty years he got up and dreaded everyday to go to work. You know, he said I look at you and you’re fired up each day. You know
he said you can’t put a price on that. When I get down on that I think about that and I think you know what he is right. It is pretty cool.

*Other Profession Question: Ann Joy*

Yes. I say my second job would be a nurse. I just like listening to problems and trying to diagnose people. It is because I love to help people and fix people. And so, that would be my second job. Now, would I want to leave what I am doing now and do that? No, but you know if I, if they told me I couldn’t teach anymore then that would be the profession I would probably look into.

*Other Profession Question: Kelly*

Yes, I am pursing my administrative degree. It [teaching] is what I always wanted. When I graduated, I knew from kindergarten myself that I was going to be a teacher. It was never an option to be anything else. Honestly, since I’ve become a teacher I thought okay why did you not even consider other options either? Is it the theory of the summer off? Is it family because you do have more time during summers with family. I really don’t know the answer to that question. It was just always….its never been an option to do anything else in my mind. Not because of my parents, not because of anything. It was just me. Then I graduated from college. I knew I wanted to pursue my education further but I didn’t know what. I decided it was administration that I wanted to do.

Second Interview Questions

After analyzing the first round of interviews, this researcher realized that the semi-structured interview had only led two participants to talk about their views on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Consequently, during the second round of interviews
each participant was asked what their thoughts and feelings were on the NCLB Act. The teachers responded that the No Child Left Behind Act was good in theory, but felt it did not really work. Each teacher felt accountability was necessary and the Act addressed that. The teachers did not know what would make the Act work, but they did feel changes needed to be made.

Kelly was one of the participants this researcher had asked about the Act on the first interview: “What are your feelings on the No Child Left Behind Act?”

NCLB Question: Kelly

I think it is a great theory. I think it is great on paper, but in reality not all of us are the same and we don’t all learn at the same pace. The reality is some children will be left behind regardless of what program is in. There is nothing that is going to fit everything or we would have discovered that by now. I mean you do everything you can…. You have all these support programs, but at the same time, I have a child that is failing reading right now and I honestly believe because he is out 45 minutes for ESL and he is out for 30 minutes with the reading specialist. You know he is missing a lot of my instruction time that I am taking a grade on. That is a big chunk of the day and I think the programs are great, but at the same time you know they are missing other things as well. We do all the pull out programs. We work with small groups. We do everything we can, but sometimes there is just things and you can’t fix them all. There are outside factors that play in as well. So, No Child Left Behind is a great idea, but in reality I don’t think it will ever work. Things are different than what legislatures [think], you know, we are here daily. We know what is going on.
As a follow up question Kelly was asked: "What is the thing about No Child Left Behind that you see never working? You mentioned some children get left behind".

Because they want them all to pass a standardized test and I don’t think we will ever live in a world where every child passes the standardized test at the same time, same day. I just see that as never happening. So when you say No Child Left Behind I think you can say maybe a few are going to be left behind.

NCLB Question: Leigh

Leigh was the other teacher asked about the No Child Left Behind Act in the first interview.

That is one thing right now that I don’t even know how I feel about. You know the No Child Left Behind...I ...yes...definitely we need to go towards that. You know, you need to make sure you can do everything for every child. Give the chance, the opportunity to be successful. Um, but I think my thing would probably be how do you do that though? The state is saying or the nation saying we need to do it by doing this, but is there one recipe for one child?

As a follow up question Leigh was asked: "Are you worried about your students passing the STATE test?"

I try not to worry about that. Of course you should see me about a week, about a month and a half before the STATE test. I’m the one who should...walk around like the one with her head cut off...totally stressed! People are saying, you know...just breathe...leave, breathe. I think it is just anticipation. Most of time when the STATE test day comes I feel good and I feel confident. And basically have I done everything I can do for these kids? If I had, then yes I’ve done what I
could do. But accepting that and saying that are two different things. You know you want all your kids to be successful but it is very hard to get 100% of your kids to pass the STATE test.

In the second interview with Leigh, she made a point about society functioning with the idea that everyone is different. She wondered why no one had ever asked her opinion on this matter before. As a teacher, it dawned on her that she should have some say in this matter since it directly affected her job and the children she taught.

**NCLB Question: Leigh**

I feel the No Child Left Behind belief is contradictory. If you look at society and the way it operates, it is successful because all members of society are different. We all look differently, learn differently, have different jobs, live in different places, have different personalities, etc. When you take a classroom full of children who all have different learning styles and who may be at different levels and you force them to all be tested in the same manner, you are doing them an injustice. If all children learn differently, then why would you ever think to measure their success based on only one form of testing?

**NCLB Question: Ann Joy**

Ann Joy believed accountability was important and that No Child Left Behind encourages accountability, but in the end the child can still pass to the next grade if they do not pass the test.

I think it is important to have accountability and I think No Child Left Behind encourages accountability on the teacher and the student. However, what I’ve noticed in the several years that this act has been put into place was that they are
given too many chances. You know you have this child that doesn’t pass 3rd grade reading. Well, they get to take it a second time and then a 3rd time. And then if they don’t pass it then, then a committee can decide whether or not they go on. I think too many chances are given. Either you can do it or you can’t do it. You know? I think it is a lot of pressure on the kids though. And you know, I think it’s good to give maybe a second chance in case it was test anxiety. I think there are other factors; you know some kids can’t take tests well. I think really in talking about it now, it’s more mainly on an individual basis to look at the kids and decided if...do you have an “A” student here that is failing a test that should be able to pass it? I think a lot of factors come into play, but I think there is just a lot of gaps.

**NCLB Question: Chris**

I mean it’s...I don’t pay much attention to it. You know, I mean they give me the curriculum I need to teach. I teach the curriculum and you know I want to make sure my students know what they need to know before they go on to the next grade. I think it is good. I don’t think there is...I think...even with the No Child Left Behind there is still a lot of cracks in the system to where some kids kind of fall through the crack. You know, it shouldn’t hold the teachers accountable; there are other people that need to be held accountable besides just the teachers. I don’t really know how accountable they are being held.
As a follow up question he was asked: “Who are you talking about "other people"?”

Well, you know, you have your teacher, you have your student, you have the parent. The parents play a big role in this. How do you judge how much help they are getting at home? Or how much help as a teacher you are getting from the parent. I mean there is only so much you can do at school. If the parents aren’t doing anything at home, it gets kind of... You teach what you have to teach and do the best you can.

NCLB Question: K.J.

When K.J. was asked about the No Child Left Behind Act, he said he did not think the researcher had enough “tape”. He asked that the tape recorder be turned off. His feelings were strong about the topic because of a personal experience of his cousin; consequently, the tape recorder was turned off. He said his cousin taught in another state with a population of students who were really struggling because of certain home lives and socio-economic factors. She was a teacher who received the “Golden Apple” award for outstanding teaching. She was doing a wonderful job with her students. After the NCLB Act began, her students did not do so well. She received criticism from her administrators. She went from a recognized teacher, to a teacher who was considered a failure. K.J. felt it was not fair to judge her teaching ability on the test results of her students. The students she taught were more difficult to teach because of their circumstances. He felt that the No Child Left Behind Act was not fair to all teachers or all children.
He agreed to just list the good and bad things about NCLB Act. He only had one good thing to say about it - he felt that it did hold teachers accountable. He felt accountability was good. Everyone should be accountable. He felt teachers, students and parents all should be held accountable. He said that was the only good thing. The bad things he listed were that it was not fair to hold everyone to the same test. He said that not all teachers dealt with the same type of children. He felt it could cause burnout of both teachers and students. He believes that all students deserve the right to learn and he felt strongly that NCLB destroyed the right to learn.

Summary

Using the three guiding sub-questions of this study, four themes emerged to answer the central research question: With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 being the major focus of education at this time, what expectations are being placed on a sample of elementary school teachers, and how does it impact their job satisfaction.

*Theme One: Wearer of Many Hats*

Participants in the study reported having to assume many roles other than that of teacher in a typical day. Observations in the classroom confirmed these claims as Ann Joy was witnessed looking at a rash on a child’s face and writing a note for the child to see the nurse. Kelly was also observed asking a child about her birthday party that occurred over the weekend, and was observed reminding the students several times to move carefully around the room as an injured girl with a cast had just returned to school from having surgery on her thumb. Kelly also had to remember to send the same child to the nurse to get her afternoon medicine. K.J. knelt beside a crying girl’s desk to comfort her over a bad grade she just received. Leigh stopped teaching to settle a dispute because...
one child had called another child a "weenie." Chris interacted with students who just wanted to talk during recess. The teachers' jobs consisted of many things, and many had nothing to do with teaching a lesson. Because of this, the theme of "Wearer of Many Hats" emerged.

Theme Two: You Must Not Teach to the Test

This theme emerged after observations and interviews in which teacher after teacher stated that they did not teach to the test, but felt students needed to know the format of the test and how the questions were worded. They believed that learning the concept and applying the concept in standardized test format to be two totally different items, and student must be taught to combine the two. Teachers also reported teaching strategies that would be good in any subject and for the many tests the students would take over the course of their school experience. Teaching to the test went against how the participants felt they should teach. The curriculum framework set up by the state gives the teacher the scope and sequence of the lessons to be taught, but does not teach test-taking strategies. The STATE test is formatted to test objectives covered through the State Framework.

Theme Three: Teammates are the Primary Supporters.

While discussing job satisfaction, the researcher attempted to determine if any support structures were in place to help teachers who were having a bad day, or whom an angry parent has just confronted. "Teammates" was the primary answer. The teachers in the study felt that they could go to a teammate to vent, or to discuss situations that arose during the day. Teammates would listen and understand because they might have gone through similar situations in the past, and may even have taught the same children.
Theme Four: Time is Scarce

The number one complaint of the teachers in the study was the lack of time. Whether it was a lack of time to communicate with teammates, time to grade papers correctly, time to teach thoroughly, or time to deal with parent complaints, time was a precious commodity, and the teachers wished they had more of it. Teachers were observed being interrupted on several occasions before they could complete the task of entering attendance in the computer, or getting out supplies. The planning of lessons, grading of papers, and getting prepared for a lesson had to be completed almost exclusively before or after school hours because of interruptions from students, other teachers, and administrators.

The above-mentioned themes were interwoven throughout the data collection activities. It gave a glimpse into what is expected from a sample of elementary school teachers, and possible implications of negative and positive things that could have an impact on job satisfaction.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through analysis of data such as field notes, interviews, document collection, and observations, themes emerged to answer the central research question: With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 being the major focus of education at this time, what expectations are being placed on elementary school teachers in a public school district in a southwestern state and how does this impact job satisfaction? The following discussion correlates to the theoretical framework presented earlier. The important connections between the data collected and the theoretical framework are presented in the sub-headings: Intensification Theory, Job Satisfaction, Teaching to the Test, and The Misunderstood Profession.

Discussion

Intensification Theory

Ballet et al. (2006) found when a teacher tries to obey all calls to change such as the external ones (expectations of law makers and parents), as well as the essence ones (doing what he or she feels is right for the student), the workload for teachers increases and the pressure to be a “good teacher” mounts, creating what is termed the “Intensification Theory”. In other words, teachers do what they are told and if what they are told to do does not match what they feel is best for the students, the teacher will do both. Doing both causes an additional workload for the teacher over and above just addressing the curricula, and this in turn leads to the Intensification Theory. Ballet reported “Teachers can self-impose pressures by keeping to, and mercilessly striving for,
self-formulated standards of pedagogical perfection. Hence, the pressure is not only created from the outside, but also the inside."

In this study, evidence was found of teachers doing what was best for the students, which might lead to an expression of the Intensification Theory (Table 6).

Table 6. *Doing what is Best for the Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Examples of Meaningful Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>And when they are all tested the same way, you know, how is that going to work? It is not going to work so that is why I try to do my thing. Teach them how I think they need to be taught. But as far as the STATE test in my classroom, I would say I don’t do a whole lot of that because to me that is not how you teach math. I try to teach just an overall understanding of the math...not just the algorithms...which is basically the STATE test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Joy</td>
<td>A lot of time we agree with doing it and you shut your door and you do what is best for the kids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although evidence of teachers doing what was best for students, in addition to what was required of them, four out of the five teachers in this study had considered leaving the teaching profession, but not because of dissatisfaction with being a teacher. The teachers stated reasons such as money, pursuit of other interests, or a move into administration.

Ballet (2006) asserted that three working conditions serve as buffers for the call to change: a) a working consensus; b) collegial relationships among team members; and c) the role of the school principal. At the center of this study was the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Teachers in the study were dissatisfied with many elements of the No Child Left Behind Act, but not dissatisfied with their jobs. Interviews
of each participant were examined to see if any of the “buffers” were mentioned. Evidence of such buffers existed throughout the interviews. In the interviews, four out of five participants talked fondly of his or her school administrator. One did not speak fondly of the principal, and had considered transferring to a different school. This participant had the support of teammates, which was a source of release when the stress of the job became overwhelming.

Another buffer mentioned by Ballet (2006) was the working consensus. Working consensus refers to a “set of implicit and explicit norms, rules and conventions between members of the (sub)team about what counts as ‘good education’ and which conditions are necessary for it” (Ballet, 2006, p. 9). The participants in this study seemed to feel good about what the school was doing for children. Evidence of all three buffers could explain why the participants of this study were satisfied for the most part with teaching under the No Child Left Behind Act (Table 7).

Teachers in this study were taking on additional responsibilities by tutoring students during the only times they had to prepare for the lesson, grade papers, or do other duties required that were not instructional. Tutoring was a direct result of the No Child Left Behind Act, and teachers felt obligated to tutor their students in order for them to pass the STATE test. This did not, however, cause job dissatisfaction. The teachers felt they could better help struggling students during tutoring because of the small number of students in the group. A reasonable explanation for this falls once again on the Intensification Theory research of Ballet et al.
Table 7. Buffers that Alleviate Pressure in Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Meaningful Statements</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Teammates</th>
<th>Working Consensus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Administrators are extraordinary. My principal and my assistant principal are both awesome and are very hands on as far as being there for you and being very supportive.</td>
<td>My team mainly, you know are the ones that work really closely together.</td>
<td>I am held accountable by them [my team] to make sure I am doing what is necessary for me and our kids that we all share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our administration is pretty good about... it would be a comfortable situation.</td>
<td>Good to be at a school where you can, you know, do that with other teachers. Cause I know some schools are different than others and sometime they don’t work together. I feel very lucky to be here.</td>
<td>And then 6th grade wise during that flexible time, we have duties as a grade level that we are not told to do but we do them because there needs to be somebody there. As a team we just can’t let the kids go out there and stand. I guess there has never been a need for any of that to be assigned cause we have always done that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They [principal and assistant principal] very much trust you.</td>
<td>I can tell them [my team] anything and it is going to stay with our group. We give each other advice. We help each other through difficult situations, personally and professionally. I think that is an important part of the job, because I feel like as an educator you need a sounding board.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel very comfortable going to them and talking with them and talking about what we can come up with.</td>
<td>Just being a good teammate, team member.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You can discuss options for situations that arise with other teachers in the building.</td>
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</table>
Ballet et al. (2006) stated that the Intensification Theory was "more than working more hours, more than having to manage additional and diverse tasks, more than an increased number of administrative duties. More specifically, intensification theory is about struggling with the experience that one's professional self as a teacher is at stake" (p. 5). A teacher’s professional self comes under attack when the teacher feels he or she is unable to do "justice to the pupils' needs" (p. 5). The teachers in this study felt they were doing the students justice by providing before- and after-school tutoring, as well as teaching them test-taking strategies and the test format. The teachers in the study felt they were making a difference in the lives of the students they taught. Ballet et al. (2006) explained how teachers would accept the call to change for the benefit of the students, as it would be hard for them to turn down something that promised significant benefits for the students. This could explain why the teachers in this study did not complain about before- or after-school tutoring, which in the past had not always been expected of them.

Teachers not merely accept the calls for change, but nevertheless seem to be quite obedient in answering them. Teachers sometime seem to become blinded by the way changes are legitimated, for the benefit of the pupils. A teacher who wants to continue believing that he or she is a ‘good’ responsible and committed teacher, and being recognized by ‘meaningful others’, feels obliged to answer the calls (p. 5).

Meaningful others could be parents, colleagues, administrators, or any other person who made judgments on whether a teacher was a “good” teacher, or not. Ballet et al. (2006) reported that teachers are vulnerable because “teachers can only rely on their
own task perception, their personal set of values and norms to justify their actions, and
get acknowledgement and recognition by others (parent, principal, colleagues) as being a
‘proper teacher’ which is always open to contestation and questioning (p. 7).

**Job Satisfaction**

Bobek (2002) states that in order for a teacher to persevere, he or she must possess the following five particular qualities: a) Teachers must have relationships with individuals that support and understand “the trials and tribulations of teaching (such as Kelly had with her husband and the other teachers had with his or her teammates); b) teachers need competence and skills in the area or subject they teach (such as K. J., who had been teaching sixth grade science for 15 years; c) teachers need to experience personal ownership and advancement in their jobs (all teachers in this study took pride in doing a good job as a teacher); (d) teachers need to feel a sense of accomplishment (as the teachers in this study did when they saw the students grow academically and personally); and (e) teachers need to possess a sense of humor (as each teacher in this study laughed and joked with their students (p. 203-204).

**Teaching to the Test**

Dever and Carlston (2006) found that teachers spent valuable instructional time preparing students for a test, and the teachers in their study believed that the NCLB Act had definitely changed the way they spent instructional time. The teachers in this study did not feel they taught the test, but did feel they had to take the time to teach test-taking strategies and familiarize the students with the test format. This occupied valuable instructional time, but the teachers in this study reported that the students would always have to take tests, and that the test-taking skills the students were being taught would
benefit them in the future. Test-taking skills were often referred to as teaching the students higher-order thinking skills, which was advantageous to them.

A Misunderstood Profession

Brown (2005) contends, “Teachers belong to a noble profession that is not entirely understood by the public” (p. 640). Teachers in this study implied this idea. Kelly believed her husband understood the pressures a teacher goes through because he lives with a teacher. Kelly stated, “He is not blind to what’s going on in education. He is more educated than a common person that doesn’t listen to a teacher ever night.” Ann Joy felt parents really did not understand what it was like to be a teacher. She stated, “It just seems like parents expect so much from you and you know, I think a lot of times they don’t realize how much we give.” Chris believes that parents do not really understand what teachers do from day to day. He reported that he had a police officer that was a parent of one of the students he taught and the police officer told him that he did not see how Chris did what he did on a daily basis.

Conclusions

As Leigh pointed out, society functions on the premise that everyone is different, and everyone is good at different things. If three buffers such as: a) positive supportive administrators; b) supportive teammates; and c) a working consensus that is consistent with each teachers’ professional and personal philosophies, can make a difference in job satisfaction of five elementary teachers in a southwestern state, then schools that are experiencing teacher burnout and high levels of teacher dissatisfaction could benefit from this knowledge. Schools that are experiencing a high turnover rate of teachers should examine the teammates and administrators working at the school as well, as take a closer
look at the working consensus present at schools to see if the teachers employed “buy-in” to the school’s educational philosophy.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study took place in a school district whose highest number of student’s population participating in the free and reduced lunch program was 36.6%. That is a low percentage compared to other struggling school districts in the United States. In order to examine job satisfaction taking place under the auspices of the No Child Left Behind Act, studies need to be conducted in schools where a greater number of lower socio-economic student populations exist. The question of whether buffers make a difference in job satisfaction, or whether the type of student the teachers teach, are making a difference, needs to be explored.

Recommendations

According to the participants in this study, five recommendations for change would be advisable: a) level the playing field; b) redefine AYP; c) provide teachers with information to be knowledgeable about the NCLB Act; d) allow more teacher control over classroom decisions; and e) hold students and parents more accountable.

First, the participants of this study understood that leveling the playing field is a daunting task and not easily resolvable, but the NCLB Act does not seem to recognize or allow for the differences in the schools. Many schools are without the proper equipment and supplies such as textbooks, science lab supplies, and math manipulatives. Some schools are understaffed and are in the poorest neighbors. These schools are held to the same accountability levels as schools that are adequately equipped and staffed.
Second, lawmakers should redefine Adequate Yearly Progress to include the progress of the child and not just the school. Currently, AYP is defined by the Department of Education (2006) as “an individual state’s measure of progress toward the goal of 100 percent of students achieving to state academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that the state, its school districts, and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators.” Students move in and out of schools so often that it is reasonable to believe that if they begin at school in kindergarten, they are not at the same school by the time they reach sixth grade. However, the schools’ growth is measured on how each grade progresses each year. The goal of the NCLB Act is to have every child a proficient reader by the year 2014. Schools are held accountable for students that they may only have for one school year. It is recommended that student growth be measured, and not just the growth of schools. The rationale for this is that all children do not start kindergarten with the same level of maturity, cognitive ability, or background knowledge. Children mature at various rates. If a child’s growth is measured at the start of kindergarten and then tracked throughout the twelfth grade, then the federal government can see if adequate yearly progress is made. As long as a child is growing academically from year to year, then that could be considered adequate yearly progress.

Third, it is recommended that teachers should be well informed about the NCLB Act and involved in decision-making about the law. Many teachers in this study were not effectively informed about the NCLB Act. No one explained the NCLB Act to them. The limited information that the teachers had was gathered from newspapers, news stories, and other colleagues in the teaching field. Teachers also were never asked for
their opinion about the NCLB Act and they felt they should have some say in a law that affected their jobs.

Fourth, it is recommended that teachers be given more control over decisions made in class. Top-down decisions making is saying to a classroom teacher, “You are a professional, but we cannot trust you to make the best decisions for the students you teach.” Teachers are held accountable for the students they teach, but are not given the freedom to use his or her best professional judgment.

In conclusion, it is recommended that both students and parents should be held more responsible for Adequate Yearly Progress. All the responsibility is placed on the school and the teacher, but the student and the parents are not held accountable.
HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 26091101
PROJECT TITLE: No Child Left Behind: How do Teachers Cope?
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 10/01/06 to 01/31/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Shelly Robinson
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Curriculum, Instruction, & Special Education
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 10/19/06 to 10/18/07

[Signature]
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

10-24-06
Date

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APPENDIX B

Consent Form of School District Participating in Study

Participant’s Name: ____________________________ School District (all identifying names will be blacked out of this document before this document is added to study.)

Consent is hereby given by the above named school district to participate in the research project entitled: No Child Left Behind: How Do Teachers Cope? (The title of this study may change in the future, but the purpose of the study will not change.) Shelly A. Robinson explained and provided a typed copy of all procedures and / or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures. Information was given orally and in a typed copy form about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

Research Procedure Description: The researcher will interview the participant (teacher) before observation occurs in the classroom. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes to an hour and will be tape-recorded in order to transcribe later. The participant (teacher) will be provided a copy of the transcription of the taped interview to clarify any misinformation. The researcher will shadow the teacher throughout a whole day to make anecdotal records of what the teacher is required to do during the day. This may include recording that the teacher made a phone call to a parent, tied a shoe, made copies of a handout, or zipped up a sweater. At no time, will the identity of the child, parent, teacher, or other people involved in observation be revealed. After the observation, the researcher will again interview the participant to clarify any observation recorded.

Risks: No known risks are foreseen in this study. The possibility and degree of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: A study of the ramifications for teachers’ daily routines and responsibilities resulting from the implementation of the NCLB Act could benefit many people concerned about education. First, teacher educators may find the information useful as they help pre-service teachers prepare for the expectations they may encounter once employed as a teacher. Pre-service teachers tend to enter the field of teaching with rose-colored glasses and are soon disappointed. Second, the information may give the general public insight into what actually happens in a teacher’s day and emphasize how important it is for parents to be involved in their child’s education and be advocates for the teacher to be able to spend more time teaching their child. Finally, administrators and policy makers may gain more knowledge of the expectations on a teacher. With this knowledge, administrators and policy makers may make decisions to alleviate some pressures teachers are facing.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and the school district may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All school district’s information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. The School District’s identity will not be revealed in any form, shape, or manner in the reporting of this study. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Questions concerning the research should be directed to Shelly Robinson at 972-475-4616. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human participants follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

_____________________________________________________________ Date
Signature of Authorized Person for School District

_____________________________________________________________ Date
Signature of Person Explaining the study
APPENDIX C
Consent Form of Teacher Participant
Authorization to Participate in Research Project

Consent is hereby given by the teacher to participate in the study titled:
No Child Left Behind: How Do Teachers Cope? (The title of this study may change in the future, but the purpose of the study will not change.)

Purpose: The purpose of this collective qualitative case study will be to explore the experiences of five public school elementary teachers in a southwestern state in this era of the No Child Left Behind Act. The central research question will be: With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 being the major focus of education at this time, what expectations are being placed on elementary school teachers in a public school district in a southwestern state and how are the teachers coping with these expectations?

This research may lead the way to a solution to prevent teacher burnout and keep highly qualified teachers in the classroom; this in turn can only benefit the children in our schools.

Research Procedure Description: The researcher will interview the participant before observation occurs in the classroom. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes to an hour and will be tape-recorded in order to transcribe later. The participant will be provided a copy of the transcription of the taped interview to clarify any misinformation. The researcher will shadow the teacher throughout a whole day to make anecdotal records of what the teacher is required to do during the day. This may include recording that the teacher made a phone call to a parent, tied a shoe, made copies of a handout, or zipped up a sweater. At no time, will the identity of the child, parent, teacher, or other people involved in observation be revealed. After the observation, the researcher will again interview the participant to clarify any observation recorded.

Benefits: A study of the ramifications for teachers' daily routines and responsibilities resulting from the implementation of the NCLB Act could benefit many people concerned about education. First, teacher educators may find the information useful as they help pre-service teachers prepare for the expectations they may encounter once employed as a teacher. Pre-service teachers tend to enter the field of teaching with rose-colored glasses and are soon disappointed. Second, the information may give the general public insight into what actually happens in a teacher's day and emphasize how important it is for parents to be involved in their child's education and be advocates for the teacher to be able to spend more time teaching their child. Finally, administrators and policy makers may gain more knowledge of the expectations on a teacher. With this knowledge, administrators and policy makers may make decisions to alleviate some pressures teachers are facing.

Risks: No known risks are foreseen in this study. The possibility and degree of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Confidentiality: As a participant I have been fully informed of the intent of the study and the manner in which the study will be conducted. (See Research Procedure Description above.) As a participant, I have been asked for my consent to pursue the study using the information that will be provided to me through interviews, document retrieval, audio tape recordings, and observation of my day. As a participant, I have been asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study and have been informed that I may withdraw at any point during the study. I understand that to preserve my anonymity I will be given a pseudonym.

Subject's Assurance: Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. The participant's identity will not be revealed in any form, shape, or manner in the reporting of this study. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to Shelly Robinson at 972-475-4616. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human participants follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

Date
Signature of Teacher Participant

Date
Signature of Person Explaining the study
First semi-structured interview questions
Impact of Legislative Accountability on Job Satisfaction

Questions

1. Start from when you arrive at school to when you leave at the end of the day and describe what a typical day is like for you as an elementary teacher.

2. What demands other than teaching do you feel are required of you?

3. What part of your day is devoted to teaching to the test?

4. What is the most satisfying part of your job?

5. What is the most unsatisfying part of your job?

6. If you disagree with a decision that “comes from above” as not being in the best interest of your students, how do you handle or cope with this situation? For example, spending a whole day practicing bubbling in your answers in preparation of the test for kindergarten students.

7. Who do you feel is your best supporter in coping with the job of a teacher: Other teachers, principal, spouse, parents, students or others? Please explain your answer.

8. Have you considered a profession other than teaching and if so, why?
APPENDIX E

Impact of Legislative Accountability on Job Satisfaction

Second semi-structured interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you think about this comparison between the teaching profession and the medical profession saying, “imagine a pediatrician being asked to supervise her waiting room between medical consultations?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel teaching to the test is not necessary because it is built into the curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are your thoughts and feelings about No Child Left Behind?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

Observational Protocol

Location of Observation: ________________________
Project: Impact of Legislative Accountability on Job Satisfaction
Observer: Shelly Robinson
Observed: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Notes</th>
<th>Reflective Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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APPENDIX G

Interview Protocol Sheet
Location of Observation: ____________________
Project: Impact of Legislative Accountability on Job Satisfaction
Interviewer: Shelly Robinson
Interviewee: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Non-verbal cues</th>
<th>My reaction</th>
<th>Reflective Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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APPENDIX H

Email Protocol Documentation Form

Sent Email to: ____________________ Date Sent: ____________________

**Emails you have sent.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To (No names, just titles please.)</th>
<th>Nature of email.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other teacher</td>
<td>Asking if she has the book “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” I could borrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX I

Email Protocol Documentation Form

Received Email From: _____________________________ Date Received: _____________________________

Returned Email: _____________________________ Date Returned: _____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From (only put title such as student, parent, principal, etc. No names needed.)</th>
<th>Nature of Email</th>
<th>Did this email require you to do anything? What?</th>
<th>Did you respond to this email?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Principal</td>
<td>Remind me of faculty meeting</td>
<td>Yes, attend meeting from 3:15 – 4:30.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Did I get her child’s field trip money?</td>
<td>Yes, look at my records.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Harris, D. N. (2004). *Putting a high-quality teacher in every Florida classroom*. Unpublished manuscript, Education Policy Studies Laboratory, Tempe, AZ.


Wolf, M. A. (2002). *Teacher time: A study of time and task required to complete job related work*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Virginia, Charlottesvilles, VA.