NOVICE GENERALIST AND CONTENT TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AFFECTING PERSONAL TEACHING EFFICACY

Dorleen Billman Hooten, B.S., M.Ed.

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APPROVED:

Leslie A. Patterson, Major Professor
Carol D. Wickstrom, Minor Professor
James D. Laney, Committee Member
Mary M. Harris, Committee Member
Nancy J. Nelson, Chair of Department of Teacher Education and Administration
Jerry Thomas, Dean of the College of Education
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School
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New teachers begin the school year with optimism and enthusiasm, but their excitement quickly wanes as they encounter the realities of the everyday life of a teacher. When they do not experience the successes they predicted, many begin to doubt their capabilities, which results in a lowered sense of teaching efficacy. This descriptive study was designed to identify the contextual factors novice teachers perceive as influences on personal teaching efficacy and to examine the relationships between the factors. Two groups of novice teachers who were concurrently enrolled in a post-baccalaureate accelerated educator preparation program and working as first-year teachers were the participants in the study.

Data were gathered for the study through focus group activities, twice weekly journal entries completed during the teaching year, and a culminating “lessons learned” paper written during the last month of the first year of teaching. Each of the two focus groups identified nine contextual factors they perceived to affect personal teaching efficacy. Six factors were identified by both groups: parental involvement, support from administrators and colleagues, classroom discipline, testing results, teaching strategies and outcomes, and relationships with administrators and colleagues. The groups, however, perceived the relationships between the contextual factors differently. The generalists perceived recursive relationships between the factors, while the content group perceived a linear relationship.
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I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Leslie Patterson, for persevering with me throughout the time it took to complete this dissertation. Her belief in me and my ability to finish this amazing process are appreciated more than words can express. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Carol Wickstrom, Dr. James Laney, and Dr. Mary Harris; it was a privilege to learn from each of you. Your thoughtful critique of my work challenged me to stretch as a scholar.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Each year many new teachers walk into their classrooms with energy, high hopes, and rose-colored glasses, only to face unexpected problems that cause them to give up on teaching or radically lower their perceptions of their capabilities as teachers. (Ryan & Cooper, 2010, p. 455)

Since the 1970s teacher efficacy has been a topic of interest for researchers. Defined as “a belief that the teacher can help even the most difficult or unmotivated students” (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 159), teacher efficacy beliefs have been linked to student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2002; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2002). Berman et al. (1977) even describe efficacy as the “single most powerful explanatory variable” (p. 94) related to teacher behavior and student achievement.

Personal teaching efficacy, however, does not develop in isolation. Schools are complex environments to which each teacher contributes a unique set of experiences and system of beliefs. We can assume that personal teaching efficacy is influenced in complex ways by multiple factors. This study explored novice teachers’ perceptions of the contextual factors contributing to personal teaching efficacy.

Context of the Study

As the newly hired coordinator of a university-based post baccalaureate accelerated teacher certification program, I found the majority of the novice teacher interns exhibited a high level of teaching efficacy as they began their first teaching
assignment. Although most of them realized they still had much to learn about the teaching profession, they were certain that they would have a positive impact on the academic performance of the students entrusted to their care. The 42 teacher interns were employed on 36 different campuses in seven school districts. Most were the only university-based accelerated teacher interns working at their campus, so they were working with different principals and mentors. With all the different placements and school personnel involved, I expected the intern teachers’ first year experiences to be as varied as their assignments.

I began reading the intern teachers’ weekly journal entries as soon as the journals arrived during the first week of school, eager to hear how each was progressing. While there were a few exceptions, a majority of the teacher interns appeared completely overwhelmed in those first few weeks of teaching. Their entries reflected that there were enervating factors that affected their enthusiasm and teaching efficacy. Their perceptions appeared to fall along a continuum from concern to despair. In one of her first journal entries, an intern teaching on a secondary campus wrote the following about her early experiences.

I am tired and the kids won’t listen to me. They failed my quiz because they didn’t even try. I don’t know how I am going to help them. I picked up my modifications this week, and one student needs an oral exam. How in the world am I going to give someone an oral exam? This is so awful. I don’t know how I am going to help these students.

Over the next few weeks, as the teacher interns continued to post journal entries expressing their perceptions of inadequacy, I began to wonder what could be done differently within the university coursework or program that would support and sustain the higher levels of personal teaching efficacy the interns started with on the first days
of school. To accomplish this, I saw the need to understand the key contextual factors of the daily teaching experiences that the novice teachers perceive as contributors to their perceptions of personal teaching efficacy.

Statement of the Problem

While the effects of high levels of teacher efficacy have repeatedly been identified, the literature regarding the impact of contextual factors on the development of teaching efficacy is limited. "Generally lacking from the literature are the voices of teachers, their perspectives, explanations for efficacy beliefs, and the factors they perceive to impact their own sense of teaching effectiveness" (Hebert, Lee, & Williamson, 1998, p. 216). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) specifically suggest that "qualitative studies about the effect of vicarious experiences on preservice and novice teachers would be useful" (p. 954).

Evans and Tribble (1986) suggests that the "challenge for teacher educators is how best to maintain and increase whatever commitment and realistic efficacy levels" (p. 85) preservice teachers bring to their teacher education programs. To do so, teacher educators need to understand how they can contribute to a newly certified teacher's developing perception of teaching efficacy. Further, complex school environments, where interdependent relationships between and among factors in the system, make it difficult to clarify direct causal factors that might influence personal teaching efficacy. According to Aguayo (1990), "every facet [of a system] is affected by and related to other areas in ways we cannot see or measure and in some cases cannot even imagine" (p. 30). As change in one part of a system affects all other parts of a system,
understanding the relationships of the contextual factors of teaching associated with personal teaching efficacy is necessary for addressing the most problematic issues for novice teachers’ developing sense of teaching efficacy.

Further, several factors associated with teaching efficacy have also been found to impact departure from the profession. Ingersoll (2002) described teaching as a revolving door profession, and a recent staffing survey reflects leaver rates of public school teachers at 13.6% of teachers with one year of experience, 9.6% of those with two years’ experience, and 8.3% of teachers with three years of experience (Aud et al., 2010). Attrition is costly to districts in terms of expenditures (Shakrani, 2008) and in “lost teacher quality and diminished student achievement” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2007, p.3).

A highly skilled teacher workforce is needed to bring about continued increases in student achievement. Fetler (1999) and Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) report that teachers with more than five years teaching experience generally produce higher levels of student achievement than do less experienced teachers. Maintaining the highest quality teaching force becomes problematic for districts when a large percentage of teachers leave the profession prematurely. Research like that cited above suggests that those who leave typically have lower levels of personal teaching efficacy than do those who choose to continue to teach. Therefore, the link to attrition and the cost to districts in terms of student achievement and district expenditures necessitate a more thorough understanding of personal teaching efficacy.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to give voice to novice teachers regarding the contextual factors of teaching they perceived to impact their personal teaching efficacy. Three questions were chosen to examine their perceptions.

Research Questions

The following three questions guided the study:

1. At the end of the first year of teaching, what do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape perceptions of personal teaching efficacy?

2. How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?
   a. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary drivers of the system?
   b. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary outcomes of the system?

3. How do the contextual factors identified by Early Childhood (EC)-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4-12th grade content specific teachers?

Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. First, as teacher educators assist novice teachers in navigating the complex environment of teaching, they need information, currently absent from the literature, about how personal teaching efficacy works as an interdependent system. Knowledge of the components of the system and its key drivers could be used by teacher preparation programs to assist new teachers in understanding and navigating the key tasks necessary to establish a workable learning environment and build a strong sense of personal teaching efficacy. Second, an understanding of the key contextual factors influencing personal teaching efficacy and
their role in teacher attrition could be beneficial to school administrators and mentors in establishing a supportive campus environment conducive to building a strong sense of personal teaching efficacy in novice teachers. Third, novice teachers need to understand the roadblocks to their success in the classroom. Novice teachers could use their understanding of the key drivers of personal teaching efficacy to know when to seek assistance.

Overview of the Methodology

While limited research has been conducted which identifies contextual factors of teaching that influence teachers’ perceptions of efficacy, none could be found that investigated the interrelatedness and strength of influence of the various individual contextual factors on the overall feeling of efficacy.

There is a growing body of research regarding teacher efficacy, and much of it is quantitative in nature. To a great extent, the quantitative research has utilized one of several different teacher efficacy scales as a source of data. Utilizing efficacy scales of this nature limits participant responses to a predetermined number of preselected items that represent a predetermined number of preselected theories or criteria (Patton, 2001). Few studies of teacher efficacy have been conducted that utilize a qualitative method that allows teachers to describe their personal experiences with this phenomenon (Herbert et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007). For these reasons, interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) was chosen as a qualitative method that gives voice to novice teachers in identifying and describing the contextual factors of teaching they perceive as influences on their personal teaching efficacy. IQA is a
qualitative method based on grounded theory, and as such, its purpose is to develop theory from the participants' responses regarding their experiences with the phenomenon of personal teaching efficacy. The IQA research design facilitates the generation of theory from the data obtained.

IQA, developed by Northcutt and McCoy (2004), employs a systems approach to data gathering and analysis whereby participants identify relationships between self-identified components of an issue. Through this process, the researcher is able to capture a socially constructed view of the participants' reality with the phenomenon under study.

Two groups were identified for inclusion in this study: a group of teachers employed as generalist teachers and a second group employed as content area teachers. All of the teacher interns were simultaneously completing a university-based, post-baccalaureate accelerated teacher preparation program and their first year of teaching.

The primary data sources included documents that recorded participants' responses in focus group sessions conducted in May and June at the end of participants' first year of teaching. These findings were triangulated through an analysis of participants' reflective journal entries submitted weekly during their first year of teaching and a "lessons learned" paper written at the end of that year.

Delimitations

Two delimitations were identified for this study. First, the findings of this study refer only to the reports of this one group of teacher interns. Therefore, the findings
cannot be generalized beyond this group. Secondly, an assumption has been made that the self-report of the participants is an accurate reflection of their perceptions and, therefore, their experiences.

Definition of Key Terms

The following operational definitions were used in the context of this study:

- Affinity – a set of textual references that have an underlying common meaning or theme, synonymous to factors or topics (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.81)
- Content teacher- a teacher who teaches only one subject area to several different groups of students throughout the day
- General teaching efficacy- a teacher’s beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to affect student learning in a positive manner
- Generalist- a teacher who teaches several different subjects to the same group of students all day
- Interrelationships diagram- a table which displays arrows that show whether each affinity in a pair is a perceived cause or an effect, or if there is no relationship between the affinities in the pair (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 170)
- Novice teacher- in the context of this study, novice teacher identifies a first year teacher
- Personal teaching efficacy- the extent to which a teacher believes he or she can personally affect student performance (Ashton, 1984). Although the distinction between general and personal teaching efficacy is made in the literature, the topic of
this study related only to personal teaching efficacy. The terms personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy are used interchangeably throughout.

- Primary driver- a significant cause that affects many other affinities but is not affected by others (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.173)
- Primary outcome- a significant effect that is caused by many of the factors, but does not affect others (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.173)
- Secondary driver- a relative cause or influence on other affinities in the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.173)
- Secondary outcome- a relative effect of other affinities in the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.173)
- Self-efficacy- refers to individuals' perceptions regarding their ability to complete future actions (Bandura, 1977)
- Systemic influences on personal teaching efficacy- complex influences of contextual factors on personal teaching efficacy as identified by the focus group participants
- Systems influence diagram- a visual representation of a system of influences and outcomes (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 174)
- Teacher intern or teaching intern- a teacher concurrently enrolled in an accelerated educator preparation program while serving as a first year teacher under a probationary teaching license
Summary

Because a high level of personal teaching efficacy has been shown to impact both student achievement and retention in the profession, it is important for teacher education programs to understand both the contextual factors that influence personal teaching efficacy and the relationships among those factors. This chapter presented the reason for the interest in the topic, the background and significance of the study, the research questions and an overview of the methodology used in the study.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the background research presented in this chapter. It also presents past research related to teacher efficacy.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to identify the contextual factors of teaching that novice teachers perceive as influences on personal teaching efficacy and to examine the systemic relationship among the factors. It also sought to compare the factors identified by EC-8 generalists with those identified by 4-12 grade content teachers in terms of both components and system relationships.

This chapter presents the conceptual framework which serves as the foundation of the construct of teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is defined and differences in general and personal teaching efficacy are identified. Past teacher efficacy research related to beginning teachers, alternative certification, and attrition is also included. The themes of efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for instructional practices, and efficacy for student engagement are explored as they have been identified as areas impacted by personal teaching efficacy. Prior studies related to contextual factors which influence teacher efficacy are also explored. A further literature review related to the findings of the study is included in Chapter 5.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is Albert Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory and the construct of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy as defined by Bandura refers to individuals’ perceptions regarding their ability to complete future actions. These perceptions are task specific and are based on an individual’s evaluation of past experiences with a specific activity. Individuals with a high level of efficacy believe they
have the skills necessary to bring about a desired result, while those with low efficacy expectations believe the greatest influence on the results comes from external factors beyond their control. Bandura suggests that behavior can be better predicted by beliefs rather than by actual capabilities. It is the individual’s belief in personal ability, not the number of skills possessed that determines an individual’s self-efficacy.

Efficacy expectations are linked to three behavioral consequences: approach versus avoidance, performance, and persistence. Individuals with high efficacy expectations expend more effort, persist longer when faced with adversity, rebound more quickly from setbacks, and experience more success than those with lower efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977).

Self-Efficacy

Bandura (2007) describes self-efficacy as “perceived operative capability” (p. 646). It is about an individual’s belief in what he or she can make happen; it is not simply about the actual skill set possessed. To use the skill set proficiently, “cognitive, motivational, self-regulatory, and affect regulation skills” (Bandura, 2007, p. 646) are required. Thus, the execution of any skill set can produce differing results based on oscillation in perceived self-efficacy. Individuals with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely than those with weak efficacy beliefs to continue with a task even in the event of set-backs. Because efficacy beliefs influence the activities in which an individual chooses to engage, they have a profound effect on the individual’s life path (Bandura, 2001).
Two types of expectations provide the framework for self-efficacy: outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. Outcome expectancy is an individual’s belief that a specific action will result in a certain outcome. Whereas, efficacy expectation refers to an individual’s belief that he or she, personally, can successfully perform the action that will bring about the outcome (Bandura 1982, 1986).

**Triadic Reciprocal Causation**

Within social cognitive theory, Bandura (1997) suggests that human agency operates in a model of triadic reciprocal causation whereby there is a bidirectional interaction between internal personal factors (cognitive, affective, and biological), behavior, and environmental events, shown in Figure 2.1.

![Figure 2.1. Reciprocal nature of triadic determinants (Bandura, 1997, p. 6).](image)

Self-efficacy beliefs are included as a cognitive aspect of the internal personal factors. Actions that are decided upon and carried out constitute the behavioral events, while the climate and supports of the environment in which the behavioral events take place comprise the environmental events. In this, “interdependent causal structure” (p. 5), the role of cognition is equally as essential as the behavioral and environmental determinants because people both create and are created by their social systems.
Although all are equally essential, there is fluctuation within the amount of influence each of the three factors exerts, and the influence is dependent upon the situation or activity.

Sources of Efficacy

Four sources have been identified as contributors to the formation of self-efficacy beliefs: (a) enactive mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological or emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). Bandura suggests that the greatest increases in efficacy are accomplished when a combination of the four sources is present during skill development.

Enactive Mastery Experience

Mastery experience is thought to be the most influential of the four sources in terms of efficacy development because of the authentic evidence it yields regarding the possibility of future successes with similar tasks. It refers to the individual's interpretation of the results of an action. Generally, actions perceived as successful raise efficacy for similar tasks, while those interpreted as failures lower it (Bandura, 1977).

Vicarious Experience

Bandura (1977) defines vicarious experience as the observation of others performing specific tasks. When an individual has limited prior experience, vicarious experiences are advantageous because observing the success of others increases the
belief in one’s own ability to succeed. It allows an individual to learn from the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of others which are projected in course of an activity. However, to accurately use observation for gauging one’s abilities, the model must be someone of similar or slightly higher ability. The individual must identify with the model for vicarious experiences to assist in raising efficacy levels. If the model is perceived to possess skills that are much better or much worse than the individual’s, the vicarious experience has no effect on efficacy.

Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion refers to the persuasive comments of others regarding an individual’s capabilities in successfully performing a task. These evaluations of performance by others during skill development can have an impact on personal efficacy, but in order for the verbal persuasion to have a positive effect on personal efficacy, the persuader must be seen as a knowledgeable and credible source of information (Bandura, 1997).

Physiological Arousal

The fourth source, physiological arousal, is displayed through both physical and physiological modes. Physical signals for efficacy development include sweats, tension, and shakes. Physiological signs include low energy, windedness, and body aches. These signals do not raise or lower efficacy beliefs by themselves; rather it is the perception and interpretation of them by an individual that determines efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). The effect on efficacy comes from the individual's past history and
interpretation of the effect of the physiological arousal on performance of a given task as well as the level of arousal. While levels of arousal affect individuals differently, generally moderate levels assist with skill execution and high levels are debilitating.

Teacher Efficacy

Self-efficacy was extended to teacher education in what was termed teacher efficacy. Defined as the extent to which teachers believe in “their ability to have a positive effect on student learning” (Ashton & Webb, 1985, p. 142), teacher efficacy has powerful consequences for both students and teachers in the classroom. Student achievement has consistently been linked to the level of personal teacher efficacy ( Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992; Shaughnessy, 2004). Teachers with greater levels of personal teacher efficacy persist longer when faced with difficulties (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), are more apt to try new instructional strategies to meet their students' needs (Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988), and are more resilient when faced with setbacks (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

In studies by Bandura and Shrunk (1981) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) efficacy has been linked to effort expended by the teacher and the length of persistence when confronted with difficulties. Teacher efficacy beliefs have also been linked to desirable teaching and learning variables (Hebert et al., 1998; Shaughnessy, 2004) and students in classrooms of highly efficacious teachers are more likely to experience greater achievement than students from classrooms with teachers lacking in efficacy (Shaughnessy, 2004).
There is little argument that a teacher’s behavior in the classroom is greatly influenced by the beliefs held by the teacher. Teachers act in certain ways depending on their beliefs about learners, learning, classroom control, and their ability to assist with the learning process. Difficulties have existed for researchers wishing to examine teachers’ beliefs because of “definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understanding of beliefs and belief structures” (Pajares, 1992, p. 307). Additionally, teacher efficacy has been difficult to measure because of the lack of a common definition among researchers (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

Although teacher efficacy has been conceptualized in different ways (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), for this study the most prevalent conceptualization is used. Its roots extend back to 1976 and the work of the RAND Corporation which consisted of two independent dimensions. The RAND researchers used Rotter’s (1966) locus of control construct as the theoretical base for their two studies which reported a significant correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). In their study of reading programs and interventions, the RAND researchers asked teachers in Los Angeles to respond with agreement or disagreement to the following statements: (1) “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.” and (2) “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students” (Berman et al., 1977, pp. 159-160).

Gibson and Dembo (1984) furthered the conceptualization with two items similar to those in the Rand study. Rather than using locus of control in their explanation of the dimensions, they referred to self-efficacy as described in Bandura’s social cognitive...
learning theory. These dimensions of efficacy include both efficacy expectations and outcome expectations, whereby efficacy expectations refer to an individual’s expectations related to his or her own teaching and outcome expectations refer to the outcomes of teaching (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified the dimensions as independent of each other, and as such, an individual can believe in either one or both of the dimensions for any activity thus leading to several configurations of overall efficacy beliefs.

Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) concurred with the conceptualization of teacher efficacy containing two dimensions, but opined that along with expectation of an individual’s personal sense of efficacy, there is a belief about the power of teaching in general which is grounded in personal attitudes about education. They labeled the two dimensions general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. This study looks at the dimension of personal teaching efficacy because it seeks to investigate the factors individual teachers identify as influences on their beliefs about what they can personally do to bring about student learning.

**Teacher Efficacy Sources**

The four sources of self-efficacy identified in social cognitive theory have also been identified in the literature as sources associated with personal teacher efficacy. Mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological arousal have all been reported as contributing to personal teacher efficacy, though at varying degrees of influence. Additionally, their influence appears to contribute at different times during an individual’s development as a teacher.
The research regarding sources of personal teacher efficacy is limited (Labone, 2004). Bandura (1997) identified mastery experience as the source that had the most powerful influence on teacher efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) concurred. They suggested that fluctuation in efficacy levels of beginning teachers could be attributed to the limited number of mastery experiences they have to reflect back upon when they are experiencing difficulty; whereas, the personal teacher efficacy of experienced teachers is more fixed because they have more experiences from which to draw. Because they are important sources in the early stages of personal teacher efficacy development, Szabo, Bailey, and Ward (2005) suggest that it is vital that teacher preparation programs afford students the opportunity to be subjected to vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion as often and early as possible during their preservice education. Vicarious experiences help teachers build confidence, and they demonstrate that teaching can be done successfully. They can come from several sources: watching teachers teach, listening to the stories of teachers about their teaching experiences, and professional reading (Szabo et al., 2005). During preservice education, verbal persuasion comes from coursework and feedback from instructors and peers. In a school setting, it comes from the feedback of mentor teachers, supervisors, colleagues, and instructors. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) suggest that verbal persuasion in the form of support is also an important efficacy source for beginning teachers. They reported that support from teaching peers and the community positively affected the efficacy of the teachers in their study, but unlike other study results (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001), administrative support or lack thereof had no effect.
Once preservice teachers begin to teach, physiological or emotional cues and mastery experiences further assist in the formation of personal teaching efficacy (Szabo et al., 2005). Experiences where the individual feels relaxed and confident assist with prediction of future success (Bandura, 1997). Moderate levels of arousal can benefit performance which in turn can increase personal teaching efficacy; whereas, extreme levels of arousal can have negative consequences for efficacy. Identified as an emotional cue, teaching-related stress is linked to personal teacher efficacy (Smylie, 1988). An individual’s personal teacher efficacy level can be positively or negatively affected depending upon the level of stress.

Mastery experience and verbal persuasion were identified as the primary sources for building teacher efficacy in Mulholland and Wallace’s (2001) longitudinal case study. The feedback provided by the students affected personal teaching efficacy both positively and negatively. When students responded excitedly to the science lessons, the teacher’s belief in personal ability to teach science increased; otherwise, the students' behavior negatively affected the teacher’s personal teaching efficacy. In the study, vicarious experiences in the form of discussions about teaching experiences assisted with developing a stronger sense of personal efficacy. Physiological arousal was much less a factor in bolstering or decreasing personal teacher efficacy; however, there was mention of a calmer class and well rested teacher after a holiday break.

**Subscales of Teacher Efficacy**

They suggest that these three dimensions “represent the richness of teachers’ work lives and the requirements of good teaching” (p. 801). Personal teacher efficacy levels can be different for each of the three dimensions. Depending on the experiences with each dimension and how an individual processes the experiences, efficacy for each dimension can be raised or lowered. On the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), each dimension can be measured separately, and an overall teacher efficacy score can be established.

Efficacy for Classroom Management

In the Teacher Self Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), efficacy for classroom management refers to issues dealing with both effective discipline techniques for classroom control and managing the classroom with routines that make the class run smoothly. The literature suggests that although student teachers express concern about controlling the class (Veenam, 1984), they hold unrealistic beliefs about their ability to follow a discipline plan to control the class (Veenam, 1984; Weinstein, 1988). The new teachers hold an “it won’t happen to me” (p. 39) attitude whereby they believe they will be able to organize and control the classroom better than their peers (Weinstein, 1988). Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) suggest that beginning teachers’ beliefs about student control are related to their sense of efficacy. In a study of 182 students enrolled in a teacher preparation program, Hoy and Woolfolk reported that individuals with high teacher and personal efficacy scores were more humanistic in their classroom control ideology, while individuals with low teaching efficacy, but high personal efficacy tended to be more custodial in their approach to classroom control. Teaching efficacy in
their study referred to the individual’s beliefs about the power of outside influences on teaching.

Efficacy for Instructional Strategies

Efficacy for instructional strategies is identified as ability to use a variety of instructional strategies, effective questioning skills, ability to differentiate instruction to meet students’ needs, and skilled assessment of student learning. The findings of several research studies reveal that teacher efficacy is correlated to an individual teacher’s methods of instruction and willingness to try new methods to meet students’ needs (Berman et al., 1977; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). Berman et al. (1977) reported that efficacy was linked to teachers’ sustained use of new methods and materials. Stein and Wang (1988) concurred. In their study of implementation of an innovative program in three elementary schools, they reported that staff development in the program led to more effective implementation, which then led to an increase in personal teaching efficacy. Riggs and Enochs (1990) reported greater use of hands-on teaching methods and Ashton and Webb (1986) reported fewer lessons utilizing a teacher-led, whole group instructional method among teachers with higher efficacy levels. Further, teacher efficacy has been linked to a teacher’s willingness to experiment with and adopt teaching innovations (Allinder, 1994; Berman et al., 1977; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Guskey, 1984; Smylie, 1988). Guskey (1988) noted that highly efficacious teachers were more amenable to experimenting with new instructional methods than those less efficacious.
Efficacy for Student Engagement

In the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), engagement refers to the teacher’s ability to assist students in believing in themselves, valuing education, and motivating them to want to learn. It also refers to the teacher’s ability to work with students experiencing difficulty learning. Studies related to efficacy for student engagement yield results that link a teacher’s sense of efficacy with persistence in working with students experiencing difficulty in mastering content (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), level of judiciousness in working with students making repeated errors in their work (Ashton & Webb, 1986), and the likelihood of referring students to special education (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Podell & Soodak, 1993). In a study of novice English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, the ability to motivate and engage the students was scored the lowest of the three subscales (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008).

Contextual Factors

There have been only a few studies which identified contextual factors and even fewer that have examined any interrelationships between the contextual factors and teacher efficacy. Labone (2004) suggests that a greater understanding of the effects of context variables on teacher efficacy is needed. The process of triadic reciprocal determinism implies that personal factors, behavior, and environmental factors influence one another. Thus, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) argue that “it should be instructive to examine reciprocal relationships between school contexts and teacher self-efficacy” (p.945). Research related to contextual factors that affect teaching efficacy
is an area that also requires further examination (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

Studies have been conducted at both the campus and classroom levels in an attempt to identify contextual factors related to teacher efficacy. The influence of the campus workplace context on personal teacher efficacy was investigated by Moore and Esselman (1992). Their findings indicated that efficacy is influenced by factors that impede instruction such as interruptions and paperwork, a climate focused on instruction, and the degree of participation in classroom instructional and curricular decision making. The extent of campus-level decision making to which teachers are allowed to participate has also been linked to teacher efficacy (McCormack-Larkin, 1985; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Other school-wide factors identified as influences in past research on teacher efficacy include (1) perception of a positive school environment (Moore & Esselman, 1992), (2) sense of community (Lee, Dedick, & Smith, 1991), (3) low morale (Webb & Ashton, 1987), (4) a coordinated, school-wide approach to controlling student behavior (Rosenholtz, 1989), and (5) insufficient salaries and status (Webb & Ashton, 1987).

Classroom context has also been investigated. Ross, Cousins and Gadalla, (1996) found variation in teacher efficacy levels of high school teachers depending on subjects taught and groups of students. Raudenbush et al. (1992) concurred and added that teacher efficacy levels were higher in academic track and honors classes. The amount of parent involvement was noted by Rosenholtz (1989) as a factor affecting teacher efficacy.
Campus leadership has also been identified as a factor affecting personal teacher efficacy. Efficacy levels were higher on campuses where the principal minimized classroom interruptions, ensured teachers had the resources needed to fulfill their duties, and allowed teachers a great deal of autonomy over classroom decisions (Hipp & Bredeson, 1995.)

Efficacy and Teacher Attrition

Beginning a teaching career is a critical stage for teachers. The initial years of teaching are recognized as being important to an individual's teaching effectiveness, job satisfaction, professional commitment, and career longevity (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Lortie, 1975; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Many novice teachers start their careers with uncertainty, find their jobs more demanding and challenging than expected, and reconsider their career choices (Veenam, 1984) The National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) reported that nationally, 17% of new public school teachers leave the profession within the first three years. Others report teacher attrition as high as 35% in the first three years to near 50% within five years (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Likewise, Heath-Camp and Camp (1990) found that 15% of career and technical teachers quit within their first year and more than half left the profession within six years. Teachers on the job for just a few years are twice as likely to leave the teaching profession as their more experienced counterparts (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004), while the greatest risk for teachers leaving occurs in the first year (Murnane, Singer, Willett, & Olsen, 1991).
Several different reasons for teachers’ departure from the field have been cited. The National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) reported that of the 17% they noted as leaving, 27% retired, 37% left for family or personal reasons, and 26% left because they were dissatisfied with teaching or entered another career. Other reasons cited for leaving include job-related stress (Ruhland, 2001), concerns about their own safety, a perceived lack of fairness and support, inadequate facilities, materials, and resources, and time-consuming tasks that were perceived as unnecessary (Kirby & LeBude, 1998). Many of these factors are related to teacher efficacy, and a lower sense of efficacy is linked to teacher departure from the profession. Teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more committed to the profession (Burley, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1991; Milner, 2002) and thus more likely to remain in teaching (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

In an analysis to determine the main reasons teachers leave, Ingersoll (2003), focused on teachers who left teaching after their first year. Job dissatisfaction or pursuit of other employment accounted for about half of all leavers. Of those who left because they were dissatisfied with teaching, the major reasons given were poor salaries, inadequate administrative support, student discipline issues, poor student motivation, and lack of faculty influence or autonomy. Lesser reasons cited included large class sizes, inadequate time to prepare, and intrusions on instruction time.

Of these factors, more than three-fourths of the departing teachers listed at least one of the following as the reason for quitting: student discipline problems; poor student motivation; lack of administrative support; or lack of influence over classroom or schoolwide decision making (Ingersoll, 2003). These four factors have also been found
to influence teachers’ perceptions of efficacy. Classes with orderly students have been found to have teachers with higher efficacy levels (Fletcher, 1990; Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989). Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) suggest a link between classroom management and student motivation and efficacy for beginning teachers. Webb and Ashton (1987) report a link between poor morale and a diminished sense of efficacy. Higher levels of efficacy were noted among teachers in schools with principals who provided appropriate resources and allowed flexibility over classroom decisions (Hipp & Bredeson, 1995; Lee et al., 1991). Likewise, in their study of teachers in an urban Midwestern school district, Moore and Esselman (1992) reported a greater sense of efficacy among teachers who perceived they had influence in schoolwide decision making.

Ingersoll (2002) described teaching as a “revolving door profession”. Previously, the attrition rate among new teachers during their first three years was reported to be as high as 35% with the numbers increasing to 49% within five years (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). A more recent staffing survey of the 2008-09 school year reflects leaver rates of public school teachers at 13.6% of those with one year of experience, 9.6% with two years of experience, and 8.3% of teachers three years of experience (Aud et al., 2010). This same report and other research adds to attrition literature as findings express that teachers with two or fewer years of experience are twice as likely to leave the profession as teachers with 11 or more years (Hanushek et al., 2004), and the greatest risk for teachers leaving occurs in the first year (Murnane et al., 1991). Besides adding to the shortage of teachers in critical teaching areas, the high attrition rates are costly to districts. In Texas alone, it was
estimated that the cost of teacher turnover and attrition for the state in 2005 was $505 million (Shakrani, 2008).

Further, although not quantifiable in dollar figures, the cost of the loss in teacher quality and student achievement is even higher (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2007). Teachers have a measurable influence on student performance (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 1998), and increases in student achievement are typically greater with experienced teachers than novice teachers with less than five years teaching experience (Fetler, 1999; Murnane & Phillips, 1981; Rivkin et al., 2005). Along with instructional effectiveness, experienced teachers also exhibit an overall greater sense of personal teaching efficacy (Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) and efficacy related to both classroom management and instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

Because of the link to attrition and the cost to districts in terms of student achievement and district expenditures, a more thorough understanding of personal teaching efficacy is needed. Retention in teaching will become even more important to educator preparation programs (EPPs) in Texas because in 2009, new rules were established regarding accountability of the state’s EPPs. Among other indicators, EPPs will be rated on the number of candidates retained in the profession, retention of beginning teachers in the profession for at least three years, and student achievement of new teachers for three years following the induction year (Texas Administrative Code, 2010). In light of the research indicating the effect of teacher efficacy on both teacher attrition and student achievement, further examination of personal teaching efficacy is warranted for all educator preparation programs.
Efficacy and Alternative Certification

Although this study was not specifically about alternative certification, the literature regarding such routes should be used in any discussion of beginning teachers as many new teachers gain certification through this route. Also, this study used participants from an accelerated program which was a shortened pathway much like an alternative program. Research examining the efficacy of alternatively certified teachers includes studies that deal strictly with alternative programs and others that compare alternative routes to traditional teacher education routes. Findings regarding the teacher efficacy levels of alternatively certified teachers are not consistent.

Malow-Iroff, O’Connor, and Bisland (2004) examined the personal and general teaching efficacy of a group of alternative certification participants, teaching fellows, in New York City. Their findings indicated that when the campus was perceived to have low SES, administrative support was also perceived as low, and the teaching fellows’ general teaching efficacy was negatively correlated. When the SES and administrative support were low, the fellows believed that there was little they could do about the outside variables that overshadowed their influence. The study’s findings indicated that new teachers need to feel supported by both administration and parents in their efforts to work with their students. Likewise, Forshbach-Rothman, Margolin & Bloom (2007) reported that administration and support were primary concerns to beginning alternative route teachers.

Malow-Iroff et al. (2004) found that the alternatively certified teachers in their study expressed competence in their personal teaching efficacy despite the shortened pathway to the classroom. Further, they suggested that teacher educator programs
should build supports for these positive beliefs into the training so that they carry over into the classroom.

In a study of alternatively certified teachers in Florida, Suell and Piotrowski (2006) found that there was no significant difference between the levels of competency between alternatively certified and traditional route teachers. These findings support those of Houston, Marshall, and McDavid (1993) and Guyton, Fox, and Sisk (1991).

In contrast, Raudenbush et al. (1992) suggest that levels of teacher efficacy are dependent upon the teacher preparation program. According to Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) and Zientek (2007), an individual's feeling of preparedness is the strongest predictor of teacher efficacy. Results of their research suggested that teachers with lengthy teaching experiences and coursework with a practicum tended to feel better prepared than those going through an alternative route. Although Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley and Wilson (2003) found that concerns regarding instruction and classroom management were similar among traditional and alternatively certified teachers, they reported that the traditional teachers had higher levels of efficacy in dealing with the concerns.

Flores, Desjean-Perotta, and Steinmetz (2004) also noted differences in the efficacy levels of beginning teachers depending on certification route. They found that teachers trained through a traditional teacher education route were more likely to experiment with different instructional strategies; whereas, alternatively certified teachers used a more traditional approach. They reasoned that fewer teaching opportunities coupled with fewer pedagogy classes prior to their initial year of teaching could be the reason for the lower efficacy of the alternatively certified teachers.
Concerns of Beginning Teachers

There is a wide body of research regarding the concerns of first year teachers, and many of the concerns identified by first year teachers are also identified as contextual factors that affect teaching efficacy. The two studies discussed here are characteristic of much of the research on first year teacher concerns. In a review of the literature regarding perceptions of problems faced by beginning teachers, Veeman (1984) identified the seven most problematic as: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing student work, relations with parents, organization of classwork, and insufficient materials and supplies. Fogarty, Wang, and Creek (1983) also listed classroom management as a major problem for beginning teachers and noted beginning teachers’ sensitivity to student disruptions while delivering a lesson.

In a more recent two-year longitudinal study, Watzke (2007) noted five major concerns for beginning teachers at the end of their first year of teaching. Noted as concerns were student academic growth, student motivation, student socio-emotional growth, individual student differences, and classroom conduct.

Efficacy and Beginning Teachers

In a study of graduate students who were teaching, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) suggest that experienced teachers with four or more years of teaching reported greater overall efficacy than novice teachers with three or fewer years of teaching experience. Likewise the experienced teachers reported greater efficacy for classroom management and instructional strategies than did their less experienced
counters. Since insufficient preparation in either teaching methods or content expertise has been linked to decreased sense of teacher efficacy (Tasan, 2001), it is imperative that teacher preparation programs provide opportunities for application of content learned in teacher preparation coursework.

Summary

This chapter included a discussion of the relevant aspects of social cognitive theory as it relates to teacher efficacy in this study. A review of research related to the sources and dimensions of personal teacher efficacy was presented. Also included was a review of research on teacher efficacy related to attrition, teachers in alternative certification programs, and novice teachers. The next chapter explains the methodology used in this study and the rationale for its use.

Personal teacher efficacy is an important factor in both student achievement and teacher retention. As such, it is essential that teacher preparation programs have an understanding of new teachers’ developing efficacy so they can assist them with navigating the complex teaching environment.

Bandura (1997) suggests that teacher efficacy both affects and is affected by environmental factors and behavioral events. For this study, two groups of novice teachers were examined regarding the contextual factors perceived to affect personal teaching efficacy. To that end three research questions were examined.

1. At the end of the first year of teaching, what do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape perceptions of personal teaching efficacy?

2. How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?

   a. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary drivers of the system?
b. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary outcomes of the system?

3. How do the contextual factors identified by Early Childhood (EC)-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4-12th grade content specific teachers?

Chapter 3 describes the methodology utilized to determine which contextual factors novice teachers identify as drivers and outcomes of personal teaching efficacy.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study intended to capture the lived reality of two groups of novice teachers by actively involving them in identifying and examining the contextual factors they perceived to influence their personal teaching efficacy. Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) was utilized as the method of data collection and analysis for this study. It is “an approach to qualitative research grounded in systems theory whose primary purpose is to represent the meaning of a phenomenon in terms of elements (affinities) and the relationships among them” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. xxi).

This chapter presents a description of the research methodology used in the study. The rationale for selection of the method and participants is discussed. A description of the IQA process of data collection and analysis is also presented.

Overview of Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)

This study was designed to investigate the contextual factors novice teachers perceived as influences on their personal teaching efficacy. A grounded theory approach that utilizes IQA methodology was used. IQA is a systems approach to qualitative research that combines the rigor of quantitative research with a qualitative design of data collection and analysis. The qualitative design uses a “detailed, applications-oriented, systematic process by which data, analysis, and interpretation are integrated into a whole” (Northcutt and McCoy, 2004, p. xxii).

“The product of an IQA study is a visual representation of a phenomenon prepared according to rigorous and replicable rules for the purpose of achieving
complexity, simplicity, comprehensiveness, and interpretability” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 41). Focus groups are used as the method for group data collection. The data collected from the levels of meaning of the different focus groups become the foundation for interpretation.

Three phases comprise the IQA process of this study: research design, focus group, and report. After identifying the research questions, focus groups are established with members who share common experiences with the phenomenon being investigated. The focus groups identify themes or categories called affinities. Then data are evaluated and reported (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Figure 3.1 illustrates the IAQ research and document flow for this study. Each of the steps in the research flow and the process for completing the working documents is described in detail later in this chapter.

Rationale for Selection of the Method

There is a growing body of research regarding teacher efficacy, and much of it is quantitative in nature. To a great extent, the quantitative research has utilized one of several different teacher efficacy scales as the method of data collection. In quantitative research utilizing scales of this nature, participant responses are limited to a predetermined number of preselected theories or criteria (Patton, 2001). Few studies have been conducted utilizing a qualitative method that allows teachers to describe their personal experiences with the phenomenon of teacher efficacy (Hebert, Lee, & Williamson, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).
For this study, IQA was chosen as the qualitative method to give voice to novice teachers in identifying and describing the contextual factors of teaching they perceive as
influences on their personal teaching efficacy. IQA is based on grounded theory, and as such its purpose is to develop theory from the participants’ responses regarding their experiences with the phenomenon of personal teaching efficacy. The IQA research design facilitates the generation of theory from the data obtained.

Grounded Theory

IQA is an inductive discovery methodology based on the grounded theory approach to qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (p. 2). Cresswell (2003) identifies grounded theory as a research strategy “in which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants in the study” (p. 14).

Three elements comprise grounded theory: concepts, categories, and hypotheses or propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers collect data in several stages, refine the data, and determine any interrelationships of identified categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). The three elements of grounded theory identified by Corbin are present in this study as it attempts to identify the contextual factors perceived to influence personal teaching efficacy, categorize the factors, and develop hypotheses about interrelationships of the categories and the extent of influence each category has on personal teaching efficacy.

Additionally, Cresswell (2003) states, “Two primary characteristics of this design (grounded theory) are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize similarities and differences of
information” (p. 14). In this study, the contextual factors identified by the focus groups and student writings are constantly compared for the emerging categories. Further, with the gathering of data from two different groups, identification of similarities and differences is maximized.

Selection of Participants

Northcutt and McCoy (2004) contend that people closest to a phenomenon of interest are best able to label and describe experiences associated with it. For the purposes of this research, the 2008-2009 cohort of intern teachers who were concurrently completing a central Texas university-based post-baccalaureate accelerated teacher certification program and their first year of teaching were chosen as the research participants. Two separate convenience groups were identified for inclusion in the study: (a) a generalist group consisting of 27 intern teachers seeking generalist certification as either an EC-4th grade or a 4-8th grade teacher, and (b) a content group of 15 intern teachers seeking certification as 4-12th grade content specific teacher. The groups were identified based on their accelerated certification program placement and teaching assignment. The generalist cohort began the program together and took all coursework together throughout the program. Likewise, the content cohort proceeded through the program together. The two groups had similar coursework, but the courses were grade level specific, and the generalist group had instructors with elementary and intermediate school expertise, while the content cohort instructors had middle and high school expertise.

For the focus group data, archival data from the two convenience groups was
used. Of the 27 interns originally identified in the generalist group, seven of them were not included in the focus group because, although they were seeking generalist certification, they taught only one subject area. The generalist interns included in the focus group taught multiple subjects to the same group of students each day. Additionally, one generalist intern did not complete the program, one moved before completion of the study, and one chose not to participate, leaving a generalist focus group of 17 participants. With the exception of one intern who did not complete certification requirements, and one who chose not to participate, the entire group of intern teachers from the 4-12th grade content specific group was included in the focus group. All 13 of the content interns taught one subject area to multiple groups of students each day.

Participants

Participants included the 2008-2009 cohort of intern teachers who concurrently completed a central Texas university-based post-baccalaureate accelerated teacher certification program during their first year of teaching. The generalist focus group consisted of 17 interns. Of the interns, 14 were female and 3 were male. Five were African American, one was Hispanic, and 11 were Caucasian. The generalist intern teachers taught in three different central Texas school districts in close proximity to each other. Teaching assignments included one pre-K, two kindergarten, two 1st grade, six 2nd grade, one 3rd grade, three 4th grade, and two 5th grade.

The content focus group consisted of 13 interns. Of the interns, 7 were female and 6 were male. Two were African American, two were Hispanic, and nine were
Caucasian. The content intern teachers were employed in four different central Texas districts. High school teaching assignments include two history, two math, and one each in geography, biology, and Spanish. At the middle school level, the teaching assignments included three language arts, a math, a science, and a theatre arts assignment.

All of the interns were admitted to the post-baccalaureate accelerated teacher certification program at a central Texas university. The screening process for admission into the program included a GPA of 2.75 or greater on all undergraduate coursework and in the area in which the teachers were seeking certification, successful scores on both writing and critical thinking tasks, and a professional interview. Additionally, interns were required to pass a higher education readiness exam in the areas of mathematics, reading and writing.

Prior to employment as classroom teachers, the interns are required to pass the state content exam, the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES), for their certification area, maintain a 3.0 GPA on summer coursework which consists of 12 graduate credit hours in the education department, and perform satisfactorily in a two-week summer school teaching experience.

During their internship year, the interns take three graduate credit hours of coursework during the fall and spring semesters. They are supervised throughout the year by retired public school principals under contract with the university. The supervisors visit and observe each intern a minimum of three times during the fall and three during the spring. They also communicate with the interns through twice-weekly journal submissions by the intern. The employing school district assigns a mentor to
provide support in the school setting. Each mentor receives six clock hours of mentor training from the university related to effective coaching strategies and program expectations.

Role of the Researcher

Within the IQA research design, the researcher’s role is that of facilitator. The facilitator should serve a neutral role (Northcutt & McCoy, 2003). Kayser (1995) states that the facilitator should “focus on guiding without directing and bringing about action without disruption…. All of this must be done without leaving any fingerprints” (p. 12). The data collection and analysis protocols of IQA were specifically designed to minimize the involvement of the researcher; the researcher’s role during each step is explained further in chapter 3 when discussing each step.

The researcher in this study was the coordinator of the post- baccalaureate accelerated certification program and was the instructor for several of the courses the generalists completed but did not teach the interns during the semester the focus groups met. It is acknowledged that the relationship of the researcher/facilitator to the participants could have influenced the way the students responded to the facilitator, but because the work conducted by the focus groups allowed for anonymity, it is assumed that any influence on the responses of the participants was minimal.

Data Sources and Analysis

To research the contextual factors novice teachers perceive as influences on their personal teaching efficacy, two sources of data collection were used. Table 3.1
summarizes the data sources and analysis documents used for each of the research questions.

Table 3.1

*Data Sources and Data Analysis Documents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Primary Source from Focus Group</th>
<th>Primary Data Analysis/Interpretation</th>
<th>Secondary Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape teachers’ personal teaching efficacy?</td>
<td>Focus Groups’ Contextual Factors Cards and Affinity Naming</td>
<td>Affinity Write-up</td>
<td>Axial Coding Table for Journals and “Lessons Learned” Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system? (a) Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary drivers of the system? (b) Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary outcomes of the system?</td>
<td>Focus Groups’ Affinity Relationship Table (ART)</td>
<td>Pareto Protocol, Group Interrelationship Diagram (IRD), Group System Influence Diagram (SID)</td>
<td>Axial Coding Table for Journals and “Lessons Learned” Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do the contextual factors identified by EC-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4th-12th grade content teachers?</td>
<td>Comparison of Affinities, ARTs, IRDs and SIDs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Axial Coding Table for Journals and “Lessons Learned” Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group Realities: IQA Focus Groups

Data for group realities was collected utilizing focus groups. The focus groups identified the perceived contextual factors influencing personal teaching efficacy. Focus groups were led through two steps with the purpose of identifying the contextual factors participants perceived to influence their personal teaching efficacy. The first step involved a brainstorming activity to identify the contextual factors and the second step involved clarifying the information identified in the brainstorming activity.

Identifying Factors

Focus group composition was determined based on people who shared a common experience. While all of the participants were novice teachers involved in a university-based, post-baccalaureate accelerated teacher certification program, two distinct focus groups were identified based on the participants’ accelerated certification program placement and teaching assignment. One focus group consisted of 18 generalists, and the other consisted of 13 content area teachers.

Each of the focus groups met near the end of their internship year. The focus groups were involved in an affinity production process which gave them the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and then express their thoughts and feelings regarding the experiences. The affinity process is designed to "categorize data into thematically organized groupings, referred to as affinities" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 98). Participants were each given a stack of index cards and were instructed to write about their daily school experiences with personal teacher efficacy. Specifically, participants were asked to write all the experiences, based in the context of teaching
responsibilities, which they believe influenced their personal teaching efficacy in some way. Participants were given 10 minutes to write as many words or phrases as they could identify, using a different card for each thought. Personal teaching efficacy was defined as the belief that they, in their individual role as classroom teacher, could produce a positive effect on student performance.

The brainstorming was conducted silently so that every participant had an opportunity to contribute without any influence from peers or the facilitator. Once all students quit writing, the cards were taped to a wall.

The facilitator read each card and a consensus of each card’s meaning was established by the focus group. The purpose of this phase is to “arrive at a socially constructed, shared meaning of each card among members of the group” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p.94). After the clarification of cards, participants were then given another opportunity to add any additional thoughts or reflections of other contextual factors (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 94).

Affinity Grouping

Affinity grouping consisted of two steps which included both an inductive coding activity and an axial coding activity. The cards the participants just generated were first grouped into categories and then given heading titles reflective of the cards in each group.

The facilitator led the participants through an inductive coding activity in which they silently placed individual cards into groups based on commonalities. During this coding activity, participants relinquished ownership of their individual cards and were
permitted to move any of the cards several times, but could not defend their
categorization of the card. Cards were moved and sorted until all participants in the
focus group were satisfied with the affinities. In determining the groupings, participants
were instructed that an affinity should possess the following characteristics:

1) It should describe constructs or categories of meanings, not people, places or
   physical things.

2) It should include only one construct.

3) It should be easily defined.

4) There should be a wide range of meaning within its definition.

5) It should have relationships to other things (Northcutt & McCoy, p. 99)

The facilitator then led participants in giving each affinity an appropriate title that
was reflective of the meaning of the affinity. Participants discussed possible heading
titles for each category until there was general consensus of a heading that captured
the affinity's meaning. The facilitator wrote header cards with the titles and placed each
above the appropriate affinity. During the discussion of affinity titles, the facilitator took
notes of major discussion points. This concluded the first session with each focus
group.

The facilitator then began the process of writing paragraph descriptions of each
affinity to capture its meaning. The descriptions were grounded in the language of the
focus group members by using specific quotes and examples from the note cards
developed by the participants and from the notes of discussion points made by the
facilitator during the affinity naming process.
Identifying Relationships among Factors

The next step in the IQA process again involved the members of the focus groups. The content group met with the facilitator a second time during the final month of the internship year. The generalist focus group met with the facilitator in two different sessions. Some met during the final month of the internship year, while others met during the summer. In this step, all perceived relationships among the affinities were sought by developing hypotheses grounded in the data. With the goal of identifying the structure of the group mindmap, focus group members determined whether a direct causal relationship existed between each affinity pair and if so, the directionality of influence.

Detailed Affinity Relationship Table

Focus group members worked in dyads or triads to determine all possible relationships between the affinities. For each possible affinity pair, the participants were instructed to determine whether there was a direct relationship between each pair of contextual factors. If participants perceived a direct causal relationship, they were instructed to determine which of the two contextual factors influenced the other.

To gather this data, the affinities were numbered, and the facilitator gave each focus group participant a copy of the numbered affinities along with the descriptions written by the facilitator. The descriptions were based on each of the focus group’s earlier discussions. A detailed affinity relationship table (ART), Table 3.2, was the protocol used by the dyads to record the hypotheses they developed by analyzing the relationships among affinities.
Table 3.2

Affinity Relationship Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Example of the relationship either in natural language or in the form of an IF/THEN statement of relationship.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For each pair of affinities, participants were instructed to draw an arrow in the direction of influence of each affinity pair. Either 1 influences 2, 2 influences 1, or there is no relationship. Dyads and triads then developed a hypothesis statement of cause and effect about each relationship pair and expressed it in the form of an if/then statement. This completed the focus groups’ work. From this point forward, all further work on this study was completed without additional input from the focus groups.

Creating a Pareto Composite

Based on the Pareto principle identified by Wilfredo Pareto, that 20% of the variables in a system will account for 80% of the variation in a system, a Pareto composite was created to represent the consensus or preponderance of affinity relationships identified in the ARTs. “While the percentages aren’t always 80/20, usually a ‘vital few’ can be identified that will provide greater payback than the ‘useful many’” (Tague, 2005, p. 381). A Pareto chart, Table 3.3, was used to identify the frequencies of each possible relationship, determine the optimal number for use in the composite system, and to resolve any ambiguous relationship which received votes in both directions (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).
Table 3.3

Pareto Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Frequency Sorted (Descending)</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Relation)</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Constructing the Group Interrelationship Diagram

An interrelationship diagram (IRD), which summarized all of the perceived affinity relationships, was completed for each focus group, shown in Figure 3.2. The directionality of the arrows in each row was counted to determine the value of delta (Δ). A second IRD was completed with the value of delta being placed in descending order in the diagram. The delta values identify the position of each affinity within the system and whether it is a potential driver or outcome. A positive delta value signals a relative driver or cause, whereas a negative delta value implies an outcome. An affinity with only outs is a primary driver which affects other affinities, but is not affected by others. Affinities consisting of both outs and ins, but more outs than ins, is a secondary driver. Outcomes are identified by the number of ins. A primary outcome consisting of only ins has no effect on other affinities, but others affect it. An affinity with both ins and outs, but more ins than outs, signals a secondary outcome. Any affinity with an equal number of ins and outs is a circulator/pivot which represents a position in the middle of the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).
Count the number of up arrows (↑) or Outs; Count the number of left arrows (←) or Ins
Subtract the number of Ins from the Outs to determine the (Δ) Deltas; Δ = Out - In

*Figure 3.2. Interrelationship diagram (IRD) (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 172).*

Constructing the System Influence Diagram

Once the IRD was finished, a tentative system influence diagram assignment chart, Table 3.4, was completed to determine the organization of affinities in the system influence diagram (SID).

*Table 3.4*

**Tentative SID Assignments**


The final working document of the system is an SID. “The SID is a mindmap or visual representation of the entire system of influences and outcomes and is created by representing the information present in the IRD as a system of affinities and the relationships among them” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 174). As a path diagram, the
SID, Figure 3.3, presents the simplest representation of the system for each of the focus groups. It was used for analysis of the structure of each group’s system and for identifying any areas of the systems where outcomes might be influenced to change.

Figure 3.3. Clean systems influence diagram (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 183).

Conclusions and Implications

The findings are reported in Chapter 4. The conclusions and implications of this study are fully discussed in Chapter 5 and come from four sources: affinity descriptions, interrelationships of affinities, comparison of the focus groups, and corroboration. The descriptions of the affinities and the affinity headings are the first source and are related to the first research question: What do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape teachers’ personal teaching efficacy? The second source, interrelationships among the affinities elaborates on perceived cause-and-effect relationships and is related to the second research question: How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system? Comparisons of the focus group mindmaps are related to the third research question: How do the contextual factors
identified by EC-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4th-12th grade content teachers?

During the course of the internship year, the teaching interns submitted two journal entries weekly in which they reflected on experiences that occurred during the week. For the entries, the teachers were instructed to submit two entries each week concerning events of the week. They were instructed to write about what happened, what their response was, and what they could do better next time they were faced with the same event. Additionally, they were specifically told that the journal was not simply a diary of events. At the end of the internship year, a “lessons learned” paper was written by each intern in which major learnings as a first year teacher were detailed. The students wrote five to seven pages in which they reflected on the major lessons they learned throughout the year. Both of these writing sources were examined to corroborate the contextual factors perceived as influences on personal teaching efficacy as identified by the two focus groups.

An axial code table, Table 3.5, was the tool utilized to record references to identified affinities in the interns’ journal and paper writings. The axial code table consists of the affinity heading, the participant group, date of the writing, quotes, phrases, or examples that define the meaning of the affinity, and facilitator notes regarding the affinity.

The completed axial code tables are the basis for corroboration of the contextual factors identified by the focus group participants. The tables were also used for further comparison of the two focus groups across the affinities.
Table 3.5

*Axial Code Table*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affinity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Writing</th>
<th>Axial Quotations</th>
<th>Facilitator Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Summary**

This chapter explained the IQA research methodology and the rationale for its selection as the method used in the study. Participant groups and data sources were identified, and data analysis techniques were described. Further, methods of corroboration were discussed. Chapter 4 consists of a thorough reporting of the data gathered through the methods described in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 4  
RESULTS: NOVICE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF  
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The results in this study convey the beliefs of two groups of beginning teachers regarding contextual factors perceived to influence their personal teaching efficacy. A three-part research question developed to investigate contextual factors associated with personal teaching efficacy in novice teachers serves as the framework for the presentation of the results:

1. At the end of the first year of teaching, what do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape teachers’ personal teaching efficacy?

2. How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?
   a. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary drivers of the system?
   b. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary outcomes of the system?

3. How do the contextual factors identified by EC-8 generalists compare to those identified by Grade 4-12 content teachers?

This chapter presents the facts regarding the three research questions which lead to the discussion in Chapter 5. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) stress that the facts regarding the research results should be presented without researcher interpretation. Doing so adds to the “credibility of the data” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 300). Therefore, this chapter presents the results related to the three research question using the voices of focus group participants.

Novice teachers continue to leave the profession, most within the first few years of their careers. The first two chapters of this report clearly established the
strong correlation between teacher’s self-efficacy and both student achievement and retention in the field. For that reason, it is imperative for personnel involved with teacher education programs to have a greater understanding of personal teaching efficacy.

Influences on Personal Teaching Efficacy

The results for the first research question, “At the end of the first year of teaching, what do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape teachers’ personal teaching efficacy?” are presented here. Reporting of these results includes data gathered through the affinity identification and affinity write-up steps of the research.

Affinity Identification

As explained in Chapter 3 of this study, this analysis is grounded in interactive qualitative analysis methodology. The first step in this approach was to identify the central categories or themes of the phenomenon under study. These categories are called affinities. The affinity identification process involved four parts: brainstorming, clarification, clustering, and refining.

Brainstorming

In the brainstorming activity, participants generated responses to the first research question. Specifically, members of each focus group were asked to close their eyes and reflect on their lives as teachers. They were asked to picture themselves engaging in the activities of a typical teaching day. What did they see? Hear? Feel?
They were then asked to identify the contextual factors involved with teaching that affect their personal teaching efficacy. To ensure that the participants shared a common understanding of personal teaching efficacy, it was defined for them as belief in their personal ability to affect student performance.

The participants were each given a stack of 3x5 cards and were instructed to silently write all of the contextual factors they could identify, one word or phrase per card. After five minutes, the participants taped all of the cards to the wall in random order. The facilitator then led the groups through a clarification stage so all participants shared a common meaning for the ideas written on each card.

The participants were next involved in an inductive coding activity whereby they clustered all of the cards into groups organized thematically. Participants could move any of the cards, not just their own, and cards could be moved from one clustered group to another by different participants. Once all of the participants determined the cards were appropriately placed into their respective affinities, they examined each affinity against the others and made any final changes.

The facilitator then led each group through a discussion of the meaning of each affinity grouping so that participants could determine a heading title for each that was reflective of the meanings of the cards within it. The results of the affinity identification process for both of the focus groups are shown in Appendix A. The bulleted lists are the responses taken from the brainstorming activity. The table titles indicate the affinity titles determined by the groups to be reflective of the meaning of the affinity. The generalist group produced nine affinities to explain the contextual factors they believed impacted personal teaching efficacy. Likewise, nine affinities were identified by the content group
to categorize the contextual factors they believed influence teachers’ personal teaching efficacy.

Composite Affinity Descriptions (Affinity Write-Up)

The next step in answering the first research question was to articulate the meaning of each affinity. The goal of the affinity description was to capture the meaning of the affinity thoroughly enough that the full range of data was expressed in each. (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The facilitator generated these descriptions based on the focus groups’ discussions regarding the naming of affinities. These write-ups were grounded in the words of the participants as noted in the audio recordings of the focus group sessions and from the phrases identified during the brainstorming activity.

Generalist Affinity Write-Ups

The generalists identified nine affinities perceived to have an impact on personal teaching efficacy. They gave the following names to the affinities: working relationships, parental involvement, testing and assessment feedback, classroom management, emotions, student and teacher interactions, curriculum requirements, relationships, and attitudes and perspectives. The write-ups or brief explanations follow, with a few illustrative quotes from the data for each.

- Working relationships: This affinity reflects increased efficacy levels when the teacher feels he/she is receiving appropriate support, assistance and approval from peers, administrators, mentors, and accelerated certification program personnel. It also reflects decreased sense of efficacy when the support and assistance is insufficient or
non-existent or when others appear to dislike or disapprove of the teacher or his/her actions.

- Parental involvement: This affinity describes the contact teachers have had with parents during the year. The group further subdivided the affinity into “good” and “bad”. The “bad” includes feeling attacked by parents/grandparents and frustration over parents who do not adequately care for the child’s physical, emotional, or educational needs, which leaves the teacher to take on a parenting role. The teachers’ comments indicated that they believe this lack of parent involvement decreases teacher efficacy. However, the participants perceive efficacy as increasing when there are “good parents” – those who positively reinforce what is happening in the classroom. These parents also outwardly show their support by letting the teacher or administration know of their approval of the teacher.

- Testing and assessment feedback: Positive or improved test results are reflected in this affinity and increase efficacy. In contrast, efficacy is decreased with less than favorable test scores.

- Classroom management: This affinity consists of both positive and negative aspects of behavior management. When students don’t do what is expected of them, don’t follow classroom or school rules, or act in a disrespectful manner, teaching efficacy is lowered. However, when the teacher is in control of the class and students behave appropriately, teaching efficacy increases.

- Emotions: This affinity addresses how the mental, physical, and emotional states of both the teachers and students affect teacher efficacy. Feelings of stress, loneliness, and tiredness decrease levels of teaching efficacy.
• Student and teacher interactions: This affinity deals with the increased sense of teaching efficacy felt when students are learning. It involves what happens both during and after instruction. Engaged students who exhibit their understanding lead to increases in teaching efficacy. However, when students do not engage in the lessons or when they exhibit a lack of understanding, teaching efficacy decreases.

• Curriculum requirements: When the teacher has adequate knowledge of the content to be taught and feels adequately prepared, efficacy is increased. However, when the teacher does not feel comfortable or knowledgeable of the material, does not feel prepared to reach all learners with the lesson, or feels time constraints, efficacy levels decrease. It also decreases when the training provided for required curricular programs or methods is insufficient to understand and correctly use the programs or methods.

• Relationships: The positive feelings expressed by students for the teachers are expressed here. Teacher efficacy is increased when students exhibit their liking of the teacher through hugs, smiles, calling her Mom, gifts, compliments and laughter. All of the ideas expressed in this affinity were perceived to raise personal teaching efficacy.

• Attitudes and perspectives: This affinity suggests that the teacher’s general outlook toward the job responsibilities, the students, and their abilities play a role in the level of efficacy.

Content Affinity Write-Ups

Nine affinities were identified as contributors to personal teaching efficacy by the content group: relationships and recognition, parental involvement, student
achievement, discipline issues, resources, teaching and learning, support, school environment, and beyond the call of duty.

- Relationships and recognition: This affinity mainly reflects an increased sense of teaching efficacy based on positive relationships and praise from students, peers, administrators, parents, and others. Teaching efficacy increases when students communicate their appreciation for the teacher. Also beneficial is the feeling of confidence when praised by peers and administrators. However, the inability to establish a relationship with a student causes a decrease in efficacy.

- Parental involvement: This affinity describes the contact teachers had with parents during the school year. When communicating with parents who are receptive and supportive, student behavior and achievement increases as does personal teaching efficacy. Other parent contact decreases teaching efficacy as in the case of parents requesting a child be moved to another class or parents believing a child when the child is lying or when parents go to the principal rather than working problems out with the teacher.

- Student achievement: Student learning outcomes in the form of increases in or positive grades and test results are reflected in this affinity and increase teaching efficacy. Low test scores, on the other hand, decrease teaching efficacy.

- Discipline issues: This affinity reflects the difficulty in teaching when students are disrespectful, disruptive, and unmotivated. Teachers are dealing with issues of gangs, defiance theft, vandalism, fighting, and cursing, all of which take away teaching time and decrease the teacher’s belief that they can affect student achievement. Also within this affinity, teachers expressed that because of behavior problems, different
groups of students are more difficult to teach, as with 8th graders or 2nd period. All of these discipline issues are perceived to decrease teaching efficacy.

- Resources: When resources to provide lessons in a variety of formats is lacking, efficacy lowers because the teachers feel they don’t have the tools necessary to help students learn. Some schools lack the funds for supplies including projectors. Some don’t have enough student books for each to have one which creates a problem with assigning homework. At some schools, facilities and equipment are just not maintained well. Perceived by the teachers as a lack of pride which spills over to students and their work, the lack of maintenance ultimately negatively affects teaching efficacy.

- Teaching and learning: Experiences expressed in the teaching and learning affinity reflect the teachers’ satisfaction and increased efficacy when they design and conduct a lesson that engages students and leads to student understanding. Several teachers wrote about the “aha” moments student occasionally have. Also adding to teaching efficacy are the times students actively show their engagement by asking thoughtful questions, making connections between concepts, and participating in conversation with the teacher. Likewise, students’ lack of understanding what has been taught, apathy, and low skill level lead to teaching efficacy decreases. Also addressed in this affinity are the teachers’ assessments that they have failed to teach students in different situations and that other teachers are doing a better job of ensuring that students understand what is being taught.

- Support: Teachers expressed their frustration over lack of support from administration and mentors in this affinity. Policies and procedures set by the
administrator that were perceived as impeding a teacher’s progress such as the lack of sufficient time for lesson planning, meetings and last minute demands were cited as issues that decreased teaching efficacy. Lack of support was also perceived when administrators did not follow through with assistance in dealing with students with special needs or discipline problems. Along with administrators, department chairs and mentors contributed to an increase or decrease in teaching efficacy based on their level of support.

- **School environment:** The school environment plays a role in teaching efficacy. When there are too many distractions, activities, or requirements that take the focus off teaching and learning, teaching efficacy decreases. Attention to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) issues, excessive paperwork, dress code changes in the middle of the year, and excessive interruption of class for announcements all take away from teaching time and contribute to a decreased sense of teaching efficacy. Some aspects of environment were noted as positive for students and/or teachers, such as having a long break which rejuvenated the teacher or pep rallies which were fun for all and helped relieve some of the stress, while issues with co-workers, rumors/gossip by peers tended to make teachers question their effectiveness regarding student achievement.

- **Beyond the call of duty:** This affinity centers on the idea that students bring baggage with them to the classroom that prevents them from fully engaging and participating in classroom or campus activities and leads to the decrease in teaching efficacy. Some students have children of their own, several are pregnant, and many do not have clothes that fit. Other students exhibit hopelessness and worry about survival for themselves or family members. When students experience these factors that are
beyond the control of the teacher, their studies lose importance. Some activities that classroom teachers engage in that are beyond their regular duties can lead to an increase in teaching efficacy because the students’ willingness to participate in them strengthens the relationship between the teacher and student which carries over into the classroom.

**Relationships among Contextual Factors**

The next phase of the research sought to answer the second research question, “How do the contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?” During this phase of the research the mental model or mindmap of each groups’ understanding of contextual factors impacting personal teaching efficacy emerges from the participants’ focus group activities and data generated by the facilitator in response to the participants’ activities.

**Theoretical Coding**

Theoretical coding allows for the discovery of the perceived cause-and-effect relationships or influences. In this phase of the research process, a series of theoretical coding activities are conducted. Participants identify the perceived direction of influence between each pair of affinities, and a power analysis is conducted to determine which pairs of relationships to use in the system. The significant interrelationships are represented in a table. Next, the researcher creates a visual representation of each affinity with its relationship to all other affinities it affects. As corroboration, relevant excerpts from the participants’ journal entries are included. The final step in answering
the second research question is a graphic representation which provides a synthesis of the contextual factors perceived to affect personal teaching efficacy as reported by each group.

Frequency Table

The cause-and-effect relationships between the affinities were determined in this step. For this, the facilitator assembled each focus group a second time and reviewed the affinities each group had identified. The affinity write-ups of each group were shared with the respective group and participants agreed that each write-up was reflective of their thoughts regarding each affinity. Participants then worked in pairs, with the exception of one group from the content group and one group from the generalist group which worked as triads, to determine the direction of influence between each affinity pair. Each pair or triad was directed to first decide whether there was a direct causal relationship between any two affinities and if so, to determine the direction of influence. For affinity pairs where a relationship was perceived, participants were asked to form a hypothesis about the perceived relationship by writing an if/then statement. "If… [cause; independent variable], then… [effect; dependent variable]" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 152). For example, a participant pair perceived support to influence discipline issues, 4 ← 7, thus they wrote, "If you have support from the office, discipline issues can be minimized."

A tally of all of the direction of influence relationships reported by the participants into Tables 4.1 and 4.2 (adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) which shows the frequencies of responses for each pair of affinities were compiled. The hypotheses
constructed for each affinity pair are used later in the discussion of the system influence.

Table 4.1

Generalist Group: Frequencies in Affinity Pair Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1→2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2→7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4→8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1←2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2←7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4←8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1→3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2→8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4→9</td>
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Adapted from *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* by N. Northcutt and D. McCoy, 2004, p.158.
Table 4.2

*Content Group: Frequencies in Affinity Pair Order*

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Adapted from *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* by N. Northcutt and D. McCoy, 2004, p.158.

**Pareto Protocol**

The next step in the analysis, the Pareto and power analysis, assisted in deciding which relationships were the least influential, and, therefore, could be excluded from the analysis. The Pareto principle suggests that a minimal number of relationships accounts for the greatest amount of variance in the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; p. 156). To
determine which of relationships to use in the system and to resolve situations where relationships received votes in both directions, a count in descending order of frequency was completed and a Pareto and power analysis was conducted.

In determining the cutoff point for relationships that received few votes, the last two columns of Tables 4.3 and 4.4 are used. The cumulative percent (frequency) is figured to determine the amount of variation in the system, while the power analysis is conducted to determine the degree of optimization. The results are shown in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 (adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; p.159). The cumulative frequency is figured by adding the votes cast for an affinity pair to the previous total. The cumulative percent (relation) is based on the total possible number of relationships. Table 4.3 has 72 possible relationships, so each relationship represents 1/72 which is approximately 1.4% of the possible relationships. To determine the cumulative percent (frequency), the number in the frequency sorted column is divided into the total possible relationships and then added to the previous total. For Table 4.3, the second relationship has seven votes cast so the seven is divided into 215, the number of possible relationships, for a dividend of 3.3. The 3.3 is then added to the previous total of 3.7 for a cumulative percent (frequency) of 7. The power reflects the degree of optimization of the system. It is figured by subtracting the cumulative percent (relation) from the cumulative percent (frequency).
Table 4.3

Generalist Group: Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency with Pareto and Power Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affinity Pair Relationship</th>
<th>Frequency Sorted (Descending)</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Relation)</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Power</th>
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Table 4.3 (continued).

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<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Relation)</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Power</th>
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Adapted from *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* by N. Northcutt and D. McCoy, 2004, p.159.

For the generalist group, power (degree of optimization of the system) was reached at the 29\textsuperscript{th} relationship suggesting that 40% of the possible relationships account for 72% of the variance in the system as shown in Table 4.3. Thus, no relationships with three or fewer votes were used in the system. According to Pareto principle, 72% of the variance in personal teaching efficacy is contended with by addressing 40% of the relationships identified by the generalist group.
### Table 4.4

**Content Group: Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency with Pareto and Power Analysis**

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<th>Cumulative Percent (Relation)</th>
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Table 4.4 (continued).

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Table 4.4 (continued).

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Note. Adapted from *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* by N. Northcutt and D. McCoy, 2004, p.159.

For the content group, the Pareto and power analysis reveals power was reached at the 32\textsuperscript{nd} relationship, suggesting that 45% of the possible relationships account for 83% of the variance in the system as shown in Table 4.4. Therefore, the content group system does not contain any relationships that received two or fewer votes. For this group, Pareto principle suggests that 83% of the variance in personal teaching efficacy is contended with by addressing 45% of the relationships identified by the generalist group.
The Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)

The next step in answering the second research question, How do the contextual factors relate to each other in a perpetual system? was to create an interrelationship diagram. The groups' interrelationship diagram, Tables 4.5 and 4.6, display the more powerful relationships from the Pareto table.

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1=Working Relationships; 2=Parental Involvement; 3=Testing and Assessment Feedback; 4=Classroom Management; 5=Emotions; 6=Student and Teacher Interactions; 7=Curriculum Requirements; 8=Relationships; 9=Attitudes and Perspectives

Table 4.6

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1=Relationships and Recognition; 2=Parental Involvement; 3=Student Achievement; 4=Discipline Issues; 5=Resources; 6=Teaching and Learning; 7=Support; 8=School Environment; 9=Beyond the Call of Duty
First, all relationships receiving no votes were excluded. Then, based on the information in the last two columns of the table, the generalist group’s system representation does not contain any relationships that received three or fewer votes; whereas, the content group’s system does not contain any affinity relationship with two or fewer votes.

The interrelationship diagrams in 4.5 and 4.6 visually display the direction of influence between each affinity pair. The relationship of influence between each pair is recorded twice, once with an arrow facing up and once with an arrow facing left. The arrow faces from the affinity that is the influencer to the affinity that it influences as determined by the relationships identified in the Pareto and power analysis for inclusion in the system. Blank spaces reflect relationships that were left out of the system after completing the Pareto and power analysis. The value of delta is determined by counting the directions of arrows for each affinity, whereby arrows facing up are counted as outs and the arrows facing left are considered ins. Subtracting the ins from the outs determines the value of delta for each affinity.

Northcutt and McCoy (2004) define the value of delta, Δ, as “a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system” (p. 173). Affinities with positive delta values are drivers or causes; whereas, affinities with negative delta values are outcomes or effects. An affinity with only outs is a primary driver or a significant cause or influence. Secondary drivers are relative influences and are signified by more outs than ins. An affinity consisting of only ins is a primary outcome which is a significant affect that does not affect others, but is caused by many other affinities. Secondary outcomes are relative effects that are affected by more affinities than they affect. In the IRD, secondary outcomes are shown by more ins than outs.
The data displayed in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 was sorted by the descending value of delta showing the relative placement of each affinity within the system, with the affinities with the largest influence on other affinities at the top. For the generalist group, sorting in descending order of delta yielded the following results:

1) Primary driver – Working relationships
2) Secondary driver – Parental involvement
4) Secondary driver – Classroom management
7) Secondary driver - Curriculum requirements
5) Secondary outcome – Emotions
6) Secondary outcome – Student and teacher interactions
8) Secondary outcome – Relationships
3) Secondary outcome – Testing and assessment feedback
9) Secondary outcome – Attitudes and perspectives

As the primary driver of the system, working relationships influences six other affinities but has no other affinities influencing it. Parental involvement, classroom management, and curriculum requirements are secondary drivers because they influence more affinities than those that influence them. Secondary outcomes are emotions, student and teacher interactions, testing and assessment feedback, relationships, and attitudes and perspectives. All of these affinities influence others, but more affinities influenced them than those they influence.

For the content group, the IRD in descending order of delta revealed the following:

2) Primary driver – Parental involvement
Parental involvement, the primary driver of the system, influences six other affinities, but has no affinities which influence it. The affinities of support, resources, school environment, and beyond the call of duty were identified as secondary drivers. These affinities both influence others and have other affinities which influence them, but they influence more affinities than those which influence them. Discipline issues, student achievement, and the teaching and learning affinities are the secondary outcomes of the content group system. Again, these affinities have influences in both directions, but are influenced by more affinities than those they influence. The only primary outcome identified in the system is the relationships and recognition affinity. It did not influence any other affinities, but there were seven affinities that the content group perceived to directly influence it.

The Cluttered Systems Influence Diagram (SID)

Next, a visual representation of each affinity is presented separately showing its links to the other affinities, Figures 4.1-4.18. In addition, selected excerpts from the
participants’ archived reflective journal entries and “lessons learned” papers are used to illustrate the perceived influence of an affinity on each of the other affinities. For each affinity, there are four possibilities for the relationship with another affinity:

1) There is no perceived relationship. In this case, during the affinity write-up phase of the research, all of the participants indicated there was no relationship between a specific pair of affinities. In the following discussion this is expressed as “participants did not perceive a relationship between Affinity a and Affinity b.”

2) There is a relationship between two affinities, but one direction of influence received all of the votes for the pair. In the following discussion these relationships are noted as “participants did not perceive Affinity a to influence Affinity b.”

3) The relationship is not of sufficient strength to be used in the system. This was determined when conducting the Pareto and power analysis. Affinity relationships receiving three or fewer votes are not included in the generalists’ system. In the content participants’ system, relationships with two or fewer votes are not included in their system. Notated as “participants did not perceive the influence of Affinity a on Affinity b to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.”

4) There is a cause-and-effect relationship. The direction of influence was determined during the frequency tally phase of the research, whereby the direction receiving the most votes is considered to influence the affinity with fewer votes. In the separate affinity discussions below, selected excerpts from the two data sources, journal entries, and “lessons learned” papers, are included to illustrate the perceived influences. The excerpts used to illustrate a relationship are not inclusive of all excerpts related to the relationship. Only a few of the excerpts that best illustrate the relationship
between a pair of contextual factors were chosen for inclusion.

Generalist Group Systems Influence Diagrams

Figures 4.1-4.9 show the relationships among the contextual factors as perceived by the generalist teachers. The drivers are shown first with the teachers’ journal entries that illustrate the perceived relationships. The outcomes and supporting quotes are shown after the drivers.

**Working Relationships as the Primary Driver in the Generalist System**

Working relationships is the primary driver identified by the generalist group. It influences six other affinities and has no affinities affecting it.

![Diagram of Generalist group working relationships affinity relationships.](image)

*Figure 4.1.* Generalist group working relationships affinity relationships.

The journal entries of the generalist participants illustrate the central influence of working relationships and verify the strength of this influence of working relationships on teaching efficacy.
• Working relationships influence parental involvement (2).

My AP went to bat for me and told this parent I have a very good classroom management program in place and that it’s good he didn’t know her child. The whole situation was cleared up and I was glad we fixed the problem instead of festering on it.

I had a parent conference to address some bullying that had been happening. I talked with the parents, student, and got the counselor involved….I am glad that I got the counselor involved. She was able to handle the situation and provided some much needed help.

I finally demanded a conference [with a parent] and she said she was at her wits end with her own child. She came to me in tears and stated that she didn’t know what to do with him….I got the counselor involved in the meeting and she gave her some disciplining techniques.

• Working relationships influence testing and assessment feedback (3)

It seems the administration was concerned about us as new teachers and the fact that our scores were so low. The instructional specialist asked if we needed help and offered assistance. It was odd having the offer since she really has not been in our class before and I wasn’t sure what type assistance she could provide.

My concern today has to do with my students’ performance on the 2nd CBA. My overall performance went up 4% but my average was still below 70%. I have been working with my mentor very closely to get a sense of continuity in planning math lessons.

We completed our 2nd “SOU” this week. We break down each kid’s progress before the administration and give them our estimates on TAKS failure. The process can be intense, but I have placed the kids in the programs they need and each is receiving additional help where needed. This made the process smooth and I was praised for the report.

The fifth grade teachers reviewed the first 9 weeks CBA’s line-by-line and developed an approach to address and reteach/retest those areas of the CBA that we were specifically deficient in. We used input from the math coach as well as the principal in addressing, with specificity, the “high payoff” TEKS that can be addressed during this 9 weeks.

• Working relationships influence classroom management (4)

I asked my mentor for help [with a discipline problem] and she quickly stepped in.
She has a few kids like I have [ones that roam around and she has to refocus them on what they are supposed to be doing]. So overall I was able to get a few techniques that I plan to use in my classroom.

My mentor has been great….I expressed the areas of help that I needed more assistance in and he was ready to offer any suggestions. In addition, I just need to hear someone tell me that I am doing something right (even if I’m not).

When she first came to our school, I was told she would run away 6 times a week. She has been with me for 7 weeks now, and today was her first run away attempt. It took the office forever to get her back in the school, into the office and calmed down. They ended up sending her home for the day.

- Working relationships influence emotions (5)

Today my principal came to observe….I did the best I could but felt like a loser by the time he left. I really wanted him to see the kids engaged in our lesson and learning….The transition didn’t go smoothly and the noise level was more than I wanted….When we returned we began our language arts lesson and by then I just wanted to cry.

…but they forget to tell you that you have to make two copies and have to send the “district fluency letter” along with the report card. I get my stack ready to go and just to be sure the other new teachers know I mention it to them. They were like me, clueless. We work together and get it all done so cards go home with the kids at 3:00 p.m. Talk about being stressed and feeling like a fish out of water.

I am really starting to feel the pressures of working with individuals that you really don’t get along with. It is important to remain professional but I can feel myself getting irritated sometimes.

When I handed my assistant principal my documentation, he said, “Wow!” He also told me that it was the best, most detailed documentation that he has EVER seen. Yes, I said EVER! He was very impressed….I have to say, it made me feel very proud to receive such a compliment.

We will then take the ideas and decide when and where they should go in the lesson plans. I think it is a good idea, but I am nervous about my co-workers not liking my ideas. Often, my ideas are shot down and frequently I feel like my ideas or input doesn’t even matter. Most of the time when our administration asks our grade level to decide on something, my mentor
and our grade level leader will discuss it, excluding me and the other two teachers on my grade level as if what we have to say is not important.

My principal came up to me today and said she heard my PDAS went well. It made me feel good that my principal is keeping tabs on me.

I responded with my own comment that it was this type of blind passing of information, without ownership, that is bad and creates gossip….Her negativity drives me crazy and I usually let things roll down my back, but I am tired of all the talk in this school….I wanted to go bed and cry for a while – I guess it took me a little longer than others to finally crack.

I had a mini breakdown today and I cried at school. I want direction and proactive guidance, not innuendoes and reactive guidance.

- Working relationships influence curriculum requirements (7)

My mentor shared how she rolls out the scientific process with her kids and it sounds like an easy way for them to understand it.

I observed another teacher today and I asked her to walk through her centers….I was amazed at how well it works and how the kids worked through the center material….I’m excited about what I learned today and can’t wait to implement my centers.

After observing my mentor, I realized that I had left out some very important math vocabulary. When I went back to my room to teach the same lesson that I observed her give, I needed to reteach a few things.

The school held his ARD meeting today and I felt that it only documented the need for assistance, but didn’t provide me any help. I keep asking for suggestions of how to work with him and coax him to get focused for a short amount of time to be interested in learning how to read. I hate that every day I don’t have the answers. I feel like I am failing him and he is getting that much more behind.

I am concerned about the phonics requirement. I’m glad they recognize that 3rd graders still need to be taught, but the district didn’t provide any guidance to what we should teach or what method we should use.

- Working relationships influence attitudes and perspectives (9)

I was thrilled that my university supervisor noticed my classroom management skills.

What a difference a teacher makes! One of the 3rd grade teachers took an
extra week off and the grade level is so relaxed. We had math parent workshop last night and the three of us were so friendly and helpful to each other. Today’s PLC was productive and remained on track….No tension.

My supervisor evaluation was this day as well and I was very appreciative of the feedback and will strive to make improvements based upon the guidance provided.

- Working relationships influence relationships (8) and student and teacher interactions (6)

Participants did not perceive the influence of working relationships on either relationships or student and teacher interactions to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

**Parental Involvement as a Secondary Driver in the Generalist System**

Parental involvement is a secondary driver in the system. It affects six other affinities but has one affinity that affects it.

![Generalist group parental involvement affinity relationships.](image)

*Figure 4.2. Generalist group parental involvement affinity relationships.*
Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and “lessons learned” papers that illustrated perceptions of parental involvement in relation to the elements of the system.

- **Parental involvement influences testing and assessment feedback (3)**

  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- **Parental involvement influences classroom management (4)**

  What the heck is wrong with some parents in this world? I have five students in my classroom that act up because they know their parents aren’t going to a) do anything about it or b) they can’t be reached even if they would do something about it.

  I just don’t know how to handle her….I have tried to call home….they don’t really care about the kids. Of course, I really need to have a conference with them, but they didn’t return the conference slip, and they won’t return my phone calls.

  I had two students that are constantly misbehaving in my class….Yesterday I did call their parents while they were at specials. Today is much better with their following directions. I’m realizing that I shouldn’t be timid about calling parents and that it will work to my advantage if they are getting involved in their education.

  My know-it-all, tell-on-everyone, I’m always-right student’s parents came in and sat there like I was on trial.

- **Parental involvement influences emotions (5)**

  We are already half way to the end of the 3rd nine weeks and I’m feeling sad for two students who are going to repeat first grade because of no fault of their own….Even though I tried to convince the parents to assist this student to get proper help for her visual problems, the situation did not get resolved as I was hoping.

  For reading night only two parents showed up…. I have not had time to analyze what the numbers mean but the turnout was quite disappointing. It made me wonder about what the students do when they leave school every day. Who do they spend their time with? I felt sad for a lot of things.
I have been happy with my parent communication. I can really say that there is not one parent who doesn’t know where their child stands. It is also good to talk with the parents and listen to their concerns.

- Parental involvement influences student and teacher interactions (6)

We have tiered her and are working diligently with her at school but she has so many gaps that I’m afraid she is not going to pass. She doesn’t have the educational support she needs at home.

The parents seem to be supportive and willing to help me work with their kids to take them to the highest level we can go to be ready for first grade.

Things are so much easier when you have parents that have an investment in their child’s education. And of course, it’s no surprise, that these students are usually more successful.

I realize we only have two days until break but why do parents think it’s a good idea to pull their children early? Not only is it not beneficial for the child’s learning but it takes away from my lesson plans. I had academic work that I was planning to introduce to the students and take grades but when there are so many students gone, it’s just not worth the hassle of keeping up with all the missed work.

He’s failing all of the subjects. I think he doesn’t care. It’s very sad to see this in the second grade. I have discussed this issue with mom on many occasions but to no avail.

- Parental involvement influences relationships (8)

There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- Parental involvement influences attitudes and perspectives (9)

And I love being able to speak with the parents at the end of the day. I always learn something new about my students and their home life.

- Parental involvement influences working relationships (1)

Participants did not perceive the influence of parental involvement on working relationships to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.
• Parental involvement influences curriculum requirements (7)

Participants did not perceive parental involvement to influence curriculum requirements.

Classroom Management as a Secondary Driver in the Generalist System

Classroom management is a secondary driver of the system. It influences five affinities, while having two affinities that influence it.

Following are the excerpts from participants' journal entries and "lessons learned" papers that illustrated perceptions of Classroom Management in relation to the other affinities of the system.

• Classroom management influences testing and assessment feedback (3)

The students that did not pass [the common assessment] have also had behavioral problems within the classroom. I know and understand the
correlation between student behavior and academic performance and I am working on the “key” that will allow increased academic involvement.

- Classroom management influences emotions (5)

All week, my students’ behaviors have progressively gotten worse….As soon as I entered the room, I knew that I was going to have to control my emotions….I have an emotional breakdown in front of my colleagues (including my principal and vice principal). I started crying and couldn’t stop. They all offered tons of suggestions but all I wanted to do was get out of the room. I went to my room, closed the door, and cried for about an hour.

I reminded myself that next time I should take a couple of minutes to calm down before I send a student out of the classroom. I let my frustrations and emotions get the best of me.

They are just not under control like they were and I’m tired. I’m not tired of teaching (well, maybe a little). I’m just tired period. This is a very stressful time and I am definitely feeling it.

I had a meltdown yesterday. My students were not listening, my disruptors were acting out to the max, and I felt like all my efforts were being wasted on ungrateful occupants of the state education system.

- Classroom management influences student and teacher interactions (6)

Classroom management is still an issue for me. It is not as easy as I thought it would be and it can really disrupt everything else. Classroom management is so crucial to my future success and the students’ success in this grade level.

I feel I should be able to reign the kids in and still conduct my lesson/game/activity. I’m just going to have to keep trying and maybe I can unlock this mystery (challenge).

I have three really difficult students. I just can’t get them to do their work….I can’t spend the majority of my time convincing them to do their work. However, I can’t just let them sit there.

All this craziness that the students pull keeps you from teaching. It takes away from your instructional time, which is oh so precious.

Sometimes they disrupt their own learning and I do not want that in my class. I have one student that shuts down when he pouts.
I don’t know how it is happening, but I feel like I am so behind. My class needs constant redirection and behavior management. I haven’t taught a science lesson in weeks. I don’t know if they are getting any new information in reading either.

His disruptions were causing the class to get behind and his inattentive behavior was counterproductive to his own learning.

- Classroom management influences relationships (8)

  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- Classroom management influences attitudes and perspectives (9)

  I am really happy about the progress I have made with my classroom management.

  I felt good about today – my students had their best Monday ever! No squirming, minimal talking and they were all on task.

  I am losing my mind! I can’t believe how much control these kids have over me. I try to keep control, but I find myself talking and yelling over them. I start every day positive and the same students aggravate me instantly. I become defensive and argumentative – they will not win, I will win (I am teacher, hear me roar).

- Classroom management influences working relationships (1), parental involvement (2), and curriculum requirements (7)

  Participants did not perceive the influence of classroom management on working relationships, parental involvement, curriculum requirements to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

Curriculum Requirements as a Secondary Driver in the Generalist System

Curriculum requirements is a secondary driver of the system. It influences three other affinities and has only one affinity that influences it.
Following are the excerpts from participants' journal entries and "lessons learned" papers that illustrated perceptions of classroom management in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- Curriculum requirements influence testing and assessment feedback (3)

My second concern is the math and science scope and sequence we received yesterday as a grade level. We are going to start a new scope and sequence starting on Monday, October 6 and students will be tested on this scope in two weeks.

I just started to get used to some consistency in planning and teaching my lesson but now I have no idea what to plan on a daily basis when it comes to math and science. The new scope is so vague and uncoordinated that even my mentor has problems instructing me on what to teach first or next. The problem I'm having at the moment is choosing a starting point to align my lesson plans with the Curriculum Based Assessment so I can teach what is expected in the curriculum.

My concern is that I am not as effective as I thought I would be. I am not in full control of "what is taught" and therefore I am struggling with measuring the effectiveness using the established weekly assessments.
• Curriculum requirements influence emotions (5)

I also got my IEP’s again, which to be honest stressed me out just a tiny bit. I just want to make sure that I provide my students with the best education possible and it’s hard to do that sometimes when they are on so many different knowledge levels.

It sounds weird to say I feel overwhelmed and unsure of myself but I love my class. I am trying to follow the lesson plan and get ideas from the other teachers, but I feel like I don’t know if it’s right.

I’m very excited about this unit because it integrates math, language arts, social studies, and science and leaves room for imagination.

• Curriculum requirements influence student and teacher interactions (6)

I am a good science and reading teacher but math just isn’t my thing and I have felt like all year that has come across in my teaching.

I am beginning to realize that one of my biggest problems with teaching is not knowing what the curriculum looks like and exactly how I should teach it.

I am seeing the need to really have a handle on the material. I am finding myself getting stuck on some of the math/science concepts. I am going to make an effort to get these questions answered before I teach it to the kids.

I feel I need to mention he was in a bilingual class and does not understand English very well. I feel I have a lot of challenges ahead of me but I will work diligently to teach him, that is my main concern. I do not worry so much about his behavior, but I do worry whether or not I will be able to teach him.

• Curriculum requirements influence relationships (8), attitudes and perspectives (9), working relationships (1), and classroom management (4)

Participants did not perceive the influence of curriculum requirements on relationships, attitudes and perspectives, working relationships, or classroom management to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.
Curriculum requirements influence parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive curriculum requirements to influence parental involvement.

*Emotions as a Secondary Outcome in the Generalist System*

As a secondary outcome, the emotions affinity has influence in both directions but has more affinities affecting it than the number of affinities it affects. It affects three others, while four affinities affect it.

![Figure 4.5. Generalist group emotions affinity relationships.](image)

The excerpts that follow are the participants' journal entries and "lessons learned" papers that illustrated perceptions of emotions in relation to the other affinities of the system.
• Emotions influence student and teacher interactions (6)

I find myself frustrated and impatient when my students ask me questions. I need to refocus my teaching on helping them and not just trying to “get through” the lesson.

When I have a bad mood, the students pick up on it. My enthusiasm, or lack thereof, will rub off on them [students] and set the tone for the effort they put forth in their lessons.

There were times in small group instruction that one of my kids would be in tears and I was on the verge of tears right along with them. I’ve learned that if you lose your patience and get frustrated your kids will not learn anything and they will sense that you are frustrated and feed off that energy. It turns into a big mess and nothing is accomplished.

• Emotions influence relationships (8)

There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

• Emotions influence attitudes and perspectives (9)

I cannot even begin to explain the dread I have been feeling. In my whole life, I have never dreaded going to work as much as I am dreading going back today….Anyway, for about 4-5 days leading up to going back to work, I was just stressing. I was so worried because I knew what it would bring….stress again.

Today was an awful day for both me and my students. I was edgy and very impatient with the kids today. I actually blamed it on the news I received yesterday about my job. My school is reducing the number of 1st grade teachers from 8 to 6.

• Emotions influence working relationships (1) and parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive emotions to influence working relationships or parental involvement.

• Emotions influence testing and assessment feedback (3), classroom management (4), and curriculum requirements

Participants did not perceive the influence of emotions on testing and
assessment feedback, classroom management, or curriculum requirements to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

*Student and Teacher Interactions as a Secondary Outcome in the Generalist System*

Student and teacher interactions is a secondary outcome of the system. While it affects two other affinities, four affinities affect it.

![Figure 4.6. Generalist group student and teacher interactions affinity relationships.](image)

Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and “lessons learned” papers that illustrate perceptions of *Student and Teacher Interactions* in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- Student and teacher interactions influence testing and assessment feedback (3).

  We took our math CBA’s. As I walked around and saw some of the answers the kids were choosing, I could tell that the words used in the questions are nothing like the words I use to teach with.
Today I gave the kids the science CBA’s. I was pleasantly surprised how well my kids did. I guess I’ve done something right!

I’m not sure if I’m doing a good job teaching my students. My classroom management is getting on track but I am fearful that I am not teaching them everything they need to know. Well, not everything that they need to know because that is impossible but I feel like I’m not preparing them for the TAKS. I guess what I am trying to say is that I don’t know if I am going to be a good teacher yet.

I’m not sure if I am teaching them anything….Every day I teach them the same thing over and over and yet when they take a quiz you would think that it is in some foreign language.

I administered two math assessments (covering the last 3 weeks) back to back and the majority of the students passed them with high marks. I attribute the high scores to the extensive time spent on the subject (in the morning) and reinforcing the same throughout the day.

I also realize that the testing is a direct result of my teaching.

- **Student and teacher interactions influence attitudes and perspectives (9)**

  I was very pleased to see them engaged with each other sharing facts.

  I found it amazing how much these little kids have absorbed in the last five months! Lately I have doubted my ability as a teacher. These little minds, however, changed that.

  Every time I grade papers, I get so frustrated that I feel like quitting.

  Well, I was so frustrated because there was a student in my small group that would just sit there with a sour look on his face and did NOTHING when I would be helping someone else in the group. This frustrated me to no end because this kid is so bright and so lazy. And I am thinking to myself, I can’t help you if you won’t help yourself.

  I’m not being pessimistic. I’m trying my best but I just don’t see how it is going to be possible to teach them everything they need to

- **Student and teacher interactions influence working relationships (1) and classroom management (2)**

  Participants did not perceive student and teacher interactions to influence working relationships or classroom management.
- Student and teacher interactions influence parental involvement (2), emotions (5), curriculum requirements (7), and relationships (8)

Participants did not perceive the influence of student and teacher interactions on parental involvement, emotions, curriculum requirements and relationships to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

**Relationships as a Secondary Outcome in the Generalist System**

Relationships is a secondary outcome of the system. It affects only one affinity but is affected by four other affinities.

![Figure 4.7. Generalist group relationships affinity relationships.](image)

Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and “lessons learned” papers that illustrate perceptions of **Relationships** in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- Relationships influence testing and assessment feedback (3)
My behavior child with special needs passed the Math and Reading CBA. She made a 64% on the Science CBA! I am so proud of her. She has made such a vast improvement...She is making leaps and bounds!...It is amazing. My principal says it is all about my relationship with her.

Ultimately, my ability to build relationships with my students paid off. They really tried on all of the exams.

- Relationships influence working relationships (1), parental involvement (2), classroom management (4), emotions (5), student and teacher interactions (6), curriculum requirements (7), and attitudes and perspectives (9)

Participants did not perceive the influence of relationships on working relationships, parental involvement, classroom management, emotions, student and teacher interactions, curriculum requirements, and attitudes and perspectives to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

Testing and Assessment Feedback as a Secondary Outcome in the Generalist System

Testing and assessment feedback is a secondary outcome in the generalist system. It influences two other affinities but has six affinities that influence it.

![Diagram showing affinity relationships](image_url)

Figure 4.8. Generalist group testing and assessment feedback affinity relationships.
Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and “lessons learned” papers that illustrate perceptions of testing and assessment feedback in relation to the affinities of the system.

- Testing and assessment feedback influences emotions (5)
  
  I am concerned because I don’t want any of my students to fail. That is why I am scared.

  I have a little over a month to teach everything that the kids need to know in math [before TAKS]. It’s not going to happen. I am feeling so much pressure.

  I came home from work crying today. I gave my students the Reading CBA. If this stupid test is any indicator of my student’s success in reading, then I’m in big trouble.

  Another reason I am so stressed is because I have not been sleeping well. I keep dreaming about the TAKS test.

  Well today was the Writing TAKS….More like a day filled with stress and anxiety….Anyway, I left the day completely and utterly exhausted….All I can figure out is it was the stress of it all weighing on me.

- Testing and assessment feedback influences attitudes and perspectives (9)

  Today was my reading CBA. My average last semester was a 58% ;-(. My average this nine weeks was 83% 😊. Still not perfect but better. I was very pleased.

  Well, as expected, my kids bombed their math CBA. Our average last semester was a 68% and our average this semester was a 62%. I don’t even know what to say. I was extremely disappointed.

  I am so happy! My kids got a 73% on their science CBA. Now, I know that doesn’t sound excellent, but they passed.

  Well for a team of first year teachers, we are pretty d*(#& good! We got 85% of our students to pass the Reading TAKS test with only 12 who need to retake.

- Testing and assessment feedback influences working relationships (1), classroom management (4), student and teacher interactions (6), and curriculum requirements (7)
Participants did not perceive the influence of testing and assessment feedback on working relationships, classroom management, student and teacher interactions and curriculum requirements to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

- Testing and assessment feedback influences parental involvement (2) and relationships (8)

Participants did not perceive testing and assessment feedback to influence parental involvement or relationships.

**Attitudes and Perspectives as a Secondary Outcome of the Generalist System**

It is influenced by six other affinities, in contrast to one affinity that it affects.

![Figure 4.9. Generalist group attitudes and perspectives affinity relationships.](image)

Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and lessons learned papers that illustrate perceptions of *Attitudes and Perspectives* in relation to the other affinities of the system.
• Attitudes and perspectives influence relationships (8)

My students loved their teacher and all they wanted was to get that same love back. Each student wanted to feel important and ultimately wanted to please me. My downfall in this area was not showing as much love and encouragement as I could. This was due to the fact that I had a class full of challenging students and I felt that if I let up I would lose control. I was preventing a disaster, but as a result missed out on deeper connections with my kids.

• Attitudes and perspectives influence working relationships (1), testing and assessment feedback (3), classroom management (4), student and teacher interactions (6), and curriculum requirements (7)

Participants did not perceive the influence of attitudes and perspectives on working relationships, testing and assessment feedback, classroom management, student and teacher interactions, or curriculum management to be of sufficient strength to be used in the generalist system.

• Attitudes and perspectives influence emotions (5) and parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive attitudes and perspectives to influence emotions or parental involvement.

Content Group Systems Influence Diagrams

Figures 4.10-4.18 show the relationships among the contextual factors as perceived by the generalist teachers. The drivers are shown first with the teachers’ journal entries that illustrate the perceived relationships. The outcomes and supporting quotes are shown after the drivers.
**Parental Involvement as the Primary Driver of the Content System**

For the content group, parental involvement drives the system and participants perceive it to influence six of the other affinities.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.10. Content group parental involvement affinity relationships**

Excerpts from journal entries and “lessons learned” papers are used below to illustrate participants’ perceptions of parental involvement in relation to the other affinities in the system.

- Parental involvement influences relationships and recognition (1)

  It was nice to hear parents say how much their son/daughter talked about my class at home.

  The conversation went really well and she stated that she knew I was for real when I called her. She advised she was testing me to see if I was serious and if I cared.

  Parent support is a must. I have had a great rapport with the parents this year. You find out pretty quick which parents are supportive and which ones think the school is just a daycare.
When the parents are involved, you will have a better relationship with the students.

- Parental involvement influences student achievement (3)

  I called parents right in the middle of class. Some parents told me to fail their kids, others tried to make excuses.

  I contacted the parents of seven of these students because their failing test grade was enough to bring their average down to a D. I got excellent responses from most parents.

  If you have a student who is failing your class, call the parent. No, the parent will not always be the answer, but it does not hurt to try. Sometimes a parent will surprise you by how effectively they deal with their child.

- Parental involvement influences discipline issues (4)

  Almost all the parents that came in were parents of kids that were excellent in class. Coincidence? I think not.

  I have students that parents have been contacted multiple times and nothing has happened.

  All in all, I think the phone calls are helping some [with discipline issues]. Utilizing parents toward the end of the school year was my most effective tool for discipline.

- Parental involvement influences teaching and learning (6)

  I tried calling their parents after school today. I only got hold of a couple, but those couple yielded some positive results.

  Some of the parents do mean business though. I have gotten some work turned in from students. I have heard several say they've lost their cars or iPods or phones. One student’s mother has threatened to come and go to class with her son for a couple of days if he doesn’t get it together.

  I e-mailed two other parents last week and the average of those students has not changed yet.

  I had seven of my homeroom kids’ parents and two from the other teacher’s homeroom class [come for conferences] out of 60 students.
• Parental involvement influences support (7)

Mom wants Step 1 [of the discipline plan] retracted [for her child’s misbehavior]. The AP and principal are already involved in the matter. Sigh.

I also found out today that a parent called the principal on me because of a comment I made. My principal forgot to tell me about it sooner because he said it was petty, but I got talked to and a slap on my hand. I was hurt because the parent never called me with any questions.

• Parental involvement influences beyond the call of duty (9)

The other kid that was sleeping apparently just got kicked out of his house and now he’s homeless.

A student came up to me and told me today was his last day in my class. I asked why and he said that his stepfather did not want him anymore and he was going back to some other state….I did notice that the shirts he wears are faded and have holes in them.

One lady called during my conference and told me her son was smoking weed because her and her husband were going through a divorce.

• Parental involvement influences resources (5) and school environment (8)

Participants did not perceive the influence of parental involvement on resources or school environment to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

Support as a Secondary Driver of the Content System

For the content group, support is a strong secondary driver as it influences all other affinities with the exception of parental involvement.

Much of what the content group wrote in their journals concerning support dealt with a perceived lack of support for the manner in which administration on the campus handled student discipline problems. The following excerpts illustrate the participants’
perceptions of support in relation to the other elements in the system.

Another issue I was having was that my lead teacher was not helping me at all. I have major pacing issues.

I know she is just doing her job but I really felt a bit upset as she told me that she was told to cut the cord to the new teacher and I just kept on thinking to myself, what cord? I had never been attached and every time she sees me she asks me how I am doing and when I start talking, she just says, “I know, I know, just hang in there.” What type of help is that?”

Today started off with a meeting at 7:45 in the library. Our principal held a meeting with all first year teachers. This was our meeting to bring any concerns or questions up to him. It is nice to work for a principal that truly cares about what is going on in his school and with his teachers.

I asked her (my supervisor) if she truly thought I could make it. I was tired, and frankly ready to give up if things did not get better. She told me she had seen worse end up just fine. So, with the confidence of a wise veteran teacher, I pushed myself and jumped in the next day.
• Support influences student achievement (3)

There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

• Support influences discipline issues (4)

I had one student in ISS and of course I did not worry to secure a permission slip because students in ISS are not supposed to attend field trips; however, I never counted on the Assistant Principal “forgiving” his ISS assignment. I was really upset to hear the news as this particular student causes disruptions everywhere he goes and has no respect to other students or adults.

They [the assistant principal and PDAS supervisor] are both going to come in and observe my first period class to see what is going on and to give me some pointers, or to see if there is just a critical mass of bad kids in my first period and they might need to be spread out. I feel better about it now that I have talked to them. It was a little hard admitting that I really had lost control of my first period class, but if that’s what it takes to get someone to help me, then I am not too proud to admit it.

There is absolutely no motivation for teachers to do what they have been asked to do if the people in charge of discipline are not going to do their jobs!

The administration is weak and has consistently ignored behavior problems and pleas from teachers, parents, and students about certain students.

• Support influences resources (5)

Looking at the curriculum guide and the resources provided, something doesn’t make sense. The curriculum guide says to teach out of the text and reference page numbers but the page numbers don’t correspond. Something is not right. So we had a meeting with our curriculum instructor today. We were missing the literature books and the page numbers don’t match up in the grammar book. Our CI says she is working on it.

• Support influences teaching and learning (6)

I still don’t have all my mods [end of September] and I’m sure some of them say they [students] need to be seated near the teacher.
I had a great conversation with my principal today. She gave me some great ideas on handling group work.

The AP has a personal relationship with the kid and his family. She has been combining office referrals so the number does not reach the limit to send him back to the behavior class. The teachers are extremely frustrated. We as teachers find it hard to do our job successfully when we spend most of our time on one kid. We neglect the other students in the class in situations like these.

- Support influences school environment (8)

I had to meet with other people to ask questions and get the help I needed but the meetings were so unorganized that either the same stuff was repeated over and over again or we ended up talking about things that would take place months later.

I do show up early in the morning but feel like I need all the time to prepare, and no matter how much I do, I feel like I am barely surviving.

Your campus is only as good as the administrators. Administrators have to lead from the front. If a campus does not have the support of an administrator, it adversely affects morale.

- Support influences beyond the call of duty (9)

Today one of my 1st period students has a 19 year old sister who was raped and hospitalized. She was bawling in class and I asked her to step outside. I asked her what was wrong and she told me this horrifying story. I immediately called my mentor, I got the sub. Then I tried my dept. head and lead teacher, all of them were out today. So I called every AP, they were gone. Then I called a counselor and she told me to send the student down, although she had a student in her office, she would get to the student. Well, I sent the student down and 30 minutes later the student comes back. She never saw the counselor because the counselor was changing schedules! I was so pissed.

- Support influences parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive the influence of support on parental involvement to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.
Resources as a Secondary Driver in the Content System

The resources affinity was considered a secondary driver in the content system as it affects four other affinities and has only one affinity that influences it.

Figure 4.12. Content group resources affinity relationships.

The teachers mostly noted that instruction was affected based on the availability of supplemental resources. Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and “lessons learned” papers that illustrate perceptions of Resources in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- Resources influence student achievement (3)

  We started receiving lesson blueprints for every week. This was done in an attempt to hit areas in which the district feels that either students are going to perform poorly in on the TAKS test, or that they will encounter on the TAKS test. We also receive weekly assessments to administer to the students in an effort to collect performance data….I don’t even get to see the assessment until it’s too late (after I’ve already taught for the week).

- Resources influence discipline issues (4)

  A student got into a shoving match in the hallway with another student. I
wrote office referrals for both. The AP dismissed my referrals after student told her that was their handshake. I asked for the videotape to be reviewed from the overhead cameras but, for the second time, the camera was not working.

- **Resources influence teaching and learning (6)**

This is one area where I feel a little lost. I have practically NOTHING to go by when it comes to a Theatre Arts curriculum....There is no cohesiveness and I feel like I'm on my own, trying to figure out what to teach them and in what order.

Today I took my classes to the computer lab. It was a total disaster. Of the 30 computers, 14 did not work! So why is it when the teacher clears a day in the lab (and I'm only allowed 8 days per semester) I can’t accomplish what I need to? Furthermore both printers were out of order. All this technology is useless if it is not operational! If the technician doesn’t do his job, it makes it difficult for me to do mine!

I specifically put 'Comic Life' under the 'Programs needed section of the form. I get my whole class in there and none of the machines had Comic Life on them. So I had to take all my kids out and fly by the seat of my pants for something for them to do today. SO irritating. I totally lost a day of instruction just because the tech people couldn’t do their job.

It helps to have some sense of direction. Now that the Curriculum Guide is straight, we can get ahead on lesson planning.

Today I conducted class using the ‘Smart Board’....The students were extremely engaged even when it wasn’t their turn to go up to the board.

- **Resources influence school environment (8)**

  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- **Resources influence beyond the call of duty (9), support (7), and relationships and recognition (1)**

  Participants did not perceive the influence of resources on beyond the call of duty, support or relationships and recognition to be of sufficient strength to be used in the content system.
• Resources influence parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive a relationship between resources and relationships and recognition.

School Environment as a Secondary Driver of the Content System

The content group also identified the school environment as a secondary driver of the system. The school environment influences five other affinities, while two affinities influence it.

The content group perceived the school environment to have a strong influence on teaching and learning. These relationships and other excerpts illustrate perceptions of the school environment in relation to the elements of the system follow.

• School environment influences relationships and recognition (1)
I had to learn fast to ignore negative comments and not allow the environment to change who I wanted to be.

If rumors or gossip exist between the teachers, the professional relationships are affected.

- School environment influences student achievement (3)

  We were told not to fail any student because we had not been ‘issued’ any MODS….Because someone didn’t do what they were supposed to, now I’m being told to not report the grades as they are in the grade book. The grades issued on progress reports have absolutely no integrity!

  Since when has it been acceptable to allow students who do not work pass to the next grade?

- School environment influences discipline issues (4)

  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- School environment influences teaching and learning (6)

  I feel like I spend more time doing things for everyone else than I do preparing to teach or teaching my class.

  But I just don’t have the time to reenergize and motivate 12 students in a 52 minute class period where we have so much else to do (thanks to the wonderful pace of the curriculum).

  Everyone needs something – the principal, the department head, the team leader, the librarian, the counselors, the nurse, and, oh yeah, the students.

- School environment influences beyond the call of duty (9)

  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- School environment influences support (7)

  Participants did not perceive the influence of School Environment on support to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.
• School environment influences parental involvement (2) and resources (5)

Participants did not perceive the school environment to influence parental involvement or resources.

_Beyond the Call of Duty as a Secondary Driver of the Content System_

The content group identified beyond the call of duty as a secondary driver. It influences four other affinities, while three affinities affect it.

![Figure 4.14. Content group beyond the call of duty affinity relationships.](image)

These were the participants' writings that illustrated their perceptions of beyond the call of duty in relation to the elements of the system.

• Beyond the call of duty influences relationships and recognition (1)

I also had a student that was dragging his feet and had a face that screamed for help as he approached my door. I stopped him and asked him that was wrong and he let it all out. It turns out that his brother almost got into a fight but he was able to pull him away from that fight. Then he let
him go and almost got shot by some school dropouts that showed up at the school looking for his brother.

I had a student come to me last week with an intimate issue, she thought she was pregnant.

Today one of my 1st period students, has a 19 year old sister who was raped and hospitalized, she was baling in class, and I asked her to step outside, I asked her what was wrong and she told me this horrifying story.

I did have a good moment with my newest student who just started here last week after being placed by CPS with her aunt. She is pretty quiet but today she brought me her collage when she was done and explained what it meant….At the end of class she said goodbye to me, which was a first. I’m glad I made a little connection with her because I’m sure with everything that’s going on in her life right now she really needs it!

- Beyond the call of duty influences student achievement (3)

I have another girl who is pregnant, she has been sick all week. I can’t imagine being 14 and pregnant. I have 5 students who had babies last year, so they are in 9th grade with a one year old.

We found out too this week that the kid that got shot in the mouth during the drive by is okay and he will be out.

- Beyond the call of duty influences discipline issues (4)

All the teachers on my team seem to be having problems with one particular kid. Doctors think he may have cancer, but his single mom doesn’t have the money to get the treatment he needs. He is very disruptive.

Drugs in my classroom….This girl in the back row has her 3-ring binder propped up on her desk in kind of a shield and she’s doing something back there, peering at me over the top. So I head back to her and she starts getting frantic. Our conversation went like this:

Me: What’s going on?
Her: Nothing, just reading.
Me: What’s in your hand?
Her: Nothing, this is just how I hold my hands when I read.
Me: Will you open your hands for me, please.
Her: There’s nothing there.
Me: OK, so you won’t have a problem opening your hand.
She opens her hand and it’s full of white stuff.

- Beyond the call of duty influences teaching and learning (6)

She is dealing with (according to her) a family that is convinced she’ll end up a failure. And it’s to the point where she believes it, not to mention the fact that she should be a senior but is a sophomore….Her situation is unimaginably hard.

I also learned a lot about my students and to be truthful, I learned about things and situations that I really did not want to know such as whose mother is in prison, who was molested, whose mother is a thief….I also had one student who showed up to school twice without shoes. Some of them [students] are awfully angry at their family life or lack of it that it makes it extremely hard for them to concentrate on their school work - how can I expect them to pay attention and to learn equivalent fractions or factors when their minds worry about how to take care of their siblings because mother is never home or about what they are going to eat when they get home.

- Beyond the call of duty influences support (7)

Participants did not perceive beyond the call of duty to influence support.

- Beyond the call of duty influences school environment (8) and parental involvement (2)

Participants did not perceive the influence of beyond the call of duty or parental involvement on school environment to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

- Beyond the call of duty influences resources (5)

Participants did not perceive a relationship between beyond the call of duty and resources.

**Discipline Issues as a Secondary Outcome in the Content System**

For the content group, discipline issues are a secondary outcome of the system. Discipline issues influence three other affinities, but are influenced by five.
Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and lessons learned papers that illustrate perceptions of discipline issues in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- Discipline issues influence relationships and recognition (1)

I cannot get my 6th graders to shut up. So many of them are talking I don’t even know where to start redirecting….6th graders wear me out. It takes a special kind of person to teach 6th graders and I’m afraid I don’t have what it takes!

Their overall demeanor was completely rude and disrespectful and I was not amused….I’m just so disappointed and I take it personally.

I received several compliments from veteran teachers and administrators on how well behaved my classes are before and after the bell rings.

Today was a good day for me because I was told that out of all the six new teachers, I had the best classroom arrangement, the most engaging lesson and good classroom management.
• Discipline issues influence student achievement (3)

I implemented something new [classroom procedure for controlling discipline]. This is going to be the most difficult and challenging task but I know something needs to be done. Their CBA's prove it today as I had only 14 students passing the test out of 57 students.

We had a test on chapter two this week, and the students did so much better than before, all except my eighth period (who do not listen and pay attention).

I was so mad at my 4th period class because only seven out of 26 PASSED their vocabulary test. I realized this was partially my fault because they probably tried to get away with goofing off instead of working and maybe I let them get away with it.

• Discipline issues influence teaching and learning (6)

I had planned a vocabulary activity but was not even able to get there as I had to deal with the discipline.

I could not even get to half of the material. I am really feeling frustrated about the discipline.

I am just so tired of dealing with discipline instead of concentrating on my teaching.

The saga of first period continued today. My horrible students were as horrible as ever….It shouldn’t have taken more than 20 minutes, but I just could not get any of them to calm down and shut up. …their learning is being interrupted by the time I have to spend trying to keep the three horrible students in line.

I have been getting help with my classroom management. I still need to get my own style worked out but for now I feel I will be able to teach the infamous fourth period.

Gaining control is huge. I will get some instruction done now.

I had students in almost every period who consistently and constantly talked, disrupted class, argued with me, and basically did everything they could to derail class. This environment, of course, encouraged most of the other students to act likewise. They successfully baited me into arguments, drew me off topic, talked out of turn, off topic during lecture, and generally kept the room rowdy and made it hard to learn for those who wanted to learn. …and as I took and exercised my authority in the
classroom, my classes improved a hundred fold. They went from a chaotic three-ring circus to an oiled machine of learning. Classroom management is the key to success. If you can’t manage the kids in the classroom, you can’t teach effectively.

- Discipline issues influence support (7), school environment (8), parental involvement (2), and resources (5)

  Participants did not perceive discipline issues to influence support, school environment, parental involvement or resources.

- Discipline issues influence beyond the call of duty (9)

  Participants did not perceive the influence of discipline issues on beyond the call of duty to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

**Teaching and Learning as a Secondary Outcome in the Content System**

Teaching and learning was identified as a secondary outcome for the content group. It influences two other affinities, but has six affinities which influence it.

![Figure 4.16. Content group teaching and learning affinity relationships.](image-url)
Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and lessons learned papers that illustrate perceptions of *Teaching and Learning* in relation to the other affinities of the system.

- **Teaching and learning influences relationships and recognition (1)**

  I had a very proud moment today. One very shy kid on stage was doing his imagination improvisation where he had to turn a cup into anything other than a cup. He was really insecure…then I told him to think about where they were (a bus) and he held the cup up like a steering wheel, but immediately said, “No, just kidding” and stopped. I said, “No! Go for it! Trust your instincts!” All of a sudden he was driving this bus and speeding up and making sharp turns, then the steering wheel fell off and he lost control of the bus and it was amazing….What a GREAT moment. I was so proud to bring that out in him.

  I also got a compliment from my school evaluator when he did the walk-through. He liked the fact that I was always on my feet and that my students were actively participating.

  The other person that gave me positive feedback was my evaluator who always praised me for trying new things. I always tried different ways of presenting new material to the students so that they did not get bored.

- **Teaching and learning influences student achievement (3)**

  I don’t know how I am going to help them. I picked up my modifications this week, and one student needs an oral exam. How in the world am I going to give someone an oral exam? This is so awful, I don’t know how I am going to help these students.

  Every Thursday I receive my assessments for the following day, and they always include very specific items, which I could not have possibly divined from the vague objectives. Often they include questions which don’t even fall within our objectives. The point is that my students have not been taught much of the material they are being tested on, so many of them score much lower than they should.

  Today I gave another chapter test, and it was absolutely horrible. I knew my students weren’t ready for the test, but I also knew that spending another day on it wasn’t really going to get them ready for it.

  Today I gave a quiz on commands and after grading some of them I feel like everything I tried was not enough.
I thought and hoped all the students would do well on the test, but they really scored closer to the level of work they had done in the class all semester long.

Team teaching is an awesome experience. I had the flexibility to incorporate other subject matter in my ELA classes….The payoff was tremendous as our TAKS scores were excellent.

- Teaching and learning influences discipline issues (4), support (7), and beyond the call of duty (9)

  Participants did not perceive the influence of teaching and learning on discipline issues, support, and beyond the call of duty to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

- Teaching and learning influences resources (5)

  Participants did not perceive a relationship between teaching and learning and resources.

- Teaching and Learning influences School Environment (8) and Parental Involvement (2).

  Participants did not perceive teaching and learning to influence the school environment or parental involvement.

**Student Achievement as a Secondary Outcome in the Content System**

The content group identified student achievement as a secondary outcome. It influences only one other affinity, relationships and recognition, but it is influenced by seven affinities.

Following are the excerpts from participants’ journal entries and lessons
learned papers that illustrate perceptions of student achievement in relation to the other affinities of the system.

Figure 4.17. Content group student achievement affinity relationships

- Student achievement influences relationships and recognition (1)
  
  I have a blast with my kids’ creatively, and they seem to really like and respect me.

  Then I got an e-mail later in the day from the principal saying she was talking to a couple of my students at lunch and they said they love coming to my class because I help them learn every day! It doesn’t get much better than that.

- Student achievement influences school environment (8)
  
  There was nothing in either the “lessons learned” papers or journal entries to triangulate this influence.

- Student achievement influences parental involvement (2), resources (5), support (7), and beyond the call of duty (9)
  
  Participants did not perceive student achievement to influence parental involvement, resources, support, or beyond the call of duty.
- Student achievement influences discipline issues (4) and teaching and learning (6)

Participants did not perceive the influence of student achievement on discipline issues or teaching and learning to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

**Relationships and Recognition as the Primary Outcome in the Content System**

Participants in the content group perceived relationships and recognition to be the primary outcome of the system. It does not influence any other affinities, but it is affected by seven other affinities.

![Diagram of relationships and recognition affinity relationships](image)

*Figure 4.18. Content group relationships and recognition affinity relationships*

- Relationships and recognition influence parental involvement (2), resources (5), and support (7)

Participants did not perceive relationships and recognition to influence parental involvement, resources, or support.
• Relationships and recognition influence student achievement (3), discipline issues (4), teaching and learning (6), school environment (8), and beyond the call of duty (9)

Participants did not perceive the influence of relationships and recognition to be of sufficient strength to be used in the system.

**Cluttered Systems Influence Diagram (SID) Composite View**

A cluttered SID, Tables 4.19 and 4.20, shows all of the possible links between affinities in the system. It is developed to “make it easier to identify and remove redundant links....Redundant links can be thought of as the paths of least resistance” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 178). If an intermediary link can be made from a driver to an outcome, the direct path can be removed, so the system can be seen with the fewest links needed to represent the meaning of the interrelationship diagram. The clean systems influence diagram with redundant links removed is shown in Figures 4.21 and 4.22.

*Figure 4.19. Generalist group cluttered systems influence diagram.*
The Clean Systems Influence Diagram (SID)

The final step in answering the second research question, “How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?” was the presentation of the final visualization of the entire system of influences within the system as shown in the clean systems influence diagram (Figures 4.21 and 4.22). In the clean systems influence diagram, all redundant links are removed to show the system in the simplest or cleanest form.
Comparing Generalist and Content Teachers

Comparing Affinities

The third question in this study was, "How do the contextual factors identified by generalists compare to those identified by content teachers?" Table 4.7 displays the affinities that were identified by both groups. Although the affinity names or titles may have been different, these affinities seemed to refer to similar perceptions and
experiences. Affinities containing some of the same perceptions and experiences, but representing different overall meanings, are shown in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.7**

*Like Group Affinities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generalist Group</th>
<th>Content Group</th>
<th>Affinity Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>For both groups, this affinity reflected the level of parental involvement with the child’s school work as a factor impacting teaching efficacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>Discipline issues</td>
<td>For both groups, this affinity described the effect of their inability to maintain control in the classroom as a factor that decreased teaching efficacy. For the generalist group only, the reverse was also perceived. When they were able to effectively control the student’s behavior, teaching efficacy increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing assessment feedback</td>
<td>Student achievement</td>
<td>This affinity dealt with testing results for both groups. Both reported increased sense of efficacy with positive test scores and decreased efficacy with negative scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and teacher interactions</td>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>Student learning and engagement are reflected in this affinity for each group. Engaging lessons, student attention, and positive lesson outcomes lead to increased personal teaching efficacy. However, student disengagement or lack of understanding decreases teachers’ efficacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.8

*Like Experiences/Different Overall Affinity Meaning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generalist Group</th>
<th>Content Group</th>
<th>Affinity Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working relationships</td>
<td>Support Relationships and recognition School environment</td>
<td>Experiences from the generalist group’s working relationships affinity are seen in the support, relationships and recognition, and school environment affinities identified by the content group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships Working relationships</td>
<td>Relationships and recognition</td>
<td>Experiences from the content group’s relationships and recognition affinity are seen in both the relationships and working relationships affinities of the generalist group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>School environment</td>
<td>Some of the experiences from the generalist group’s emotions affinity are contained within the content group’s school environment affinity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several of the affinities from the two groups did not contain any overlapping perceptions or experiences. The generalist group affinities that stand alone are curriculum requirements and attitudes and perspectives. For the content group the resources and beyond the call of duty affinities do not share common experiences with the generalist affinities.

**Summary**

Northcutt and McCoy (2004) stress that the facts regarding the research results should be presented without researcher interpretation. Doing so adds to the “credibility
of the data” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 300). Therefore, this chapter presented the results related to the three-part research question using the voices of focus group participants.

Responding to Question 1, both the generalist and content groups identified 9 affinities to describe their experiences with personal teaching efficacy. System Influence Diagrams were presented to respond to the second question. Additionally, excerpts from journal entries, relationship hypotheses statements, and “lessons learned” papers were used to illustrate perceived affinity relationships.

Comparisons of the two groups, Research Question 3, reveal that some affinities from each group contain like perceptions and experiences; others contain some perceptions from two or more of the other group’s affinities. However, two affinities from each group do not share a common meaning with the other group. As drivers of the systems, both groups identified parental involvement and support (recorded within the working relationships affinity for the generalist group) as major driving forces for teachers' personal teaching efficacy. Both groups identified student learning and testing feedback as outcomes of the system. Group participants perceive the rest of the system quite differently as illustrated by the Clean SIDs presented at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 5 presents interpretation of the affinities of the systems, the overall placement of the affinities with the systems, and the links between the affinities. Implications of these findings for research and practice are also discussed.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify contextual factors perceived by novice teachers to impact personal teaching efficacy. Secondly, it sought to identify the perceived direction of influence between each of the contextual factors. A final purpose was to compare the responses of a group of generalist teachers to a group of content teachers with respect to the findings of the first two questions.

The following three research questions guided this study:

1. At the end of the first year of teaching, what do novice teachers report as the key contextual factors that shape perceptions of personal teaching efficacy?

2. How do these contextual factors relate to each other in a perceptual system?
   a. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary drivers of the system?
   b. Which factors are identified as the primary and secondary outcomes of the system?

3. How do the contextual factors identified by Early Childhood (EC)-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4-12th grade content specific teachers?

My research corroborates past research findings on teaching efficacy as many of the same tasks associated with teaching and used in teacher efficacy scales to measure teaching efficacy were identified. Prior studies addressed and measured the contextual factors or tasks associated with teaching efficacy individually and then provided an overall efficacy level based on the sum of the individual factors. This study, however, allows for a different conceptualization of teaching efficacy as one of interrelated factors that affect the overall teaching efficacy. This is a critical consideration due to the interdisciplinary nature of schools.
The findings of this study are conveyed using the three research questions as the framework. Data from the two focus groups that participated in the study are first presented separately for Questions 1 and 2. Then, the findings of the two focus groups with respect to each of the first two questions are compared to address Research Question 3.

Identification of Contextual Factors

The first research question sought to identify the key contextual factors novice teachers report as influences on perceptions of personal teaching efficacy. The contextual factors identified by the two focus groups are presented below. Each factor is described in terms of the meaning the group attributed to it. Further, the range of meaning for the components of each factor is discussed. Focus group activities, “lessons learned” papers, and journal entries served as the data for the descriptions.

Generalist Group

Nine contextual factors were identified by the generalist group as influences on personal teaching efficacy. Each of the nine are discussed below. The first three discussed, working relationships, relationships, and parental involvement, are all concerned with relationships; however, the group saw them as three distinct factors which affect teaching efficacy. Even so, relationships in general appear to have had a powerful impact in shaping teaching efficacy as they make up one third of the factors influencing the teaching efficacy of this group of novice teachers.
Working Relationships

Administrators and peers play a primary role in the new teachers’ ability to navigate the complex teaching environment. Support with discipline issues, assistance with understanding curriculum requirements, working as a team to understand test results, and affirmations from administrators and other teachers on campus were all perceived as important components of working relationships. The components comprise both positive and negative aspects of the interactions novice teachers have with other school employees. Positive interactions correspond with increases in personal teaching efficacy, while negative interactions result in decreases in personal teaching efficacy.

Some components of the working relationships affinity relate to the benefit of watching others successfully perform a task, which is consistent with Bandura’s (1997) notion regarding the value of vicarious experiences as a contributor to the formation of self-efficacy beliefs. The following quote from one of the students illustrates the power of vicarious experiences on teaching efficacy.

I observed another teacher today and I asked her to walk through her centers….I was amazed at how well it works and how the kids worked through the center material….I’m excited about what I learned today and can’t wait to implement my centers.

Prior to the observation, the teacher was reluctant to conduct centers. She was certain they would be complete chaos and had no conception of how to set up the centers or how to manage the student movement through them. After observing the success of the other teacher and her students, the novice teacher’s efficacy was of sufficient strength to attempt centers in her own classroom.

Other components within the working relationships affinity refer to praise from mentors, administrators, and university supervisors for successfully completing teaching
related tasks. As recounted by a generalist who had given a report to the administration on possible student failures, “This made the process smooth and I was praised for the report.” And another teacher expressed, “I was thrilled that my university supervisor noticed my classroom management skills.” Bandura (1997) suggests this verbal persuasion from a knowledgeable or credible source has a positive effect on personal efficacy.

Relationships

The generalists perceived relationships with students as an influence on personal teaching efficacy. Within this factor, the relationships related only to the positive feelings students have for the teacher as exhibited by smiles, hugs, a desire to please, and confiding in the teacher.

Although relationships were identified as contributors to teaching efficacy, only two journal entries spoke to it. Further, they were general statements about building relationships with students rather than statements about receiving kudos from the students, which is the way the generalists conceptualized relationships in the affinity identification process. The lack of entries may be a result of the self-selection of topics for journal entries. The self-selection allowed the novice teacher to discuss anything of relevance from the week, and therefore, entries tended to consist of issues or revelations.

Parental Involvement

Rosenholtz (1989) identified parental involvement as a factor affecting personal
teaching efficacy. The group of generalists in this study also reported parental involvement as a key force in shaping perceptions of personal teaching efficacy. The generalists expressed difficulty in working with students when they did not feel adequately supported by parents with efforts regarding the students’ behavior and classwork. One novice teacher complained:

> What the heck is wrong with some parents in this world? I have five students in my classroom that act up because they know their parents aren’t going to a) do anything about it, or b) they can’t be reached even if they would do something about it.

In contrast, the generalists reported the benefits to managing student behavior and classwork when the parents support the teachers’ efforts at home. In one of the journal entries, a teacher ascertained, “Things are so much easier when you have parents that have an investment in their child’s education. And of course, it’s no surprise, that these students are usually more successful.”

Classroom Management

For the generalist group, classroom management had a strong influence on personal teaching efficacy and its components ranged from lack of control over student behavior to students behaving appropriately and engaging in classroom activities. The generalists expressed that classroom management is important to the success of both the teachers and students, but the teachers do not always feel sufficiently equipped or supported to deal with the interruptions to teaching caused by student misbehavior and excessive talking. On the other hand, when students follow the rules established by the teacher, the teachers attribute the good behavior to their personal skills in classroom management.
Many of the teachers were surprised at the difficulty they encounter trying to control the students’ behavior. This is consistent with Weinstein (1988) who suggested that new teachers hold an “it won’t happen to me” (p. 39) attitude. As articulated by one novice teacher, “Classroom management is still an issue for me. It is not as easy as I thought it would be and it can really disrupt everything else.” Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) identify classroom management as a dimension of teacher efficacy and assert that efficacy can be lowered or raised depending upon experiences encountered and how an individual processes the experiences.

Curriculum Requirements

The breadth of meaning within the curriculum requirements factor includes both positive and negative experiences with the requirements. Positive experiences perceived by the generalists were primarily the result of feelings of preparedness to teach, including knowledge of subject matter. Negative experiences derived from lack of understanding of the scope and sequence of the curriculum and believing that lack of student understanding is exhibited in test results. The teachers’ lack of confidence for teaching some subject areas and their inability to effectively reach all special needs students were also noted as negative experiences with curriculum requirements. Guskey (1988) and Stein and Wang (1988) indicated that teachers with greater levels of teaching efficacy are more likely to try new instructional strategies than those with lower teaching efficacy. One generalist conveyed, “I am concerned that I am not thoroughly equipped to deal appropriately with these students. I consider them special needs. I was given advice on some techniques and I will see how effective they will be.” Although the
teacher perceived a lack of preparation to work with special needs students, teaching efficacy levels appeared to be of sufficient strength to try new strategies when they were given.

Emotions

Based on generalists’ perceptions, there was no range of meaning within the emotions affinity. The teachers included stress, physical and emotional tiredness, sacrifice, and loneliness as components of the emotions affinity. Bandura (1977) identified physiological or emotional arousal as one of the four sources which contribute to teaching efficacy. While the components listed generally have a negative connotation, Bandura (1977) suggests that efficacy is not determined simply by the emotion, but rather by the interpretation of the emotional arousal on the performance. In the case of the generalists in this study, the interpretation of the emotional arousal was perceived as affecting teaching efficacy in a negative manner as illustrated by one journal entry, “I just don’t know what to expect [test scores] because they are still struggling and now they are so tired of math….Anyways, mentally and physically I am freakin exhausted.” In this case, the teacher was drained, mentally and physically, and the students did not understand the math lessons. Between of the lack of students’ mastery of the math concepts and the teacher’s state of exhaustion, the teacher was uncertain about the ability to have a positive impact on student learning.

Student and Teacher Interactions

The range of meaning for the student and teacher interaction affinity spanned
from active student engagement in the learning with positive lesson outcomes to unengaged and unmotivated students who are unsuccessful in the learning process. In the journal entries, the lesson results were expressed in respect to testing results. Positive test scores yielded perceptions of effective teaching. As one student celebrated, “Today I gave the kids the science CBAs. I was pleasantly surprised at how well the kids did. I guess I've done something right!” On the contrary, negative test scores were attributed to perceptions of ineffective teaching. In disclosing the perception of ineffectiveness, another student conceded, “My class average was 66%. That is terrible. 66% leaves me questioning myself. Am I even teaching these kids anything?”

Attitudes and Perspectives

For the generalists, the attitudes and perspectives affinity related to the outlook of the teacher and students on any given day. The range of meaning spanned from positive to neutral to negative feelings about the day or the job in general. Also included was a continuum from lack of confidence to positive about abilities. Teachers expressed difficulties engaging students on days that preceded or followed a holiday, when there was a full moon, or when there was a special event on campus, such as picture day. A majority of the journal entries revealed that classroom management and student engagement in the instruction both play a central role in the teacher’s attitude about the day and the job.
Testing and Assessment Feedback

Testing and assessment feedback refers to student test scores. The scores from benchmark exams, curriculum based assessments, and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests are components within this factor. The range of meaning within this affinity spans from positive test scores or increases in test scores to failing test scores or decreases in scores. Concern about the relationship of the teaching act to test results and stress over test scores were two themes repeated often in the journal entries.

Content Group

The content group identified nine contextual factors perceived to influence personal teaching efficacy. These factors are described below.

Parental Involvement

The degree to which the parents support the efforts of the teacher is perceived to have a key influence on personal teaching efficacy. Components of this factor range from no parental contact to positive parental contact. The content teachers expressed that there was little they could do with the student when the parents were not easily accessible or supportive. However, when parents worked with the teacher, positive results were generally seen in both the students’ work and behavior.

Support

The content group perceived support from administrators and colleagues as a
major source of personal teaching efficacy. Although the support affinity ranged from support to lack of support, the lack of support was addressed more often in the journal entries. Prior efficacy research yielded mixed results regarding the effects of support on teaching efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) suggest that verbal persuasion in the form of support is important in shaping efficacy in beginning teachers. However, Mulholland and Wallace (2001) found that administrative support had no effect on efficacy for the participants in their study. The findings in this study differ from Mulholland and Wallace because frequent journal entries address administrative support or lack thereof, and especially problematic for these novice content teachers is the perceived lack of support regarding discipline issues. As one teacher reported, “There is absolutely no motivation for teachers to do what they have been asked to do if the people in charge of discipline are not going to do their jobs!” Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) proposed that personal teaching efficacy is affected by factors that assist teachers with classroom management. The content participants in this study support Hoy and Woolfolk’s findings that the administrator’s responsiveness in assisting the novice teacher with managing student behavior affects their developing teaching efficacy.

Resources

The content group expressed their difficulty in being effective in areas related to teaching when they did not have the proper resources available to assist them in their work. Hallway cameras not functioning properly cause class time interruptions to sort out problems. Insufficient scope and sequence and inoperable student computers were
also cited as issues perceived to decrease teaching efficacy. In contrast, teachers reflected on their ability to engage students and produce results in student performance when appropriate resources were available. These findings support those of Hipp and Bredeson (1995) who concluded that when administrators ascertain that teachers have the resources needed to fulfill their duties, personal teaching efficacy was affected.

School Environment

The school environment was perceived by the content teachers to have a range from positive to negative. According to these teachers, intrusions on teaching time impacts teachers’ attitudes about their work and their efficacy. This mirrors Moore and Esselman’s (1992) findings that factors which impede instruction influence teaching efficacy. Grading policies and dress code requirements were among other components of the school environment that the content group attributed to teaching efficacy because these bureaucratic requirements contributed to low morale. In research by Webb and Ashton (1987), they cited low morale as related to a teacher’s sense of efficacy.

Beyond the Call of Duty

The novice content teachers reported their perceived inability to teach some students because of outside factors in the students’ lives. Issues such as gangs, pregnancy, and criminal offenses kept some students from engaging in the learning and were a source of frustration for the teacher. One teacher’s journal entry illustrated the despair felt by both the teacher and students.

I also learned a lot about my students and to be truthful, I learned about things and situations that I really did not want to know such as whose mother is in
prison, who was molested, whose mother is a thief…. I also had one student who showed up to school twice without shoes. Some of them [students] are awfully angry at their family life or lack of it that it makes it extremely hard for them to concentrate on their school work – how can I expect them to pay attention and to learn equivalent fractions or factors when their minds worry about how to take care of their siblings because mother is never home or about what they are going to eat when they get home.

In the journal entries, the novice teachers expressed surprise at the number of non-teaching related issues to which they were exposed. While they reflected on the difficulty of teaching because these students' basic needs were not resolved, the teachers knew they were responsible for the students' learning, yet were unsure how to resolve the other issues so the students could concentrate on learning.

The range of meaning within the Beyond the Call of Duty affinity also contains the opposite. Teachers noted that activities such as starting the dance team or students spending lunchtime with the teacher resulted in positive boosts to efficacy.

Discipline Issues

For the content group, there was no range of meaning for the discipline issues affinity. They perceived only negative discipline problems with students as influences on their personal teaching efficacy. Further, they conveyed that discipline issues also had a negative effect on student learning and test scores. A well behaved class, however, was noted as a source of positive relationships and recognition from peers and administrators.

Within the discipline issues affinity, the teachers communicated that their efficacy for managing student behavior was dependent upon the group of students they were teaching. This was verified in their journal entries as there were several citations.
referring to a particular class period or a particular grade level. The continued inability to manage the students and engage them in learning left the novice teachers questioning their abilities to teach. Issues with sixth graders prompted the following quote from a middle school teacher.

I cannot get my 6th graders to shut up. So many of them are talking I don’t even know where to start redirecting….6th graders wear me out. It takes a special kind of person to teach 6th graders and I’m afraid I don’t have what it takes!

These findings support those of Ross et al. (1996) and Raudenbush et al. (1992) who also reported variation in efficacy based on groups of students.

Teaching and Learning

The range of meaning within the teaching and learning affinity spanned from lack of student understanding of the concepts being taught to student success with learning. It also reflected the teacher’s onus in the process. When the teachers felt they had done a sufficient job in presenting a lesson, they blamed the student for not learning the material. In these instances, they cited lack of motivation or discipline issues as causes. However, when the teachers felt they did not have sufficient content knowledge or time, they were frustrated with themselves for the students’ lack of understanding. In one of the journal entries, a content teacher believed the lessons provided to the students were effective and took no responsibility for the students’ lack of performance. The novice teacher sarcastically expressed, “…they don’t know how to memorize facts or vocabulary words or times tables, they can’t recall an answer to save their lives, and there is no way you’re going to get an original academic thought out of 90% of them. And it’s my fault when they don’t score well on their benchmarks?”
Student Achievement

The content group identified test scores as an influence on teaching efficacy. Test scores reflecting both sufficient and insufficient scores were included. Research has firmly established the link between teacher efficacy level and the level of student performance (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Shaughnessy, 2004).

Relationships and Recognition

For the content group, relationships and recognition included relationships with and recognition from administrators, colleagues, parents, and students. The content teachers perceived positive relationships and recognition to be a direct result of good classroom management and effective instruction that produced results in student learning. Relationships and recognition, however, was not all positive. In those situations where the novice teachers were criticized by others, they appeared to be deeply offended, and when the criticism concerned either classroom management or student achievement, the teachers questioned their effectiveness.

Comparison of Generalist and Content Groups’ Contextual Factors

In this section, Question 3 seeks to compare the generalist and content teachers’ perceptions regarding personal teaching efficacy. Both groups identified nine contextual factors as influences on personal teaching efficacy. Four of the affinities from the groups contain the same meaning for both groups, and two of the affinities from each group do not share components with the other group. The remaining affinities are comprised of several components from among the other groups’ affinities.
1. Both groups identified parental involvement as a contextual factor affecting personal teaching efficacy and related the range as extending from lack of support to witnessing positive results when supported.

2. The generalist’s student and teacher interaction and the content's teaching and learning contain components that contain the same meaning. Both of these express decreased personal teaching efficacy when the teacher feels unable to assist the student with understanding the lessons taught. It also expresses the increased sense of personal teaching efficacy when teaching efforts bring about positive results in student learning.

3. The generalist’s testing and assessment feedback aligns with the content group’s student achievement. Both of these factors refer to the effects of test results on personal teaching efficacy. Components of these factors range from the effects of positive test results to the effects of negative test results.

4. The generalist’s classroom management contains the same meaning as the content group’s discipline issues, but the range of experiences appears to affect the two groups differently. In both the brainstorming activity and in the journal entries, the generalists reflected that positive student behavior increased personal teaching efficacy, while negative behavior decreased it. Conversely, during the brainstorming activity, the content group identified only negative student behavior as having an impact on personal teaching efficacy. Although there were a couple of references in journal entries to appreciating positive student behavior, the content group did not identify positive student behavior as an influence on their teaching efficacy.

Several of the affinities of the generalist group contain components of affinities
from the content group; however, the groups have constructed the affinities differently.

1. The generalist group’s working relationships affinities contain components regarding support from peers and administrators, as well as recognition and approval for good work. It also includes dislike or disapproval from peers. In contrast, for the content group, support from peers and administrators is a component of the Support affinity, recognition for good work belongs to the relationships and recognition affinity, and disapproval from peers is contained within the school environment affinity.

2. Some of the components of the generalist group’s emotions affinity are identified in the content group’s school environment factor. While the school environment affinity for the content group included exhaustion and energy levels, the emotions affinity for the generalists listed as two of a larger list of emotions for the content group.

3. The relationships and recognition factor in the content group’s system contains components related to praise by students, peers, parents, and administrators. For the generalists, praise by peers and administrators fall within the working relationships affinity, while praise by students falls within the relationships affinity.

Two of the affinities from each group do not contain components from other affinities: the curriculum requirements and attitudes and perspectives affinities of the generalist group, and the resources and beyond the call of duty affinities from the content group.

Relationships between Contextual Factors

Next, the data related to the second research question are discussed. The
second research question sought to examine how the contextual factors identified in question one relate to each other. Further, the data were examined to identify which factors were perceived as drivers of teaching efficacy and which were perceived as outcomes.

**Generalist Group**

The generalist group’s perceptions of the relationships between the contextual factors impacting personal teaching efficacy are presented below. The group identified nine factors. Of those nine, four were perceived as drivers influencing personal teaching efficacy, while five were perceived as outcomes or effects. The drivers and outcomes for each group are discussed below.

**Primary Driver**

The generalist system begins with working relationships as its primary driver. It influences six other factors: classroom management, curriculum requirements, emotions, students and teacher interactions, attitudes and perspectives, and testing and assessment feedback.

**Secondary Drivers**

Secondary drivers identified by the generalist group include parental involvement, classroom management, and curriculum requirements. These three factors have influences in both directions, but they influence more factors than those which have influence upon them.
Secondary Outcomes

The generalist group identified five factors as secondary outcomes. They include emotions, student and teacher interactions, resources, testing and assessment feedback, and attitudes and perspectives.

Feedback Loops

One feature of the generalist’s system is the existence of three feedback loops. A feedback loop exists when an outcome of the system loops back and influences factors that have come before it in the system. The loops represent the dynamic nature of the relationships between the contextual factors the generalists perceive as influences on personal teaching efficacy. The three feedback loops identified by the generalists include (a) the student and teacher interaction/testing and assessment feedback/emotions feedback loop, (b) the testing and assessment feedback/emotions/relationships feedback loop, and (c) the attitudes and perspectives/relationships/testing and assessment feedback loop.

The student and teacher interaction/testing and assessment feedback/emotions feedback loop shows a recursion in the system, whereby the generalists perceive student engagement and learning to influence test results, which in turn influence teachers’ emotions. The recursion continues with emotions then having an influence on student engagement and learning.

The testing and assessment feedback/emotions/relationships feedback loop reveals that the generalists perceive test results to influence teachers’ emotions, which
in turn influence how the students feel about the teacher. The loop continues with the students feelings for the teacher having an impact on test results.

The attitudes and perspectives/relationship testing and assessment feedback loop suggests that the general attitude the teacher has regarding the day or the lesson influences how the students feel about the teacher, which then influences test results. The test results then influence the general attitude with which the teacher approaches the lesson or the day.

**Content Group**

The content group identified nine factors as influences on personal teaching efficacy. Four of them were perceived as drivers, while the other five were considered outcomes of the content group’s system of teaching efficacy beliefs.

**Primary Driver**

The content group system begins with parental involvement as its primary driver. It influences six other affinities: support, resources, beyond the call of duty, discipline issues, teaching and learning, student achievement, and relationships and recognition.

**Secondary Drivers**

Secondary drivers of the content system included support, resources, school environment, and beyond the call of duty.
Secondary Outcomes

The three secondary outcomes identified by the content group are discipline issues, student achievement, and teaching and learning. These affinities have more affinities influencing them than those they influence.

Primary Outcome

Relationships and recognition serves as the primary outcome of the content group’s perception of personal teaching efficacy. It was influenced by six other factors.

Comparison of Generalist and Content Groups’ Relationships

In respect to Question 2, this section addresses Question 3, “How do the contextual factors identified by Early Childhood (EC)-8 generalists compare to those identified by 4-12th grade content specific teachers?” The comparison of the relationships between the affinities is discussed below.

Both the generalist and content systems contained nine affinities each, and there were some commonalities among the systems. However, there were also some major differences in the drivers and outcomes and in their placement in the system. Both groups identified parental involvement as a strong driver of teaching efficacy; for the content group it was the primary driver, and while not the primary driver for the generalist group, it was nonetheless a strong driver. Another driver for both groups was support from colleagues and administrators. While the content group identified support as a contextual factor by itself, support was a component of working relationships affinity for the generalist group.
Outcomes of teaching efficacy for both groups included the generalist’s affinity named student and teacher interaction and the content group’s teaching and learning. Also noted as an outcome for both were the generalist group’s testing and assessment feedback and the content group’s student achievement affinities. As personal teaching efficacy has been defined as the teacher’s belief in his or her ability to affect student learning, it makes sense that both groups identified these four affinities as outcomes of efficacy as they all address student performance.

One contextual factor perceived differently within the two group’s systems concerns the management of student behavior. The generalist group perceives classroom management as a strong driver of their teaching efficacy. They envision classroom management as an influence on the teachers’ emotions, student learning and engagement, test results, teacher attitudes, and students’ feeling for teachers. Conversely, the content group perceives discipline issues as an outcome. Parental involvement, support from colleagues and administrators, resource availability, the school environment, and situations beyond the call of duty all influence the teacher’s ability to manage student behavior.

A second affinity perceived differently relates to the novice teachers’ relationships with colleagues and administrators. The generalists’ working relationships affinity and the content group’s relationships and recognition are at opposite ends of the systems. While the generalist group perceived the working relationships affinity as the primary driver, the content group identified it as the primary outcome. The two groups conceptualize working relationships and relationships and recognition differently. The content group’s conceptualization included only praise from others and working
collegially with peers. The generalists’ conceptualization included praise, support from administrators and colleagues, and getting along with co-workers. It is difficult to determine which of the three areas within the generalists’ conceptualization carried the most weight in determining its place as a primary driver because there was no way to parse out the individual components. While there were sufficient journal entries to suggest that all three played a role, those addressing the area of support were more abundant, suggesting that support was a more critical contributor.

Implications

This section includes discussion of the implications for theory, further research, and practice. It also includes a discussion of the issues confronted with the research method used.

Theoretical Implications

A conceptualization of teaching efficacy different from past models is suggested by the findings in this study. This study suggests that teaching efficacy consists of a series of interrelated contextual factors. Bandura (1997) acknowledged that context and task heavily influence efficacy beliefs, and suggested that teaching efficacy is task specific. Some scales used for determining teaching efficacy are scored by individual task, and subsequently an overall efficacy level is determined. Although Bandura cautions against examining efficacy either too generally or too specifically, the interrelatedness of the contextual factors suggested in the findings of this study call for
a deeper examination of the influences among the factors that shape personal teaching efficacy.

While this study examined the contextual factors of teaching perceived to influence efficacy, much of the existing literature on the topic considered how efficacy informs performance related to individual contextual factors associated with teaching. For example, this study identified parental involvement as a contextual factor that shapes teaching efficacy but prior studies revealed that the level of efficacy determines the amount of parental involvement. When looking at parental involvement or any of the other contextual factors identified as influences on teaching efficacy, Bandura’s (1997) idea of triadic reciprocal determinism should be kept in mind. The personal (efficacy beliefs), the environment, and behavior all work together in a bidirectional manner. Thus, as in the case with parental involvement, it not only influences teaching efficacy, but is also affected by it. Bandura refers to the triadic reciprocal causation as an interdependent causal structure whereby people both “create and are created by their social system” (p. 5).

This study supports Bandura’s (1977) contention that there are four sources of efficacy. Both groups of teachers in the study identified vicarious and mastery experiences as contributors to their teaching efficacy. Also contributing to both groups was social persuasion in the form of accolades from colleagues or administrators. The final source, physiological arousal, was noted by the generalist group as a contributor to the teachers’ sense of efficacy.
Implications for Research

The interactive qualitative analysis methodology was a useful method to explore the contextual factors perceived to influence personal teaching efficacy and the relationships between the factors as it provided a structure for collecting and analyzing the data. However, the main difficulty stemmed from the affinity categorizing and naming activities. To successfully use this method, a researcher must be able to guide the participants through the process and ensure that an affinity does not contain more than one topic and the topic is easy to define. Establishing affinities whose meanings are unclear or which contain more than one topic make the remainder of the research process more difficult. An example of this was the working relationships affinity of the generalist group. They conceptualized working relationships as including praise from others, support from colleagues and administrators, and relationships with co-workers. While it did not appear problematic to the generalists when they were determining the influences between affinities, it was not possible to determine which of the three topics had the strongest influence on its placement in the system. The content group’s distinction between support and working relationships assisted with the final analysis.

Another problem while working on this study stemmed from the imprecise affinity heading titles attached to some of the affinities. Participants would benefit from more guidance when naming affinities to insure designators better reflect the meanings intended within the categories. Also hindering the naming process was that, as beginning teachers, the participants were not sophisticated in their thinking, thus their concepts were not well developed or refined, and their language was imprecise at times.
If I were to replicate this research, I would use only the journal entries as the triangulation source. The journal entries proved to be the better data source because the “just in time” entries contained specificity of the relationships between pairs of contextual factors. Although some relationships were found in the “lessons learned” papers, the comments were more general in nature and only a few relationships could be determined from them.

**Future Research Efforts**

The findings in this study suggest an impact of parental involvement on teaching efficacy. However, prior studies (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Garcia, 2004) found that teaching efficacy, both individual and collective, is a predictor of the level of parental involvement in the schools. Future research efforts should focus on exploring this complex recursive relationship. The nature of the accelerated teacher program impacted the amount of time devoted to issues related to parental involvement. Because this study focused on a single model of teacher preparation, it would be beneficial to conduct efficacy research with traditional teacher education programs, alternative programs, and accelerated teacher education programs to determine if the efficacy issues regarding parental involvement are the same for all novice teachers. Additionally, replication with a similar group to the one studied could prove beneficial.

Another area that needs further exploration is the difference in perceptions of the power of classroom management to affect personal teaching efficacy. More specifically, what is it about the nature of generalists and their working environment that allows both positive and negative student behavior to influence teaching efficacy, and why do only
the negative student behaviors inform the content teachers' teaching efficacy? Is it possible that the generalists teaching assignment consisting of one group of 22 students allows them to build stronger relationships with the students, thus they take it more personally when the students do not behave?

The premise of systems theory is that change in one part of the system produces change in the other parts of the system. As such, it would be beneficial to conduct further research utilizing interventions with novice teachers regarding the two main drivers, parental involvement and support, identified by both the generalist and content systems. If these two contextual factors are strengthened, teaching efficacy overall should increase.

Most of the contextual factors identified by the content group appeared to be outside their control. Replication of the study could determine if other secondary teacher groups would produce the same results regarding the outside sources. If so, is there a locus of control issue with content teachers, whereby they believe outside influences are responsible for their successes and failures? Or, could it be a matter of identity of self as a secondary teacher and beliefs about the role of a secondary teacher?

Replication of the study could be done with traditional teacher education programs, alternative certification programs, and other accelerated programs. Further studies could be used to corroborate the relationships among the contextual factors that were identified in this study and would contribute to the transferability of these findings to other contexts.
Implications for Practice

Based on the findings of the study, there are several implications for teacher educators. The most obvious is that the generalists and content teachers view the contextual factors that influence personal teaching efficacy differently. As such, instruction from teacher educators should take those differences into account in providing appropriate instruction that meets the needs of the novice teachers.

Next, based on the Pareto principle that by addressing 20% of the issues, 80% of the problems will be solved, teacher educators should provide additional instruction and support regarding the contextual factors determined as the drivers of teaching efficacy for each group. Doing so could assist teachers with developing and sustaining a greater sense of teaching efficacy and assist with retention in the profession.

The findings suggest that parental involvement and support from administration and colleagues are strong forces in shaping personal teaching efficacy for all participants, regardless of grade level or content area. As such, both should be addressed by teacher educators in coursework. Novice teachers need to be exposed to vicarious learning activities in which parental interaction is modeled, such as mock parent-teacher conferences. The teachers should be provided mastery experience opportunities whereby they practice successful parent interaction. Additionally, teacher educators should provide a variety of strategies for students to facilitate communication with parents, particularly with regard to language and culture.

Vicarious experiences are not only helpful with parental involvement; they assist teachers with recognizing successful classroom practices and understanding how to organize and carry out certain tasks in their own classrooms. Schools tend to have new
teachers work with and observe the master teachers on campus. While it is beneficial for the novice teachers to watch these master teachers, it can be a detriment to strengthening teacher efficacy when the novice teachers have only master teachers to compare themselves to. Therefore, schools and teacher preparation programs must also support the novice teachers by providing them with opportunities to watch and network with others like them. The novice teachers need to be able to identify with and compare themselves to other novice teachers.

Providing the appropriate supports for novice teachers should be a joint venture between the schools and the teacher education program. Initial mentor training is important for facilitating the relationship between the mentor and the novice teacher. The mentor teachers need to understand best practices in providing assistance to the novice teacher. As many novice teachers are reluctant to seek help, teacher educators should provide instruction that assists the novice teachers in recognizing when help is needed and then providing opportunities for them to practice asking for help.

The generalist group identified the testing and assessment feedback affinity as an outcome of the system indicating it was influenced by other contextual factors of teaching efficacy, suggesting that testing results play a less obvious role in establishing teaching efficacy levels. Testing results, however, play a major role in the system as evidenced by involvement in three different feedback loops within the generalist system. While not as pronounced in the content system, there was an abundance of journal entries related to testing outcomes. Given the current climate of accountability in Texas, it is all the more critical that teacher education programs provide novice teachers with
an understanding of the nature of assessment and foster development of skills for making informed data-driven instructional decisions.

Conclusion

At the end of the school year, the novice teachers in this study submitted a paper reflecting on the lessons they learned during the year. The major themes through most of the “lessons learned” papers addressed the same issues the teachers struggled with all year. Classroom management, parental involvement, support, relationships, and testing were all frequent topics of discussion. A fifth grade teacher not only summed up his first year experiences with efficacy, but also pointed to the major findings of this study. Appropriately this study’s focus on teaching efficacy concludes with this teacher’s quote:

I have to believe that what I’m doing is working, or it won’t. I have struggled with this all year. It doesn’t help that the teachers at my grade level all have at least nine years of experience and are great at what they do. My problem is that I let the test scores drive my efficacy. My students all did well and there weren’t any surprises. Those that did fail made great progress, and for me that’s success. Ultimately, my ability to build relationships with my students paid off. They really tried on all of the exams and as of late are turning in a much better product. I have learned to believe in myself.
APPENDIX

AFFINITY TABLES
| A good evaluation from the principal |
| Alternative program coordinator told me she had faith in me. |
| Bad administration |
| Bad mentor |
| Being part of the team |
| Bipolar administration |
| Campus Instructional Specialist help 😊 |
| Colleague intentionally ignores request for shared resource, then tells the instructional specialist that you didn't ask |
| Compliments and praises from mentor and other teachers |
| Compliments from principal |
| Custodians speaking and smiling |
| Fellow co-worker. Positive attitude! |
| Good e-mails from principal and APs |
| Good morning, Mr./Ms. ____________ !! |
| Gossip: Feel like I can't trust |
| Great evaluation |
| I contributed something to the group. |
| Leadership |
| Letting myself, the students and other teachers down |
| Librarian being there when no one else was |
| Mentor team lead 😊 |
| Mentor’s positive attitude |

*(table continues)*
Table A.1 (*continued*).

- My mentor rocks!
- My mentor was amazing to observe due to the implications it gave me for my class
- New mentor
- PDAS – 3s and 5s with no lights!
- People jumping to conclusions: backstabbing
- Praise
- School policies were impeding when they were immediate and not given a warning
- Sit down with principal when morale was low. 😞
- Successful observations
- Support from grade level
- Teamwork (x2)
- The mentor said, “The way we did it last year can be improved.”
- University supervisor always telling me good things
- What help have I received from my grade level?
- What help have I received from my mentor?
- When a fellow co-worker puts down the way you run your classroom
- When other teachers remark on the knowledge my kids have gained over the year
- You put in a referral for a serious matter. Kid gets “slap on the wrist” and swaggers back to class grinning
- Your student corrects the neighboring teacher (respectfully) on a science concept. Teacher tells you this as a compliment.
Table A.2  Generalist Group Parental Involvement Affinity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bad Parental Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A grandmother attacked me in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having 23 kids and being parents to all of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to be the parent and the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t have a toothbrush and don’t brush my teeth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t have no daddy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t take baths.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m going to go see my dad in jail tomorrow.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents griping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who say they have given up on their students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninvolved parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Parental Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A parent told me that their kid was excited about school and cried when they had fever and had to stay home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciating the parent’s positive reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents let the principal know I was great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were happy with me and let me know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When parents say, “Thanks to you, our garage is now full of rocks.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table A.3  Generalist Group Testing and Assessment Feedback Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ A+ on test. B+ on test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Amazing CBA/formative or TAKS scores!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Assessments – What is that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Assessments with passing scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Being held accountable for everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Kids that you never thought would pass TAKS, pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Knowing how to create valid assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Only three failures on CBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Seeing really good results on tests and seeing the students' faces as they realize they did well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Students understood, tested, passed, and recalled information later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ TAKS results 😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ When 100% of my class passed the CBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A.4  Generalist Group Classroom Management Affinity

- Aggressive behavior
- Behavior management not being what it needs to be
- Being a constant mediator for the student’s conflicts
- Being able to control behavior with a look
- Best practices implemented
- Bringing handcuffs to class (student)
- Children that you can no longer punish because they are used to it
- Classroom management kept changing to fit my personality until it worked.
- Consistent classroom management
- Constant noise
- Continuous talking during lessons and nothing seems to stop them
- Discipline issues/not following procedures
- Fighting/name calling/disrespect
- In control
- Keeping my patience with all my students
- Kids that no matter what you do or say, still don’t care
- Large or overwhelming class
- Negative influences
- One student before school even starts – her facial expression at that time shows me what kind of day we are going to have
- Positive influences
- Same day, same kids, same problems
- Self control/good behavior

*table continues*
Table A.4 (continued).

- Small class
- Social skills
- Student’s attitude
- Students that refuse to do anything no matter what my actions might be
- Temper tantrums
- They show respect and compassion for each other because that’s what I show them daily.
- When a discipline child ruins it for everyone
- When a student destroys something purchased for the classroom
- When my classroom can run itself
- When subs tell me how great my class is
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions/Mine and Theirs Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt stressed when I would plan for things that never were accomplished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve only had a mental breakdown once. 😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness – I don’t fit in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally, physically, and emotionally TIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No fear!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired! I’m getting really tired and so are my kids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.6  Generalist Group Student and Teacher Interactions Affinity

- A lesson that I did came together and really made a difference in a child’s learning.
- A student said, “I want to fail second grade so I can be in your class again.”
- Bored kids
- Creativity
- Did not understand lesson
- During labs when all students are engaged in the activity
- Engagement
- Exciting discussion and sharing
- Fourteen of 17 homework assignments turned in
- Frustration when they don’t want to learn
- Greater knowledge of students – knowing how to help them
- Hearing that my lesson was the best one all year
- “I get it!”
- Interacting with students – watching them evolve
- I saw my students engaged, learning, and having fun.
- Keeping students motivated
- Kids involved, wanting to read and interact with lesson
- Kids saying they can’t do this
- Lack of motivation
- “Light-bulb” coming on during difficult lessons
- Light bulb on
- Medication

(table continues)
My students have answers/input when I ask them questions
My students are working quietly and successfully on a concept I just taught.
My students have answers/input when I ask them questions.
My students were so excited to do an assignment and so I was excited.
No one has raised their hand to say “I don’t get it.”
Only two students below grade level
Oooh and ahhh moments
Seeing the progress of students
Seeing the students have an ‘aha’ moment.
Student achievement
Student goes from 70% to 90% after tutoring and stays on that level on his own
Students coming to after-school tutoring
Students engaged and listening
Students listening and participating
Students understood the lesson
Students verbalized how they enjoyed the lesson taught
Teaching a student one-on-one and the student figuring it out
The day my lowest student realized they were not dumb and that there was hope if they really wanted to succeed
The kids were excited about learning. (x2)
Their excitement when they know the answer
There are kids I still haven’t reached.

(table continues)
There was one student who understood.
They are attentive and engaged.
They get it! It is anything I am teaching, modeling, etc.
They get so engaged in a lesson that I can step back and watch them learn together.
They teach or show me something that I had never thought of before.
When a student decides to shut down because he/she is bored
When a student finally understands the material
When a student that never got the concept before finally gets it
When I get 100% engagement level after a lesson
When I see students looking something up and striving to learn on their own
When kids want to tell me the new word family they made
When my LEP student tells me no one has explained it as well as I did
When no matter how much I teach something to a student, they still don’t get it
When students do all homework; shows they actually listen to instruction
When students don’t do homework; shows they don’t care about learning
When the light bulb comes on in a child’s head
When the students answer the questions being asked and ask questions beyond. Shows me they want to learn.
When the students made a connection between subjects and/or lessons
When they read to me
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A.7 Generalist Group Curriculum Requirements Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Being flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Being prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Better at using resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Better knowledge of what is expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Change matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Documentation organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Documentation sucks with no strategies to keep up with it all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Doing things in smaller chunks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Examples of lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Full spectrum of student types, socio-economic, academic levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ I felt confident when my lesson plans were thorough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ I plan a lesson and get through it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Knowledge of material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ More hands-on fun activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ My preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Not comfortable with material being taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Not enough information about content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Not enough time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Not knowing how to teach the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Professional development made me feel I could do anything in my class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Room organized and resources identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table A.7 (continued).

- Special needs
- Technology
- Technology support is better
- They didn’t understand the lesson that I spent a long time preparing and was perfect. I reverted to flying by the seat of my pants.
- Time constraints
- Too much content
- Training provided on guided reading (rocky)
- Trying to make ELA fun
- Unknown material
- When you spend days planning a lesson and it flops
Table A.8 Generalist Group Relationships Affinity

- A great student/teacher relationship
- A student told me she loved me
- Asking me to go to a student’s game and persistence even when I didn’t go
- Call me mom
- Compliments/affirmations
- Compliments from students
- Confidentiality
- Every morning the kids run up to you to say hi and give you a hug.
- Fight Friday
- Holiday cards, candy, and gifts from students
- How excited they are to see you after you have been out a day or two
- Hugs
- Hugs and kisses
- I love you too!
- Kids going out of their way to tell me good morning
- Laughter
- My students told me I was the smartest person they knew and they loved me.
- Positive feedback from a student
- Reaffirmations/student cards
- School spirit
- Smiles and hugs (x2)
- Smiling students

(table continues)
Table A.8 (continued).

- Student says, “I can always remember it the way you explain it.”
- Student tells his mom that science is his favorite subject this year
- Student tells you you’re the best
- Students confiding in you
- Students more familiar with me (style)
- The day a student told me I was the only one who ever showed them that I loved and cared they existed
- Their smiles (x3)
- They hug me goodbye.
- They look at you and say, “I promise I will try better to learn tomorrow.”
- They tell me all of the random happenings in their lives because they know that I care.
- They tell you about their problems.
- Trust
Table A.9  Generalist Group Attitudes and Perspectives Affinity

- Attitude
- Belief that others were going through the same thing
- Christmas break/Thanksgiving break
- Confidence
- Confidence level – low. Where do I go from here?
- Doubts
- Enjoyment
- Faith
- Finally, I got to the point where I knew how my day would most likely go.
- How do I feel?
- I am excited about life.
- I can relate to the students.
- I can’t believe I made it this long.
- I don’t take criticism well.
- I got a paycheck.
- I learned something today (teacher).
- I like my job (most days).
- I like to do things my way.
- I look forward to going to work (most days)
- I look good in “teacher” clothes! 😊
- I survived another day!!
- I teach because I can, not because I have to.
- Is it a full moon?

(table continues)
Table A.9 (continued).

- My attitude (x2)
- Neutral
- No longer nervous
- Positive (about abilities)
- Not feeling well
- Personality (lack of confidence)
- So much I have to buy
- Teacher (I) can do better
- The first bell of the day rang.
- What time of day is it?
- What time of year is it?
- When I saw the light at the end of the tunnel
- Work’s never done
Table A.10 Content Group Relationships and Recognition Affinity

- A special ed student always writes she loves me on papers she turns in
- Being called on to calm a kid down because I was the only one who could
- Being told I made a difference in a child’s life when no one else has been able to reach him
- Finding talent in unusual places
- Hearing “You’re my favorite teacher.”
- I observe some teachers in my department and see how their students treat them; how their former students talk about them, and I know I am a better teacher than they are
- Impressing and surprising a UIL judge
- It is nice when students just come and hang out in your room after school. They must not hate me too much.
- Kids begging to get into my class
- Laughing with kids
- Other teachers wanting my assistance and input for student activities and projects
- Principal told me a kid at lunch told her he “learned something from me every day”
- Routine visits from kids
- Students smiling and saying “hi” in the hallways
- Students want support; many invitations to go watch them play, cheer, etc.
- Students who have a different LA teacher coming to me for help
- Students writing me thank you and appreciation letters

(table continues)
Table A.10 (continued).

- Talking to students and building relationships – those that live in ISS but never get referral from me – disciplined and do work/tells me they want opportunity
- Teachers inquire about how I reached a student
- Thank you notes and examples of new things learned
- Unexpected hugs from students
  “We’re learning!”

Table A.11 Content Group Parental Involvement Affinity

- A parent requested her child be put in another’s English class mid-year 😐
- Difficult parents
- Making good phone calls home
- One kid kept failing, but I talked to his mom about it and it actually worked. Now he doesn’t sleep in class and turns in his work. He is doing much better.
- Parent conference: making excuses for child’s behavior
- Parent contact ↓ student lies about behavior in classroom and parent believes student even with a bad record
- Parent contact ↑ 100% support that impacts students in a positive way
- Parent involvement
- Parental support
- Parents calling principal with grade issues
- Parents not involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A.12 Content Group Student Achievement Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>62-68-80 passing</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>CBA results</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I got the results back from our district benchmark – 1\textsuperscript{st} 9 weeks only 32% passed.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Low score students suddenly having 30 to 40% increase in their scores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Low test scores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My special education students receiving commended scores on their Reading TAKS test</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One of my seniors who failed the TAKS over and over finally passed the science portion in February.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One test I gave and almost every one of my 115 students passed. It wasn’t necessarily a super-easy test, but they understood the concepts.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Positive test scores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Second semester test averages 5-10% better than the first semester</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Solid geometry – January – doing better without a curve on non-multiple choice test first semester (students claimed after chapter 4 that it was impossible</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Students want test corrections.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>TAKS test scores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The second 9 weeks district assessment, 67% passed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Group Discipline Issues Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; graders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Attitudes of kids with problems with authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Attitudes, yelling, cursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Classroom management issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Dealing with difficult attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Discipline issues/defiant students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Disrespect – kids not listening – defiance (hallways)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Disrespectful students (x3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Disruptive students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Fighting /arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Gang issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ❖ I try to be nice and give them a take home test and ½ of them fail because they don’t turn it in. How can they be so irresponsible???
| ❖ My students cursing and having sex, vandalizing property, etc. |
| ❖ No homework complete                  |
| ❖ No students for tutoring (they don’t show up) |
| ❖ Second period unmotivated/low grades/can’t get them motivated |
| ❖ Students being disrespectful         |
| ❖ Students do not want to be there      |
| ❖ Students flirting with me             |
| ❖ Students not trying/doing their work; so stopped caring and constantly reminding them what they needed to do |

*(table continues)*
Table A.13 (continued).

- Students said I favored girls more
- Students taking advantage of me because I’m younger
- Study hall as the last period of the day with same students from 8\textsuperscript{th} period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A.14 Content Group Resources Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My laptop is broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My windows and doors are broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No money for supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough projectors; forced to spend $600.00 to buy my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Group Teaching/Learning Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ A shy kid bursting out on stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Academic level of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Active engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ “Can we start now?” Garage Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Example/non-example; questioning; group work; hands-on discovery – leads to assessment success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Failing to notice students not doing their project right until turned in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Fine arts night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ First day of school a boy asked me if I was nervous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Getting students to view education as a way to improve their lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Having creative ideas, yet not a creative class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Having teaching moments out of nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Hearing you don’t teach us anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ “I enjoy this” I thought to myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Intriguing questions from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Invented fun way to memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Kids being terrified of being on stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Kids understanding the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Leading a student to come up with the right answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Learned tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Lights go on; I could tell they really got it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Lights on; no one home. Explained the lesson – retaught and still no response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table A.15 (continued).

- Makeup bruise lesson
- Mini flats – Everyone learned it
- Moving students to my class for positive results
- My 7th graders seeming to not understand basic concepts
- My students don’t read well.
- No matter how simply I break down a concept, no matter how many times I repeat it, some students just couldn’t GET IT.
- Not coming up with ideas as brilliant as my neighbor
- “Randomocity’ success
- Sparking interest in someone who knew nothing about theatre before
- Student’s response that it was the first time someone explained it that way
- Students’ apathy
- Students making connections between concepts
- Students taking leadership during lessons
- Students using their natural talents to connect the learning experience to Language Arts
- Students who did not pass their math TAKS are pulled everyday during 8th and 9th period for math assistance, so they are missing a core class and are not expected to make up work
- TAKS tutorials
- Teaching a kid math wrong
- The ‘aha’ moment; ‘light bulb’ experience
- They are finally thinking
- This feels rewarding
- Two way conversation - teacher and student
Table A.16  Content Group Support Affinity

- Administrative requirements – seems like they do not want to give me the time needed to plan lessons and be successful
- Explain why Jack or Jill is having a problem
- Knowing that I was combining lessons to cover more material when experienced teachers did not even try
- Lack of support
- Library support
- Meetings and last minute demands
- Mentor support
- No administrative support
- Not having a supportive department chair
- Principal saved my job because she believed in me
- Principal support or lack thereof
- Some special education kids
- Support from other teachers +++; ask and help arrives; willing to share
- When I’m right and it doesn’t matter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Group School Environment Affinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ AYP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Adults and work ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Average cannot be below ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Being off and getting a much needed break from 12:05-2:40- 5,6,7th period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Energy level up 1st semester and walked the entire time; 2nd semester taught first 15 minutes, then sat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Exhaustion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Grading requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Messy co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ New dress code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ No more stilettos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Pep rallies +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Rumors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ TAKS review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ The schedule change in the middle of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Too many announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Too much paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Group Beyond the Call of Duty Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ A student’s sister was raped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Being accused of racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Gang members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Helplessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ I found out a few of my students had babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Kids betraying trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Starting and coaching the dance team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Students not having maternity clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Students sharing thoughts outside classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Students spend their lunch time in conversation with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Tutoring – still always there when students ask for help – day/anytime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


