

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

BURNOUT AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATORS: DO EXPERIENCE,
CERTIFICATION,
CASELOAD, AND SCHOOL SIZE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

ELEANOR K. GOETZINGER

Norman, Oklahoma

2006

UMI Number: 3237516



UMI Microform 3237516

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

BURNOUT AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATORS: DO EXPERIENCE,
CERTIFICATION,
CASELOAD, AND SCHOOL SIZE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

Dr. David Lovett, Committee Chair

Dr. Kathryn Haring

Dr. Barbara Greene

Dr. Lawrence Rossow

Dr. Laura Bixler

© Copyright by ELEANOR K. GOETZINGER 2006
All Rights Reserved.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandparents, Jack and Shirley Luthi (Grandpa and Othermama), who believe that education is the ultimate reward. I feel very fortunate to have two people with such exceptional beliefs and values shaping my life. Both of you have served as exemplary models for me throughout my lifetime, and you still are to this very day. When I was confronted with difficult challenges in attaining my doctorate, your love and support gave me the determination and strength I needed to continue on towards my educational goal. The many conversations we have had and letters of support that you wrote throughout the years continue to be at my bedside, as a remembrance of you. One of these letters contained the following poem that has provided continual inspiration.

The Bridge Builder

An old man going a lone highway
Came at the evening, cold and gray
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The chasm had no fear for him.
But he stopped when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.
A fellow pilgrim standing near
Said your wasting your time building here,
You never again will pass this way.
Why build a bridge at the end of the day.
The old man lifted his old gray head
And said there followeth after me
A fair head youth must pass this way
He too must cross in the twilight dim,
I am building this bridge for him.

Will Allen Dromgoole

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. David Lovett, the chair of my committee, inspired the research contained in this dissertation. I am grateful to him for the time and expertise he provided throughout my doctoral program. I would also like to thank the members of my committee. Dr. Kathryn Haring for her guidance and direction especially our discussions regarding students with behavioral disorders. Dr. Barbara Greene for her support, patience, and understanding when challenges came my way. Dr. Lawrence Rossow for information regarding the law in education and how knowledge does empower an individual. Dr. Laura Bixler for her perceptive feedback, which challenged my thought processes a great deal, thus I was able to see the big picture in the scheme of things.

I would also like to thank my family members, Mom, Dad, and Steve, my brother. Mom and Dad: you believed in me even when I did not believe in myself and your words of encouragement allowed me to gain confidence and be persistent in finishing. Your love and support helped me immensely in the difficult times, especially during my illness, and both of you hold special places in my heart. Steve, you have always calmed my nerves and continue to give me wonderful advice. I am thankful to have you as a brother and a friend.

The years of coursework and time spent were challenging for me, but I was very fortunate to have outstanding support from many people along the way. Laurie Shafer has known me throughout the entire process and was always there for me; I thank you for your unselfish time in listening. Sharon Lockhart, thank you for the wonderful visits; you always seemed to say the right thing at the right time and your

words of wisdom have remained with me today. Sheryl Janes, I thank you for the many times when I was confounded by the entire process and how you served as a wonderful sounding board. Dr. Joyce Brandes, a fellow doctoral student, thank you for your kind words and for being someone who kept me going through those challenging times.

To my mentor, Dr. Don Wilson at SWOSU, who tutored me for many hours at the end of his day and asked nothing in return. Your thoughtfulness and words of encouragement throughout my doctoral program are something that I will always remember. You set the standard for the type of professional I want to be and I'm very grateful that our paths crossed. You have inspired me to go on and make a difference with the tools I have been given.

To my colleagues at Putnam City High School such as Courtney Iordanescu, Lesa Rohrer, Maycie Crozier, Teri Voss, Janie Thompson, and Dr. Don Wentroth who graciously inquired about my well being throughout the dissertation process. I have been very fortunate to be able to work with outstanding educators who have taught me a great deal about working with students with special needs. All of you have provided opportunities for me to not only grow as an educator but as a person as well.

My best friend, Beth Chenoweth, I thank you for the countless hours you spent in reading my dissertation and helping me keep things in perspective along the way. Your steadfast support has given me the courage to continue to complete my dissertation and to see the scope beyond my doctoral degree.

Finally, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. Mike Nelson for his time and guidance throughout my program. You were always there to listen when I encountered problems and have always played a positive role in both my personal and professional lives. You have helped me develop a passion for conducting educational research and to ask questions and seek answers in the area of special education. Your enthusiasm and positive outlook are contagious and I'm very grateful that we are best of friends.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
Abstract	xiii
Introduction	1
History of Burnout Concept	5
Statement of Purpose	11
Research Questions	12
Review of Literature	13
Experience of Special Education Teachers In The Field	13
Goetzinger's Qualitative Study	21
Certification	24
Caseload	26
School Size	31
Other Pertinent Findings	33
Turnover/Attrition	33
Shortages	33
Excessive Paperwork	34
Summary	34

Methods and Procedures	36
Design	36
Sampling	36
Instrument Design	37
Burnout Measure	37
Emotional Exhaustion	37
Depersonalization.....	38
Personal Accomplishment.....	38
Demographic and Environmental	38
Procedures and Data Analysis.....	39
Summary	40
Results	41
Correlations	46
Experience.....	49
Caseload	49
School Size.....	51
Certification.....	52
Summary	55
Discussion	56
Discussion of Findings Related to Amount of Teaching Experience	57
Discussion of Findings Related to Types of Teacher’s Certifications	58
Discussion of Findings Related to Special Educators’ Caseload.....	59
Discussion of Findings Related to School Size	60

Limitations and Future Research Implications	60
References	64
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form	71
Appendix B: Interview Instrument.....	72
Appendix C: Special Education Teacher Questionnaire	74
Appendix D: Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey.....	81
Appendix E: Pilot Study-OU-IRB Study Approval	82
Appendix F: OU-IRB Study Approval	83

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Ranges and Categorization of MBI-ES Subscale Scores	8
2. Participant's School Size, Certification, and Teaching Assignments	22
3. Reasons Why Special Education Teachers Might Choose to Leave	
The Field	4
4. Caseload Requirements	7
5. Demographic Information Table	42
6. School Size and Teaching Experience by Special Education	
Teachers' Certification	43
7. Independent Variables' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations	45
8. Zero-Order Correlations among Burnout, Teaching Experience, and	
Teacher Caseload Variables	48
9. Multiple Regression for Emotional Exhaustion and Teacher Caseload	50
10. Minimum, Maximum, Means Scores and Standard Deviations for	
Special Education Teachers' Certification	53
10. Minimum, Maximum, Means Scores and Standard Deviations for	
Special Education Teachers' Certification (continued)	54
11. Amount of Special Education Teaching Experience	57

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Maslach Model.....	7
2. Caseload Distributions by Teachers in Self-Contained Classrooms.....	30

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to address various concerns regarding the burnout rate of special educators in Oklahoma school settings. The provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities is dependent upon the retention of qualified special education teachers in the classroom. Although attrition of special education teachers can be attributed to many factors, there has been a specific concern about the role of professional burnout. The following factors are discussed: (a) definition of stress, (b) definition of burnout, (c) experience of special education teachers in the field, (d) caseload, (e) certification status among special educators, and (f) school size. Among 226 current full time special education teachers with a minimum of three years teaching experience in Oklahoma, the relationships of experience, types of certification, amount of current number of students per caseload, and school size to three dimensions of burnout-emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were examined. Data were collected through a survey that utilized the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) and a 56-question survey pertaining to the teacher's amount of experience, demographics, types of certification, and teacher's caseload. Following a regression analysis, findings indicated that amount of teaching experience, types of teachers' certification and school size were non significant. The number of students on a teacher's caseload was statistically significant to degrees of burnout in the area of emotional exhaustion. Implications of these findings for school support programs, specific resources in the working environment, and supply of special education teachers are suggested.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

According to a report from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) (2001), the United States is currently experiencing a critical shortage of special educators, making it unlikely that the needs of children with disabilities will be adequately addressed. In 2001, more than 12,000 special education teaching positions went unfilled nationwide (CEC, 2001). For the state of Oklahoma to maintain current student to educator ratios, 1,735 special education teachers were needed to be hired from 2000-01 to 2004-05. (Office of Special Education Programs, 2002; Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education , Department of Education, 2002).

The provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities is dependent upon having the qualified special education teachers in the classroom. For over a decade, educators have voiced concerns about higher teacher attrition rates in special education as compared to general education (e.g., National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDE], 1990), and evidence suggests that the shortage of qualified special educators, which has persisted over two decades, is likely to continue (U.S. Department of Education, 1991-2001).

The “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) (U. S. Department of Education, 2002), requires that all teachers be “highly qualified” in the subjects they teach by 2006. NCLB requires highly qualified teachers to (a) hold at least a bachelors degree, (b) have full state certification as a teacher or have passed the state licensure exam and hold a license to teach, (c) demonstrate competence in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches, and (d) area of severe/profound would abide by the elementary level of

instruction in a self-contained classroom. NCLB requires states to pay greater attention to teacher quality and add subject matter expertise at the middle and high school level.

According to the report on special education from the CEC (2001), the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (1995) had major requirement changes such as using effective curricula and completing required paperwork. Problems cited by special educators in fulfilling their duties include high caseloads, overwhelming paperwork, student discipline problems, little time for individualized instruction, and inadequate administrative support (CEC, 2001). Due to these conditions, the current special education teacher shortage situation is a concern.

School districts currently face problems in securing qualified special education teachers, and shortages in future years are expected to continue at crisis proportions. The shortages are due in part to the tremendous growth of the field over the past 25 years, which has resulted from increased identification of students who qualify for special education and the passage of federal and state mandates to provide special education services for students with disabilities (e.g., Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, & Terhanian, 1997; Brownell, & Smith, 1993; Smith-Davis, & Billingsley, 1993). As reported by Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, and Terhanian in 1998, the shortage of special education teachers was twice that of general educators and 32% of new special education teachers were not fully certified within the field.

In 1999, Miller, Brownell, and Smith conducted a study that reviewed factors contributing to special education teachers remaining in or transferring out of special education classrooms. According to the authors, 1576 Florida special education teachers

were selected using the Florida state database system across elementary and secondary schools that included 526 first year teachers, 530 teachers with two to five years experience, and 520 teachers with more than five years experience. Of the 1576 teachers identified as receiving the questionnaires, 69 participants were excluded due to attrition or inability to contact those participants. With the remaining 1507 contacted, an overall response rate of returned questionnaires was 80.2%.

Due to the random sample of special educators drawn, certification areas (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional disturbances), placements (e.g., resource room, self-contained), and demographic profiles were represented. The authors designed their own survey instrument to address variables that were (a) demographic factors such as age, race, teacher efficacy, certification status; (b) student caseload, amount of workload, and relationships with students; (c) support from building administrators, relationships with colleagues, and conflict in the workplace; and (d) salary and job benefits. Other questions examined were stress, job satisfaction, teacher commitment, and intent to remain in the special education teaching field.

The results of the 1999 study indicated that certain environmental variables were effective predictors of career decisions made by special education teachers in the field. Brownell and Smith's (1993) framework uses Bronfenbrenner's (1976) systems theory model to describe interactions between individual teachers within school environments and how variables within school systems impact individual teacher characteristics. Brownell and Smith (1993) extended Bronfenbrenner's model and identify factors including age and teacher preparation, which may interact with educational environments to affect career decisions. When teacher and environmental variables were statistically

controlled for in the authors' model, the factors of certification status, school climate, perceived stress, and age were the best predictors as to whether the special education teachers chose to remain in the classroom.

In 1991, Billingsley and Cross investigated the relationship between attrition in special education and stressful teaching conditions. Using the Virginia Department of Education personnel files, teachers were identified through holding an endorsement in one or more special education areas. A stratified random sample of 286 former special education teachers who were teaching in an area within general education were surveyed. With a response rate of 87%, the authors found that the most common reasons for special education teachers leaving the field were due to (a) lack of administrative support; (b) stress of working with special needs students; (c) excessive paperwork; (d) differences regarding special education policies; and (e) lack of teaching materials. As a result, 25% of the 286 participants indicated that there were no incentives that would influence them to return to the field of special education.

Retention of qualified teachers remains a critical issue in education today, with the field of special education experiencing some of the most significant attrition levels (Boe, Cook, Bobbit, & Terhanian, 1997). In 2002, the Oklahoma State Department of Education reported that insufficient classroom experience, lack of support from administrators, poor work environments, student discipline problems, and an initial assignment of difficult students and subjects affect teacher retention. In fact, Oklahoma in 2002 lost special education teachers at a rate of 22% compared to the 16% that left in 1998. Other states (such as Texas and Kansas) have addressed this issue and offer financial incentives to entice Oklahoma teachers to their states. For example, in 2003 the

Houston Independent School District offered a signing bonus of \$5,000 for special education teachers over a two-year period. That same year the Dallas Independent School District paid new teachers a minimum of \$34,100, with an annual stipend of \$500 for special education teachers. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education (2006) the state minimum teaching salary schedule in 2005-2006 was \$28,000. The shortage of qualified special education teachers may also result from the emotional challenges of the job (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy, 2003). The most salient variables defining stress are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and the lack of feelings of personal accomplishment and were categorized as “burnout” (Maslach, 1976).

Initially, the concept of burnout was difficult to define and there were many opinions about what it was and what could be done about it. However, there were some validity underlying aspects of the three core dimensions of the burnout experience, and subsequent research on the issue led to the development of a multidimensional theory of burnout (Maslach, 1979, 1998). The Maslach theoretical framework continues to be the dominant measure used for research in the burnout field.

History of the Burnout Concept

The phenomena of burnout in the work place was described in the mid-1970s with initial articles written by Freudenberger, (1975) who was a psychiatrist working in alternative health care, and Maslach (1976), a social psychologist who examined emotions in the workplace. In 1981, Maslach designed a three-dimensional model of the burnout phenomenon related to the workplace. The three key factors of stress responses in her model were emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization (cynicism), and a lack of personal accomplishment. The first feature of emotional exhaustion indicates that

the employee feels that he or she has nothing left to give to others on an emotional or psychological level. This dimension tends to prompt actions by teachers to distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work place. The second factor is depersonalization, which takes place when there is work overload, social conflict, and lack of resources to complete the job (e.g., lack of necessary tools or insufficient time). Depersonalization entails teachers' attitudes between themselves and their students by overlooking the characteristics that make them distinctive. The third factor, lack of personal accomplishment, reflects the feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's workplace. Teachers' experiences in the work place have an impact when understanding the concept of burnout. Maslach's model proposed that burnout symptoms may exist with teachers in the work place, especially related to feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1981).

For the past 25 years of research, Maslach has examined the complexity of the burnout construct, environments that deal with individual's stress experience and the context of employees' relations to their work. The basis for Maslach's model was to examine the three dimensions hypothesized and how they progress over time, which leads to one dimension that may transition into the development of the other. According to the model (Figure 1), exhaustion occurs first, leading to the development of cynicism, which leads to inefficacy. For example, stressful interactions with students, parents, other teachers, and administrators in the school setting may increase the special educator's feelings of exhaustion. When teachers perceive that they can no longer give of themselves, as they have been able to give in the past, they are displaying feelings of

emotional exhaustion. Secondly, high levels of teacher exhaustion may lead to cynicism, especially if special education teachers lack supportive contact with their fellow teachers and administrators at school. Teachers develop and express negative and cynical attitudes toward students in a self-contained classroom setting. Thirdly, as cynicism persists, special education teachers may feel that their effectiveness in the school setting may diminish even though supportive contact with fellow special educators may help to slow down this process (Maslach, et. al, 2001). Lastly, the next component of burnout is personal accomplishment, or its lack, as it reflects the loss of perceptions of satisfying levels of achievement and fulfillment in the job (Gold, 1984).

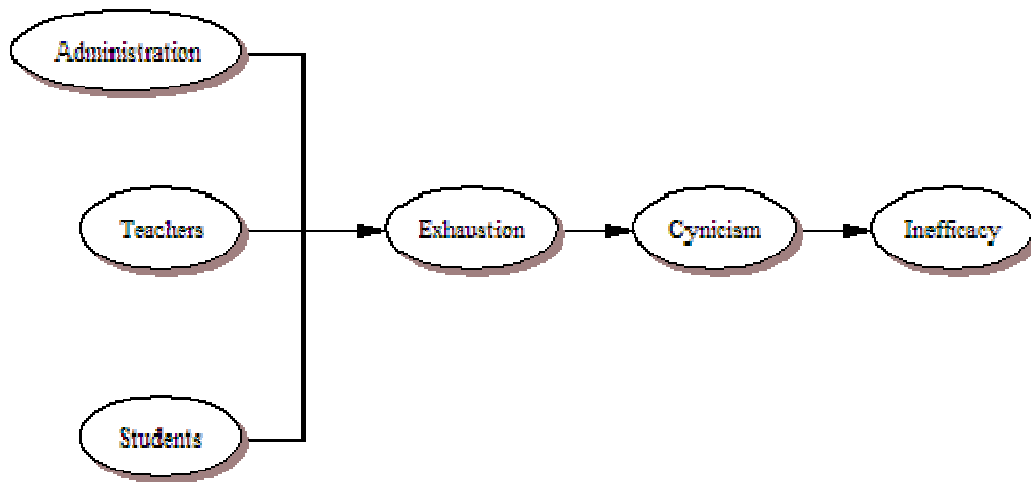


Figure1. Maslach model.

According to Maslach, et. al, (1996), the degrees of burnout are expressed as: (a) high degree: high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalization (DP) subscales with low scores on the Personal Accomplishment (PA) scale (b) an average degree of burnout would include average scores on all three subscales, and (c) low degree

scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization sub scales and high scores on the Personal Accomplishment scale. Scores were counted for each subscale, and considered high if they fell in the upper third of the normative scale, moderate if they were with the middle third and low if they were within the lower third. Table 1 provides the numerical restrictions in order to create these ranges.

Table 1

Range and Categorization of MBI-ES Subscale Scores

	Low	Average	High
MBI Subscales	(Lower Third)	(Middle Third)	(Upper Third)
EE	≤ 16	17-26	≥ 27
DP	≤ 8	9-13	≥ 14
PA	≥ 37	36-31	≤ 30

Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, (1996).

In 1981, Iwanicki and Schwab conducted a study examining the reliability and validity of the MBI with teachers. The construct validity of the MBI in education was assessed using 469 Massachusetts teachers that were randomly selected from the active membership list of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. The sample included general education teachers, special education teachers, and guidance counselors. The construct validity of the MBI in education was assessed using a principal factor analysis with varimax rotation. Four factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged accounting for 76% of the total variance. Emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were loaded on Factor I, while the depersonalization subscale separated

into two factors (Factor III and Factor IV), job-related and student-related factors within the structure of the instrument. The intercorrelations between scores of each subscale were consistent with expectations. The frequency of intercorrelations for teachers using the MBI between Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment were (-.32), between Emotional Exhaustion and Job Related Depersonalization (.58), between Emotional Exhaustion and Student Related Depersonalization (.49). The frequency intercorrelation relationship Personal Accomplishment and Job Related Depersonalization were (-.33) and Student Related Depersonalization (-.40). Lastly, the frequency intercorrelation reflected by the variables of Job Related Depersonalization was (.47). The reliabilities of each subscale of the MBI for teachers were established by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The results of the statistical reliability that were reflected on each subscale were emotional exhaustion (.89), personal accomplishment (.79), job related depersonalization (.80), and student related depersonalization (.66). The authors recognized that the subscale reliabilities for the depersonalization subscales were not sufficient; therefore they suggested for future studies that (1) the subscales of job related depersonalization and student related depersonalization should be combined.

In 1984, Gold conducted a study addressing the factorial validity of the MBI with teachers as the participants. The investigator reported that this study was important, as it provided a means of providing further evidence of the construct validity of the MBI from a different sample of teachers from a different population. The author administered the MBI where the name of the test was changed to Human Services Survey to minimize reactive effects to 462 elementary and secondary teachers in Southern California at a workshop for stress management. The replication of the three constructs of Emotional

Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment lead to some degree of generalization of the construct validity of the MBI to other teachers. The responses were scored for frequency to the 22 items of the MBI and were intercorrelated and subjected to a principal factors solution followed by varimax rotation. The reliabilities were extremely close to those reported by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) for the three subscales. The statistical reliabilities reflected were Emotional Exhaustion (.90), Depersonalization, (.76), and Personal Accomplishment (.79). The two dimensions of the Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment scales reflect smaller numbers, as this would be relative to fewer items within those subscales. The investigator concluded that the MBI demonstrates factorial validity consistent with the rationale for its three subscales.

In 1997, Maslach and Leiter rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. What may have started out as important, meaningful, and challenging work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless. According to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), recent work on burnout has developed a new theoretical framework that integrates both individual and situational factors. These interactional constructs view people and their environment as independent entities, but characterize them along dimensions to the degree of fit in which the person and his/her environment can be assessed. Based on interviews with engaged employees, the authors defined engagement as a “persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment in employees that is characterized by levels of energy, sense of pride, and absorption”. The self-report questionnaire included items such as, “I feel strong and vigorous in my job” (levels of energy); “I’m enthusiastic about my job” (sense of pride); “I feel happy when I’m engrossed in my work” (absorption). Overall, including engagement by using the full

range of the MBI scores instead of focusing only on the negative limitation, contributes in gaining a better understanding of the teachers' well being.

Earlier studies (Maslach, 1976; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) have investigated linking burnout to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. In the 1990s, the concept of burnout continued to be researched to examine potential influences with the three components of burnout (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, Leiter, 1993). These results revealed that the topic of burnout is more work related than situation specific. A work situation with overwhelming demands contributes to teachers distancing themselves emotionally and cognitively in the work place. The research over the years has maintained a consistent focus on burnout and how it affects teachers in relation to their work (Zabel & Zabel, 1983; Abel & Sewell, 1999; Embich, 2001; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Zabel & Zabel, 2001; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002).

The intent of the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 was to provide quality educational free and appropriate services for students with disabilities; insure the civil rights for students with disabilities and their families such as due process, least restrictive environments, and provides supports for special educators. In attempting to comply with the recent standards, some special educators have been overwhelmed with problems of high caseloads, huge amounts of paperwork, and minimal time for instruction and collaboration.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between Oklahoma special education teacher burnout and the impact of teacher experience, certification status, number of students on caseload, and school size. This study builds on previous

research (Zabel & Zabel, 1983, 2001) and also adds different components to determine if they affect the burnout rate of Oklahoma special education teachers. This project explored whether there are significant job-related stressors for special education teachers in Oklahoma.

Research Questions

This study measured degrees of burnout on special education teachers in Oklahoma related to experience, certification status, number of students on caseload, and school setting. All subjects were given randomly assigned numbers and all constructs were self reported by teachers on a questionnaire. Research questions of this study were:

1. Is the amount of teaching experience related to special education teachers' burnout?
2. Are the types of special education teachers' certification related to burnout?
3. Is the amount of current number of students per caseload related to special education teachers' burnout?
4. Is school size related to special education teacher burnout?

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The importance of the relationship between people and their work place has long been recognized as a phenomenon of interest. According to Hiebert and Farber (1984), stress is defined as "...a process in which environmental forces threaten an individual's well-being." Sources of stress for special education teachers may include excessive paperwork (Bensky et al., 1980), pupil attitudes and behavior (Center & Callaway, 1999), and heavy student caseloads (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002).

Examining experiences in the workplace can lead to an understanding of occupational stress and its relationship to burnout. According to Friedman (2000), burnout is a "work-related syndrome that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output)." In the helping professions, burnout occurs most often in those who work face-to-face with troubled or needy clients. It is typically marked by withdrawal from interactions with clients, emotional and physical exhaustion, and various psychological symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, sadness, and lowered self-esteem (Farber, 1991). Burnout affects dedication to the profession, and is a contributing factor to special education teacher attrition (Billingsley & Cross, 1991, Lauritzen, 1986). Four areas of research related to burnout are reviewed in this chapter: (1) special education teachers' experience, (2) type of certification, (3) number of students per caseload, and (4) school size.

Experience of Special Education Teachers in the Field

In 1972 and 1983, Singer conducted a longitudinal study to explore the career paths of special educators in Michigan and North Carolina (Singer, 1992). Singer

investigated the career paths of 6,600 newly hired special educators and examined data sets that contained information such as: (a) teachers' personal backgrounds (year of hire, age at hire, gender, and race), (b) demographic characteristics of school districts in which the teachers worked, and (c) teachers' salaries each year on the job. The data sets were obtained through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which tracks teacher supply and demand for the states of Michigan and North Carolina. The NCES model examined the teaching force and its stability over time in respect to attrition rates in the field. Within this research, a survey was completed by each teacher, and to assist identifying who among them are more likely to leave the teaching profession. The author designed a type of survival analysis in both studies, which focused on the probability that a special educator would leave in any particular year. The survival analysis was calculated by 13 years of longitudinal data describing 6,600 special educators between 1972 and 1983. It determined whether special educators who leave the field eventually return to special education. This analysis focused on whether the teachers would leave their teaching positions in any particular year, given that he or she had taught continuously until that year. This probability was identified as the hazard rate, which measured the risk of a teacher leaving in any particular year among those who had taught continuously through the immediate preceding year. The results reported were based on efficacy of the hazard model in predicting the risk of teachers leaving the profession factoring in teacher and job characteristics.

Singer (1992) found that 12% of the new special education teachers in Michigan and 13% of the new special education teachers in North Carolina left teaching by the end of the first year. Among those remaining, 11% of the special educators had left by the

end of the third year. By the end of five years, 43% of special educators newly hired in Michigan and North Carolina had left the field of teaching in each state. The results also indicated that in both states teachers' age and gender did have an effect, as women 30 years of age or younger were twice as likely to leave their teaching positions. The groups of special education teachers at the greatest risk for leaving their jobs were those who after working only with students with special needs for at least one year, had transferred into general education. These transfers from special education to general education lengthened their teaching career with a median of 5.8 years total in elementary schools and 4.7 years in a secondary school setting.

Zabel and Zabel (1983 & 2001) conducted two studies in the state of Kansas, which addressed the concern of burnout among special education teachers. Both studies examined the relationships between burnout, number of years taught by general and special education teaching experience, participant age, and amount of professional preparation. The authors also examined the teaching load and administrative support.

In the 1983 study, questionnaires were sent to special education teachers randomly selected from the high incidence categories (learning disabled, behaviorally disordered, mentally retarded) from Kansas State Department of Education listings to examine the relationships of personal and job-related factors and burnout. A total of 765 questionnaires were mailed and 601 returned, with a total return rate of 78.6%. First, recipients were asked to respond to questions pertaining to conditions of their jobs, numbers, and age levels of their students. Service delivery models, number of working hours per week, opportunities for completing administrative tasks, amount of time away from their students, and the quality of support from their colleagues were also addressed

in the questionnaire. The second part was a three-dimensional model of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment of burnout by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted between the variables of amount of teaching experience and burnout. The correlation indicated a small significant negative correlation was reflected between the amount of special education teaching experience and scores on the Depersonalization scales ($r = -.143; p < .001$). A t-test (two-tailed) comparison of the amount of teaching experience for both groups revealed that the high scoring participants on the Emotional Exhaustion scale was significant for special education teachers with less teaching experience ($t = 1.97, p = .05$).

The scores of participants who indicated they had either a bachelor's or master's degree were compared on each of the burnout measures subscales. The t-test comparison reflected that those with master's degrees were found to score significantly lower on Depersonalization ($t = 3.06; p = .002$) and higher on Personal Accomplishment ($t = 2.58; p = .01$). A one-way analysis of variance procedure was used to determine if there were differences in scores on the burnout measure in comparison to the age ranges of participants. The analysis indicated significant differences on the Depersonalization measure ($F = 1.328; p = .002$). Older participants were less emotionally exhausted ($F = 7.225; p = .007$), less depersonalized ($F = 16.78; p < .0001$), and experienced a greater sense of personal accomplishment ($F = 6.46; p = .011$) than younger participants.

The results of the 1983 study revealed that the more experienced, highly trained, and older the respondents were, the less they were "at risk" for burnout compared to respondents who were less well trained and younger. Therefore, the 1982 study indicated

that special educators who were older in age, more experienced in the classroom, and had received more training were more likely to stay in the profession of special education.

The second study conducted by Zabel and Zabel (2001) reviewed burnout among special education teachers in age, experience, and teacher preparation. Questionnaires were sent to 420 special educators in the state of Kansas, and 301 were returned with a total return rate of 71.4%. At the time of data collection in early spring of 1998, special education teachers in Kansas were listed according to the classification of students they had been reported to be teaching. In Kansas, the certification of Behavior Disorders is what IDEA refers to as Emotionally Disturbed. Equal numbers were randomly selected from each category: Behavior Disorders, Gifted, Specific Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and Interrelated. Interrelated is defined as a category in which special education teachers work in cross-categorical programs and was not addressed in the 1982 study. At the time of the 2001 study, the category of interrelated teachers made up the largest classification of special educators in the state of Kansas.

As in the 1983 study, participants responding to the questionnaire were asked to respond to two sections. The first part of the questionnaire requested information that pertained to the special educators' demographic information such as job types, age levels of their students, their service delivery model, number of working hours per week, opportunities for completing administrative tasks, amount of time away from their students, and the quality of support from the school. The participants were asked to complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach et. al, 1996). As with the MBI, the MBI-ES (1996) is an updated edition designed to measure burnout, which has been adapted into an educator's version. The MBI-ES measures three

dimensions of professional burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The emotional exhaustion scale includes nine items describing feelings of fatigue about one's job conditions and includes statements such as, "I feel frustrated by my job." The depersonalization scale contains five items representing teachers' perceptions toward others in the workplace and includes statements such as, "I've become more callous toward people since I took this job." The personal accomplishment sub-scale addresses the respondents' feelings of personal accomplishment within the workplace, and includes statements such as, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job." The 22 items of the MBI were rated on a seven point Likert scale, on which the respondent reflected how often a feeling had been experienced, ranging from 0 (never) to six (every day).

A t-test (two-tailed) was conducted to compare the mean age of participants according to classification of students they taught ($F = 7.52, p = .0001$). Early childhood special education teachers ($M = 36.83, SD = 8.70$) and teachers of students with mental retardation ($M = 39.66, SD = 8.60$) were the youngest groups. The mean age of the early childhood special education teachers were significantly lower than teachers of students with Behavior Disorders ($M = 44.02, SD = 9.13$) and Learning Disabilities ($M = 45.35, SD = 9.08$).

The mean age of high and low scorers was compared using t-tests. On the Personal Accomplishment scale, the mean age of those who scored high was 42.7 years ($SD = 8.3$) and for those who scored low 41.5 years ($SD = 10.1$). The Emotional Exhaustion scale reflected the mean age of high scorers as 42.6 years ($SD = 9.5$) and the

low scorers as 42.2 years ($SD = 8.5$). On the Depersonalization scale the mean age of high scorers was 42.8 years ($SD = 7.7$) and of low scorers was 44.6 years ($SD = 9.1$).

In both studies, the number of years teaching of general education was examined to address whether the participants had any regular education teaching experience. Almost half of the participants (47% in 2001, 47.9% in 1982) reported that they had no general education teaching experience. The mean years of general education teaching experience was 2.9 ($SD = 4.6$), significantly less than the 3.7 years ($SD = 6.0$) in the 1982 study ($F = 3.89, p < .05$). In the 2001 study, a negative correlation of ($r = -.13, p = .03$) was reflected between amount of general and special education teaching experience.

The scores on burnout measures for participants with bachelor degrees were compared with those of participants with masters or higher degrees. The teachers with master's degrees had significantly higher Personal Accomplishment scores ($F = 12.8; p = .0004$), but there were no significant differences with those with bachelors and masters degrees on either Emotional Exhaustion or Depersonalization sub scales.

Participants were also asked whether they had been provisionally or fully endorsed in special education when they began teaching in special education. At that time, Kansas's special education endorsements were added to early childhood, elementary, or secondary teaching certifications. Kansas did not grant emergency endorsements, but persons could qualify for provisional endorsements in special education by completing 9-12 hours of course work and practicum beyond their regular certification. In 2001, full endorsements in special education required the completion of a state-approved program of at least 30 hours of course work and practica beyond the requirements in the area of regular education. In addition, 57% of the participants

reported that when they began teaching in special education, they were provisionally endorsed, and 43 percent were fully endorsed. These figures reflect similarities in the 1982 study where 62.1 were provisionally endorsed and 37.1 percent were fully endorsed when they began teaching in special education.

The relationships among age, experience, preparation, and certification status were also examined even though not all of them as independent variables. Several analyses were conducted to determine their relationships among one another. There was a significant difference ($F = 16.15, p = .0001$) in the amount of regular education experience for teachers with bachelors ($M = 1.3$ years, $SD = 2.8$) and masters degrees ($M = 3.6$ years, $SD = 5.1$). There was significant difference ($F = 50.66, p = .0001$) in number of years of special education experience for those with bachelors ($M = 6.6$; $SD = 6.4$) and masters degrees ($M = 13.0$; $SD = 7.3$). There also was a significant difference in teachers with Masters degrees scoring higher on the Personal Accomplishment sub scale ($F = 12.8$; $p = .004$) than those with bachelor degrees.

An additional analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between certification status (i.e., provisional or full endorsement) when participants began teaching and their age and amounts of general education and special education teaching experience. The statistics reflected that the amount of general teaching experience of those with provisional endorsements ($M = 2.3$ years, $SD = .42$) were significantly less ($F = 4.04, p = .045$) than those with full endorsement ($M = 3.4$ years, $SD = .37$). Therefore, the participants with provisional endorsements had significantly less ($F = 19.04, p = .0001$) special education experience ($M = 9.4$ years, $SD = .57$) than those with full endorsements ($M = 13.2$, $SD = .067$). According to Zabel and Zabel (2001),

many special education teachers are hired prior to being fully endorsed in the area of special education.

The results in the 2001 study indicated that the amount of special education experience, the amount of professional preparation, and age had increased tremendously since 1982. The mean amount of special education experience in 2001 was 11.0 years, which was significantly higher than the previous study of 5.3 years. As in the 1983 study and in other research on special education teacher burnout, younger, less experienced, and less trained special educators had been identified at a greater risk for burnout and attrition (Singer, 1992). In both studies by Zabel and Zabel (1983 & 2001), teachers' feelings of personal accomplishment were related to both their experience and amount of teacher preparation. The content of special education preparation and support has changed, while special educator stress and burnout have become topics of interest in teacher preparation.

Goetzinger's Qualitative Study

Following the work by Zabel and Zabel (2001), Goetzinger (2001), conducted a study in the form of qualitative interviews on the topic of burnout. Participants in the study were eight special education teachers that had a minimum of three years teaching experience who were from four different school districts in a southwestern state. The interviews took place at the participants' schools or residences at a time that was convenient for them. Table 2 indicates the participants' school size, certification, and teaching assignment.

Table 2

Participants' School Size, Certification, and Teaching Assignments

Participant	School Size	Experience	Certification	Teaching Assignment
A	Urban	20	LD/ED	Inclusion
B	Urban	31	LD	Resource
C	Urban	27	Mild/Moderate	Resource
D	Urban	25	Mild/Moderate	Inclusion
E	Rural	25	MR	Self-Contained
F	Rural	3	LD/MR	Resource
G	Rural	13	Mild/Moderate	Resource
H	Rural	10	ED	Self-Contained

Goetzinger, (2001).

The phenomenological approach was chosen to provide an important means of helping the author to understand the feelings and perspectives about the concept of burnout among special educators. The purpose of the phenomenological approach was to examine the relationships between burnout and the participants' experience, certification status, caseload and school size.

The interviews were analyzed using the horizontalization method, which divided statements into meaningful clusters. Issues of student behavior, complying with special education laws, and health concerns were the three major themes reflected by the data and related to burnout. Teachers reported that student behavior and complying with special education laws were increasing their stress levels. The information obtained was used to design the survey instrument for the study. According to the results, Table 3

indicates the reasons why special education teachers might choose to leave based on themes of student behavior, compliance with special education laws, and health concerns.

Table 3

Reasons Why Special Education Teachers Might Choose to Leave the Field

1. Experienced problems when dealing with students and their behavior
2. Experienced more problems in the classroom with students' behavior with a mild/moderate certificate
3. Experienced problems in holding Individualized Education Program (IEPs) meetings and getting the regular education teachers to attend
4. Received minimal support from administration
5. Dealing with time-line demands of IEPs and documentation in complying with state and federal regulations
6. Experienced teachers in the regular education classroom setting not wanting students with special needs in their classrooms
7. Sought medical attention for migraine headaches
8. Experienced gastrointestinal problems and weight loss
9. Sleeping habits were affected
10. Received a stress disorder diagnosis

Goetzinger, (2001).

Certification

In 2003, Katsiyannis, Zhang, and Conroy conducted a study to examine teacher availability by analyzing data drawn from the annual reports to Congress on the implementation of IDEA (U. S. Department of Education, 1991-2001), covering the 11-year period from 1988-1989 to 1998-1999. The reports contained data regarding the

special education teaching force that included certification information during the 1998 to 1999 school year in four regions according to the classification system established by the U. S. Bureau of Census (2001). Due to the focus of the investigation, categorical data regarding teachers of students identified as emotional behavior disordered (EBD), learning disabled (LD), and mentally retarded (MR) were included and separately listed in the data set for analyses.

The data from the annual reports were entered into an *SPSS* (Statistical Package for Social Science) file. Data analysis was conducted to calculate teacher shortage rates, percentage of teachers who were fully certified, and percentages of retained teachers who were certified. Two types of data analysis were calculated to address the means of teacher shortage rates and teacher certification rates and to examine rates in each category of all disabilities, EBD, LD, and MR. Two sets of repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to examine differences among the four regions regarding teacher shortage and teacher certification.

The results of the 2003 study indicated that comparing the three specific disability categories of EBD, LD, and MR, the data reflected that the highest percentages of unfilled positions were in the EBD category, followed by the LD category, with the lowest percentage being the MR category. The study reflected that fewer teachers were fully certified in the certification category of EBD. The regional comparisons revealed that significantly ($F = 146, p < .01$) more teacher positions were not filled in the West than in the Northeast sections of the nation.

Caseload

Higher student caseloads, combined with the challenges of managing diverse learning and behavioral needs of students with disabilities, completing excessive paperwork, working with insufficient resources such as lack of updated instructional materials, and inappropriate transition services within the community may cause many special education teachers to feel overloaded, stressed, and ineffective in their relationships with students (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Metzke, 1988). According to Billingsley and Cross (1991), special education teachers left the field of special education due to excessive paperwork requirements that concur with their student caseloads. Metzke (1988) found that higher rates of attrition are among teachers who have such diverse groups of students on their caseloads. This includes teachers in self-contained classrooms and working with students of cross-categorical disabilities.

Nationally, statewide caseload guidelines may include complex formulas to determine placements, disability category, paperwork, severity of disability, and to policies made by local school districts. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education's Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, the particular type of student placement or disability category served determines total caseload. The full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher's caseload is based on each student's placement or category, and determines the percentage for that placement. Each student counts as a percentage of a teacher's caseload. To determine a teacher's caseload the number of students in a particular placement or category is multiplied by the corresponding percentage. Totals greater than 1.00 exceed the state of Oklahoma's caseload requirements. Table 4 shows the caseload guidelines according to the state of Oklahoma.

Table 4

Maximum Caseload Requirements

Placement	Caseload	
	Percentage	Total
Regular Classes Full-time	.025	40
Special Classes Part-time		
50% or less of instructional time	.04	25
Majority of instructional time	.077	13
Special Classes Full-time	.10	10
Home Instruction	.025	40
Speech/language		
60 minutes or less per week	.0165	60
More than 60 minutes per week	.025	40
Developmental Delays	.05	20

Oklahoma State Department of Education, (2003).

The Council for Exceptional Children reported that 61% of special education teachers cited large caseloads and class sizes as a major problem (Sack, 1998).

Billingsley and Cross (1991), studying teachers who left the special education classroom or who intended to leave the classroom, reported that teachers who were dissatisfied with their caseloads had high levels of emotional exhaustion and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

A survey conducted in 2002 by Nichols and Sosnowsky investigated degrees of burnout and the effects of three separate classroom conditions: the number of heterogeneous disability categories, caseload size, and the proportion of students with emotional impairments to the total class size. Two questionnaires were distributed among 310 full time Michigan special education teachers with endorsements to teach students

with learning disabilities and assigned to self-contained classrooms at the middle school level. There was a response rate of 67%. The two questionnaires used were: the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES, 1996) and the Student Diversity and Organizational Satisfaction Survey (SDOSS).

The second instrument, the Student Diversity and Organizational Satisfaction Survey (SDOSS), has two versions. Section one was designed to collect data based on (a) current number of students per caseload, (b) reported number of disability categories represented by a self-contained classroom, (c) reported number of students per disability category, and (d) total number of years taught by the teacher in special education. Section two measured degrees of satisfaction according to career selection and organizational factors that were reported to influence special education teacher stress, and burnout. Organizational factors were considered as (a) administrative support-special education, (b) administrative support-building principal, (c) decision making, (d) professional development opportunities, (e) student caseload, (f) role conflict, (g) social support networks, (h) university preparation, and (i) time given to individualized instruction. A Likert scale consisted of five points measured responses from “very satisfied” (1) to “not at all satisfied” (5).

The second version of the SDOSS resulted from recipients’ comments regarding high student caseloads and program assignments other than self-contained classrooms. The participants were given the operational definition of self-contained classrooms and departmentalized assignments. The definition given for self-contained was “classrooms located in public schools in which students receive 50 percent or more of their academic instruction by a special education teacher.” For the departmentalized assignment the

definition was stated as “a delivery system in which two or more special education teachers teach groups of disabled students by instructional content” (i.e., teachers have a primary caseload, but instruct students from other special education teachers’ caseloads).

Nichols and Sosnowsky (2002) reported that teachers in self-contained classrooms were dissatisfied with the lack of professional development opportunities and university preparation. For the relationship between burnout and caseload size, the mean number of students per caseload was 13.20. Figure 2 represents the caseload distribution as reported by teachers in self-contained classrooms, but outliers were considered if caseloads were 22 or more students being assigned. Results indicated that neither the number of disability categories in a self-contained class nor caseload size statistically increased degrees of burnout, but dissatisfaction of both professional development opportunities and university preparation did lead to higher levels of exhaustion.

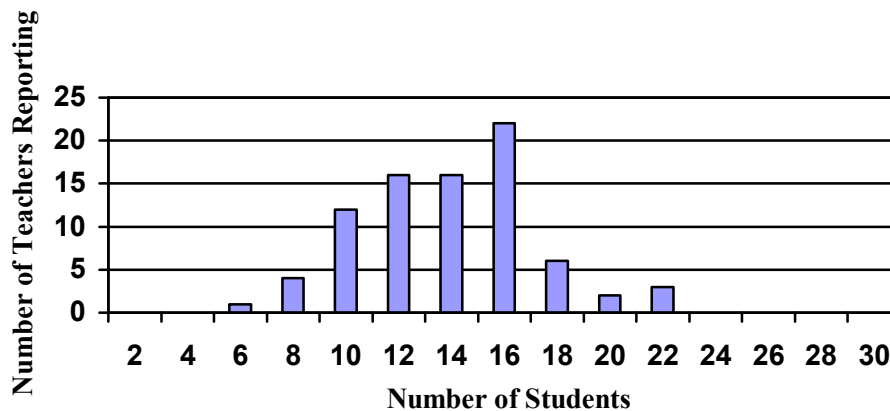


Figure 2. Caseload distribution by teachers in self-contained classrooms.

The authors cautioned readers that the analysis did have limitations. According to the Michigan Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education (April, 1997), the determined student caseload maximum is 15 for self-contained classrooms for students with learning disabilities. Two teachers from rural schools reported caseloads as high as 22 students, which may be affected by minimal financial, educational, and staffing resources. The authors also reported that even though statistically a relationship between degrees of burnout and caseload did not exist, larger caseloads could have a substantial impact on the three subscales of the MBI-ES (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Two of the participants having 18 students per caseload indicated high degrees of emotional exhaustion, while one of the teachers with a 22 student caseload reported the highest burnout summary within the study. Degrees of burnout also may be higher if state waivers raise caseloads continue to increase (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002).

School Size

Based on the U. S. Census, The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1990) defines “rural” to mean everything except urban. This would mean that any town not within a city of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) with a population of 25,000 or less would be considered rural. The term “urban” includes “suburban” or “inner city,” with a population of 25,000 or more. Rural districts have been defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (1990) as a population of 25,000 or less. The shortage of qualified special education personnel in rural areas is particularly problematic. In addition to difficulties in recruiting qualified special education teachers, higher attrition rates in rural schools as compared to urban schools have been reported (Berkely & Lipinski, 1991; Helge, 1984; Lemke, 1995).

Higher attrition rates in rural areas are not surprising, as most teachers are educated in urban or metropolitan areas, and may not have been prepared to deal with unique aspects of rural special education. Several researchers and practitioners (e.g., Cole & Leeper, 1995; Helge, 1984; Lemke, 1995; Marrs, 1984) have argued that the needs of special educators in rural schools differ substantially from those of their counterparts in urban school districts. Many leave special education teaching in rural communities within a very short time, contributing to high attrition rates of 30%, 50%, or even 100% over a three year period of time (Helge, 1984; U.S. Office of Education, 1995).

Bornfield, Hall, Hall, and Hoover (1997) conducted a study in a rural state, where the authors investigated reasons why special education teachers or support professionals remained or left positions in rural school settings. Questionnaires were distributed to 105

special education teachers, with a return rate of 86 surveys. The surveys used were the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1993), an abbreviated form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), and a demographic questionnaire designed by the authors. The MSQ questionnaire was used to measure: (a) the special education teachers' generalized job satisfaction, and (b) intrinsic job satisfaction, and (c) extrinsic job satisfaction. An informal questionnaire was administered to special education teachers to obtain information regarding services, cultural opportunities, personal demographics, and professional development.

The target population surveyed by phone included 42 participants who had left their positions at the end of the 1993 to 1994 school year. The authors reported that when asked why the special educators had left their jobs, their related issues were: (a) lack of administrative support (33%), (b) excessive amount of paperwork (23%), (c) travel demands of their jobs (16%), (d) moved from their school district to become general education teachers (10%), and (e) left due to being single (62%). The authors recommended that administrators needed to be more supportive of their special education teachers and their concerns pertaining to meeting with parents that challenge the system, excessive paperwork, and assisting special education teachers who work with students with challenging behaviors. They further recommended changes in work conditions, because as long as special education teachers in rural states are dissatisfied with work conditions, there would continue to be a high turnover rate in these schools.

Abel and Sewell (1999) examined sources of stress and burnout in 51 rural and 46 urban regular secondary school teachers from 11 school systems in Georgia and North Carolina. Ninety-eight secondary school teachers volunteered to participate in the study.

A district was defined as rural when it had a population of 30,000 or less, and an urban district was comprised of a school in a county with a population of 100,000 or more students. The participants were asked to complete two questionnaires. The MBI-ES was used in order to measure teacher burnout. The Sources of Stress Questionnaire (Borg & Riding, 1991) was divided into four parts: (a) pupil misbehavior, (b) poor working conditions, (c) poor staff relations, and (d) time pressures. Examinations of the ratings indicated a greater self-reported stress for urban versus rural schoolteachers. This was due to poor working conditions, inadequate salaries, poor staff relations, lack of a friendly environment among faculty members, and lack of support from the building administrator. The authors also indicated that self-reported stress resulting from pupil misbehavior and time pressures was significantly greater than stress associated with poor working conditions and poor staff relations in both rural and urban school teachers.

Other Pertinent Findings

Turnover/Attrition. According to Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, and Terhanian (1997) teacher turnover occurs when teachers are reassigned to other schools within the district, move to teaching positions in other districts, and leave public school teaching for other pursuits (e.g., attrition). Special education teachers have been found to have higher attrition rates in comparison to general educators (Billingsly, 1993). Teachers who work with students with behavior/emotional disabilities may be at the highest risk of leaving the classroom (Boomer & King, 1981).

Shortages. According to Billingsley and Cross (1991), a teacher shortage results from: (a) more teachers needed to serve increasing special education enrollments, (b) a decline in the number of special education teachers graduating from personnel

preparation programs over the last decade, (c) the number of special education graduates who do not assume teaching positions after graduation, and (d) attrition. According to the 20th annual report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA, teacher shortages in special education reflect both a quantity shortage of teachers and/or a quality shortage of teachers who are certified to fill vacant teaching positions throughout the United States (U. S. Department of Education, 1991-2001).

Excessive Paperwork. According to Zabel and Zabel (2001) excessive “paperwork” consisted of special educators complying with legal and regulatory requirements by writing large amounts of multiple Individual Education Plans (IEPs), behavioral contracts, and documentation as part of the responsibility of the special education teacher. Billingsley and Cross (1991) reported that excessive paperwork was cited by almost one third as a reason for special education teachers leaving the field. The problem may not be the paperwork itself, but that the paperwork prevents the teachers from engaging in meaningful teaching.

Summary

Previous related studies (Zabel & Zabel, 1983, 2001) suggest that special educators with more experience in the classroom and with additional professional training are at lower risk for teacher burnout and attrition. Zabel and Zabel (2001) reported that the mean amount of special education experience had increased from 5.3 to 11.0 years over a span of 19 years. A teachers’ feeling of accomplishment in working with students with special needs was related to both years of experience and amount of teacher preparation.

Teacher shortages and percentage of teachers who are fully certified in the areas of EBD, LD, and MR continues to be a concern across the nation. The highest percentages of unfilled special education teaching positions are in the certification category of EBD (Cavin, 1998). Special education teachers are more likely to leave the area of special education when they experience more problems when dealing with students and their challenging behaviors in and out of classrooms. Also, teachers that lacked training to work with students with challenging behaviors were more apt to leave the field of special education (Nelson, Maculan, Roberts, & Ohlund, 2001).

A special education teacher's caseload is determined by each student's placement and disability category. The number of students per teacher caseload indicates the minimum number of IEPs that are developed on a yearly basis and for which the teachers are responsible. This would not include Review of Placement/IEP meetings, which may be several meetings for each student on a caseload. Also, special education teachers are challenged by time-line demands of IEPs and documentation when complying with state and federal regulations. The excessive paperwork that special education teachers are confronted with continues to cause many teachers to feel overburdened in their jobs. Work by Abel (1999) and colleagues suggested that time pressures and poor working conditions were the best predictors of burnout for rural schoolteachers, and pupil misbehavior and poor working conditions were significant predictors of burnout among urban schoolteachers.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

Chapter one examined teacher shortages in the field of special education and concerns that school districts face in hiring qualified special educators. It also addressed the relationship between teacher attrition and special education, the phenomena of burnout in the workplace, and how interactional constructs affect people in their environment.

The literature reviewed in chapter two addressed major topics such as (1) definitions of stress and burnout, (2) previous related studies with research designs and instruments used, (3) results from the author's qualitative study, (4) Oklahoma caseload requirements, and (5) status of teacher shortages. Chapter three describes the methods and procedures followed in this study's examination of burnout among special educators.

Research Design

The design for this investigation was correlational descriptive, examining relationships among burnout and amount of teaching experience, types of teacher certification, number of students on caseload, and school setting. By using a quantitative research method, the researcher can identify relationships of these variables with special education teacher burnout (Embich, 2001, Zabel & Zabel, 1983, 2001).

Sampling

The participants ($N = 230$) in this study were certified teachers with at least three years of teaching experience in the area of special education who were working in the field at the time of data collection. They were based at urban and rural school districts

in a southwestern state. The sample was constructed using referrals from state directors of Special Services, which is a network of special education directors throughout the state.

The sample for the study was a purposive nonrandom sample from the population of special education teachers in the state. These special education teachers were asked questions in respect to their experience, type of certification, number of students on their caseload, and school sizes. Surveys were distributed in person by the researcher to the directors with self-addressed envelopes, so that the completed questionnaires would be mailed directly to the principal investigator. The directors then distributed the surveys to the teachers at their respective schools and participants mailed their completed surveys to the primary investigator.

Instrument Design

Burnout Measure.

The participants were asked to complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES, 1996), which was used to measure teacher burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The self-administered instrument measures burnout on three scales: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishment. The MBI-ES consisted of 22 statements reflecting personal feelings and attitudes about one's job conditions.

Emotional Exhaustion. The emotional exhaustion section included nine items describing feelings of fatigue, drainage of emotional energies, and tiredness that interfered with teachers' interactions with students. The emotional exhaustion sub scale

included statements such as, “I feel emotionally drained from my work” and “I feel frustrated by my job” (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Depersonalization. The depersonalization section examined negative and distant attitudes toward students and environmental settings. Perceptions about fulfilling their goals in helping students to learn in their school setting were also represented within the scale. The depersonalization sub scale included statements such as “I’ve become more callous toward people since I took this job” (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Personal Accomplishment. The personal accomplishment sub scale included eight items reflecting teachers’ perceptions of fulfilling their goals of helping students learn. The personal accomplishment sub scale included statements such as “I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.” Respondents indicated the frequency of their feelings about each item on a seven-point Likert type scale (i.e. Never=0; Every Day=6).

A higher degree of burnout was reflected in higher scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization sub scale, and lower scores on the personal accomplishment subscale. A lower degree of burnout was reflected in lower scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization sub scales and higher scores on the personal accomplishment sub scale (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Table 1 provides the numerical cut-off points to establish these ranges.

Demographic and Environmental Measures.

Participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire pertaining to their amount of experience, demographics, types of certifications, and teacher’s caseloads (see Appendix C). The questionnaire consisted of a 56-question survey based on a six-point

Likert scale and seven categorical variables, based on the information that was obtained in a previous qualitative study, (Goetzinger, 2001). These categorical variables were special education teacher experience, number of students on caseload, types of certifications attained, and type of school size.

The 56 item special education teacher questionnaire designed for this study was comprised of two sections: Section one addressed the participant's background and section two examined the participant's teaching environment. Section one was designed to collect data based on participant's (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) highest level of education, (d) teaching certification, and (e) experience in years working with students with special needs. Section two questions were designed to collect data based on the school environment including: (a) current teaching placement, (b) student caseload, (c) average number of meetings conducted per year, (d) administrative support-building principal, (e) type of teaching assignment, (f) types of disabilities of students being addressed in the classroom, (g) administrative support-special education, (h) parent relationships, (i) paperwork and (j) discipline. A six-point Likert scale measured the responses from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (6).

Procedures and Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in describing sets of data, serving as a tool to analyze the demographics and environmental supports. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the magnitude and effect of the relationships of the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to predict the relationships of burnout, as measured on the MBI-ES to the characteristics of the special educators in the study. Multiple regression was utilized to analyze collective and separate effects of two or more

independent variables on a dependent variable. Hierarchical multiple regression was used, so that the author was able to have control over which independent variable was input into the statistical computer program of *SPSS 12.0 for Windows* data analysis program.

Summary

A sample of 224 current full time special education teachers with a minimum of three years teaching experience participated in the study. Data were collected via a 56-question special education teacher survey based on a six-point Likert scale designed to examine demographic/environmental measures. In addition, the MBI-ES, which consisted of 22 statements reflecting personal feelings, was used to measure teacher burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) in the areas of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Pearson's correlation coefficient and a multiple regression analysis were used to examine the magnitude and effect of the analysis and to predict the relationships of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Out of a total of 300 surveys distributed, 230 (70.7 percent) completed surveys were returned during the nine weeks that served as the time frame for this study. Six surveys were not included in the final analysis because those participants were identified as Directors of school districts and to include their responses would create a discrepancy of certain items e.g., number of students on caseload, amount of yearly individualized educational plan meetings attended, and number of students on behavior intervention plans. The demographics for the sample are displayed in Table 5. Table 6 illustrates school size and teaching experience by special education teachers' certification.

The means, maximum values, minimum values, and standard deviations were calculated for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment experience. Years teaching special education, years teaching regular education, number of IEPs signed off, and number of students on participant's caseload that are fully included in the general classroom were also calculated for means, maximum values, minimum values, and standard deviations. The number of meetings conducted in one school year, number of students on caseloads with behavior intervention plans, and hours spent weekly on paperwork are presented in Table 7.

Table 5

Demographic Information of Sample

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender:		
Female	211	94.3
Male	12	5.2
Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	14	6.1
Asian	1	.4
African American	3	1.3
Caucasian	203	90.9
Hispanic	2	.9
School Size		
Rural	68	30.2
Urban	156	69.6
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelor's	69	30.4
Bachelor's plus one year	54	23.5
Master's	81	36.2
Master's plus additional years	17	8.3
Doctoral degree	2	1.3
Nationally Board Certified	11	4.8

Goetzinger, (2006).

Table 6

School Size and Teaching Experience by Special Education Teachers' Certification

	n	<u>School Size</u>		<u>Yrs. Special Education Teaching Experience</u>				<u>Total Yrs. Teaching Experience</u>			
		Rural	Urban	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Early Childhood	14	56.3	43.8	4	27	13.4	7.7	3	30	15.1	8.3
Special Early Childhood	22	33.3	66.7	4	30	13.8	8.8	3	30	14	9.0
Elementary Education	86	43.3	56.7	3	31	15.2	7.6	3	31	16.2	7.9
Secondary Education	30	35.5	64.5	4	31	14.9	8.0	4	31	16	7.9
Mild/Moderate	141	23.8	75.5	3	34	14.8	8.4	3	38	15.2	8.8
Severe/Profound	73	33.3	65.3	3	34	14.3	8.6	3	34	14.4	8.8
Learning Disability	156	30.6	69.4	3	34	16.0	7.9	3	38	16.6	8.2
Mentally retarded	131	31.3	68.7	3	34	16.6	7.9	3	38	17.1	8.2
Orthopedically Imp.	19	19	81	4	34	19.5	8.6	4	34	19.9	8.2
Emotionally Dist.	57	33.3	66.7	3	30	13.8	7.6	3	30	14.3	7.7

Table 6 (continued)

School Size and Teaching Experience by Special Education Teachers' Certification

	<u>School Size</u>			<u>Special Education Teaching Experience</u>				<u>Total Yrs. Teaching Experience</u>			
	n	Rural	Urban	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Autism	67	26.8	73.2	4	34	15	7.6	4	34	15.6	7.9
Hearing Impaired	9	12.5	87.5	7	27	13.5	7.2	4	27	12.8	8.7
Visually Impaired	9	25	75	8	30	20.8	6.7	5	30	20.8	7.6
Deaf	7	57.1	42.9	6	21	14.4	6.5	5	24	14.4	7.6
Multiple Disabilities	48	35.4	62.5	3	34	15.1	8.2	3	34	15	8.2
Other Health Impaired	111	32.5	67.5	3	34	15.6	8.1	3	38	16.3	8.5
Traumatic Brain Injury	50	32.7	67.3	3	34	16	8.6	3	34	16.5	8.8

Table 7

Independent Variables' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Emotional Exhaustion	3.0	50.0	25.97*	11.07
Depersonalization	0.0	23.0	5.91**	4.66
Personal Accomplishment	0.0	28.0	9.60***	6.28
Years Teaching Special Education	3.0	34.0	14.83	8.14
Years Teaching Regular Education	3.0	38.0	15.30	8.47
Number of IEPS sign off	0.0	50.0	19.76	8.18
Number of students on participant's caseload that are full time in general education classroom	0.0	40.0	5.61	6.52
Number of meetings (IEP/MEET/BIP/MD) conducted in one year for caseload	0.0	106.0	27.94	15.71
Number of students on caseload with BIP	0.0	29.0	3.64	4.69
Hours spent weekly on paperwork	1.0	90.0	7.68	9.56

Note. IEP = Individualized Education Plan; MEET = Multidisciplinary Evaluation

And Eligibility Team Summary; BIP = Behavior Intervention Plan; MD = Manifestation

Determination. * indicates moderate level of emotional exhaustion.

** indicates low level of depersonalization.

*** indicates high sense of personal accomplishment according to Maslach, C., & Jackson, S., 1996.

Correlation

Zero order correlations among burnout and years of teaching special education, years of teaching regular education, number of students on caseload, number of IEPs signed off, number of students that are fully included in the general classroom that are on a teacher's caseload, number of meetings, time spent on paperwork, and number of students on a behavior intervention plan are reported in Table 8. Correlations between years teaching special and general education and number of students on a teacher's caseload indicates that as the number of years of teaching experience increased more students are on teacher's caseload. There was no relationship between years of teaching special or general education with their scores on the three measures of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

Relationships between depersonalization and number of IEP meetings were positively correlated. This would be consistent with the number of meetings being conducted and the teacher's possible negative attitude toward the student. There was a positive association between years of teaching special education and number of IEP students on a teacher's caseload and number of students that are included into the general classroom. This would be consistent that teachers with more years of special education teaching experience may have an increased number of students on their caseloads and more of these students may be included in general education classrooms. There was also a positive relationship between years of teaching general education and number of students on teachers' caseloads that are included into the general classroom. This reflects that as teachers have more years of experience in general education they may include more students into general education classes that are on their caseload. An alternative

explanation is statistically that if teachers have a higher number of students on their caseloads, then they are maybe likely to have a higher number of students that are included into the general education classroom.

There were also positive correlations between number of students on caseload and number of students on caseload that are included into the general education classroom with number of students on behavior intervention plans. This may indicate that as the number of students on a teacher's caseload increases, more of the students that are on behavior intervention plans will be fully included into general education classes. Number of IEPs signed off on by the special education teacher was positively correlated to number of students that are fully included into the general classroom that are on the teacher's caseload and number of meetings conducted by the teacher. This reflects that the number of students that are fully included into the general curriculum may result in an increase in the number of meetings and the time spent on paperwork. Relationships between emotional exhaustion and time on paperwork were positively correlated. This indicates that the more time special education teachers spend on paperwork the more they may become emotionally exhausted.

Table 8

Zero-order Correlations among Burnout, Teaching Experience, and Teacher Caseload Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Emotional Exhaustion	---	.45**	.44**	.08	.08	.07	.12	-.01	.13	-.06	.18**
2. Depersonalization		---	.44**	-.04	-.03	.07	.11	.03	.19**	.11	.08
3. Personal Accomplishment			---	.04	.06	.05	.01	-.02	.01	-.03	.06
4. Years Teaching Special Education				---	.97**	.23**	-.03	.17*	.06	.00	.05
5. Years Teaching Regular Education					---	.21**	-.01	.16*	.08	.01	.04
6. Number of students on caseload						---	.04	.52**	-.03	.24**	.09
7. Number of IEPs signed off							---	.16*	.49**	-.02	-.09
8. Number of students in general classroom								--	.09	.28**	.16*
9. Number of meetings									---	.04	.08
10. Number of students on caseload with BIP										---	.07
11. Time on paperwork											---

Note: Number of students in general classrooms consists of students on IEP's that are fully included.

Note: * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Experience and Influence on Burnout

Research question one investigated the number of years of regular and special education teaching experience related to special education teachers' burnout. The Pearson product correlation coefficient for emotional exhaustion was non-significant. The correlation coefficient for depersonalization was also non-significant. Lastly, the correlation coefficient for personal accomplishment was non-significant as well.

Teacher Caseload and Influence on Burnout

Three separate regression analyses were run to investigate the combined influence on burnout of the number of IEPs special education teachers sign off on as the special education teacher (IEPSIGNOFF), the number of students on the teachers' caseloads that are full time in the general education classroom (MAINSTUDS), the number of meetings conducted in an annual school year (YEARLYIEPS), the number of students on their caseloads that are on behavior intervention plans (STBIPS), and the average amount of time spent weekly on special education paperwork (TIMEPAPER). A multiple regression was run with Emotional Exhaustion as the outcome variable and IEPSIGNOFF, MAINSTUDS, YEARLYIEPS, STBIPS, and TIMEPAPER as the predictor variables. Results of the analysis indicated that the overall model was significant with $F(6, 197) = 2.534, p = .022$ reflecting significant proportions of variance in the dependent variable Emotional Exhaustion. Findings of the unique variance explain that teachers who spend more time on paperwork tend to become emotionally drained and fatigued from their jobs.

Table 9

Multiple Regression for Emotional Exhaustion and Teacher Caseload (N = 224)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1			
IEP Signed Off On	.164	.105	.126
Time Spent On Paperwork	.234	.081	.204 *
Students on BIP	-.196	.180	-.080
Yearly IEP	.030	.055	.043
Students fully included in general education classroom	-.167	.119	-.120

Note: $R^2 = .07$.

IEP = Individualized Education Plan; BIP = Behavior Intervention Plan;

* $p < .05$.

A multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between Depersonalization and special education teachers' caseloads. The multiple regression between the dependent variable of Depersonalization (DEP) and special education teachers caseloads with the number of IEPs they signed off on as the special education teacher (IEPSIGNOFF), the number of students on the teachers' caseload that were fully included into the general classroom (MAINSTUDS), the number of meetings conducted in an annual school year (YEARLYIEPS), the number of students on their caseloads that are on behavior intervention plans (STBIPS), and the average amount of time spent weekly on special education paperwork (TIMEPAPER). With a statistical significance of

$p < .05$, the analysis indicated that teacher caseload did not statistically have an impact on DEP. Results of the analysis indicated that the overall model was not significant with $F(6, 195) = 1.350, p = .237, F \text{ of } 1.350$. According to the data, there was no relationship between special education teacher caseload and the dependent variable of DEP regarding teacher burnout.

A third multiple regression was run entering Personal Accomplishment as the dependent variable with aspects of special education teachers responsibilities. A multiple regression was run entering PA as the dependent variable and IEPSIGNOFF, MAINSTUDS, YEARLYIEPS, STBIPS, and TIMEPAPER, as the independent variables. Results of the analysis reflected that the overall model was not significant with $F(6, 197) = .573, p = .751$.

Research question three examined the number of students teachers had on their caseloads related to special education teacher burnout. The analysis reflected that the Pearson correlation for burnout and number of students per caseload was non-significant. The Pearson correlation coefficient for emotional exhaustion was $r = .118, p = .083$. Depersonalization was also non-significant at $r = .107, p = .120$. The correlation coefficient for personal accomplishment was non-significant at $r = .014, p = .842$.

Relationships of School Size to Burnout

Research question four addressed whether school size is related to special education teacher burnout. An independent t- test for means between the two groups was run to determine whether there was a group difference between the means regarding rural or urban school sizes. The non-directional hypothesis was that there were no differences between rural and urban school sizes with burnout. For Depersonalization, the t-score

was not statistically significant ($M = -.150$, $SD = .712$) $t = -.212$, $p = .833$. Personal Accomplishment, the t-score was not statistically significant, ($M = .735$, $SD = .950$) $t = .774$, $p = .440$. Emotional Exhaustion was not statistically significant, ($M = .672$, $SD = .1.66$) $t = .405$, $p = .130$.

Teacher Certification and Influence on Burnout

Based on the scoring system with the MBI-ES, the cut off points for each subscale are the following. In the subscale of Depersonalization, the scores for High frequency are 14 or over, Moderate is 9-13, and Low 0-8. For Personal Accomplishment, the scores for High frequency are 0-30, Moderate 31-36, and Low 37 or over. For the Personal Accomplishment a low score subscale will indicate high Personal Accomplishment. Regarding Emotional Exhaustion the score in the High frequency range are 27 or over, Moderate 17-26, and Low 0-16. Table 10 illustrates the minimum, maximum, and standard mean scores and standard deviations regarding special education teachers' certification in the study. Based on the type of teacher certification, it appears that regardless of the credential, that teachers report low levels of Depersonalization and appear to express relatively comfortable levels of Personal Accomplishment.

Table 10

Minimum, Maximum, Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Special Education Teachers' Certification

	n	<u>DEP</u>				<u>PA</u>				<u>EE</u>			
		Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Early Childhood	14	0.0	12.0	5.6	3.8	1.0	18.0	8.3	5.9	11.0	45.0	28.5	11.9
Special Early Childhood	22	0.0	20.0	6.1	5.4	0.0	28.0	7.8	6.6	6.0	48.0	26.0	13.1
Elementary Education	86	0.0	23.0	6.0	4.8	0.0	28.0	9.2	6.3	5.0	50.0	26.5	11.5
Secondary Education	30	0.0	23.0	7.2	6.7	0.0	25.0	9.9	6.6	3.0	47.0	24.0	11.1
Mild/Moderate	141	0.0	23.0	6.0	5.0	0.0	28.0	9.4	6.3	3.0	50.0	25.7	11.6
Severe/Profound	73	0.0	20.0	5.1	4.6	0.0	28.0	9.3	6.5	3.0	48.0	24.1	12.3
Learning Disability	156	0.0	20.0	5.9	4.6	0.0	28.0	9.9	6.2	6.0	48.0	26.17	10.7
Mentally retarded	131	0.0	20.0	5.8	4.7	0.0	28.0	9.4	6.1	3.0	48.0	25.6	11.3
Orthopedically Imp.	19	0.0	12.0	6.2	4.3	1.0	28.0	11.4	7.3	8.0	45.0	26.9	11.4
Emotionally Dist.	57	0.0	16.0	6.0	4.3	0.0	28.0	10.1	6.6	6.0	46.0	24.9	11.8

Note. DEP= Depersonalization; PA = Personal Accomplishment; EE = Emotional Exhaustion; Imp = Impaired

Table 10 (continued)

Minimum, Maximum, Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Special Education Teacher's Certification

	n	<u>DEP</u>				<u>PA</u>				<u>EE</u>			
		Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Autism	67	0.0	20.0	5.2	4.7	0.0	28.0	9.8	6.1	3.0	50.0	27.6	11.4
Hearing Impaired	9	0.0	9.0	4.7	3.1	4.0	14.0	8.3	4.1	7.0	38.0	25.4	10.4
Visually Impaired	9	0.0	12.0	4.9	3.5	5.0	21.0	11.2	5.3	3.0	38.0	22.8	12.1
Deaf	7	0.0	7.0	2.7	2.6	4.0	16.0	9.4	4.5	7.0	38.0	19.4	10.6
Multiple Disabilities	48	0.0	20.0	5.5	4.7	0.0	28.0	9.6	6.8	3.0	48.0	26.5	12.2
Other Health Impaired	111	0.0	23.0	6.1	5.1	0.0	28.0	9.2	6.2	6.0	48.0	26.1	11.0
Traumatic Brain Injury	50	0.0	20.0	5.5	5.0	0.0	28.0	9.3	6.3	7.0	48.0	26.4	11.6

Note. IEP = Individualized Education Plan; MEET = Multidisciplinary Evaluation

and Eligibility Team Summary; BIP = Behavior Intervention Plan; MD = Manifestation

Summary

Results indicated that neither the amount of teaching experience, types of special education certification, or school size were statistically significant in relationships to degrees of burnout. Number of students per teacher caseload had statistical relevance with the MBI-ES subscale of Emotional Exhaustion. Implication of these findings suggests that teachers who spend more time on paperwork for students on their caseloads tend to become more emotionally drained with their jobs.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between burnout among special education teachers and (a) teaching experience, (b) types of certifications, (c) teacher's caseload, and (d) school size. According to the Maslach's model, burnout symptoms may exist with teachers in the work place related to feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or a reduced sense of personal accomplishment achievement (Maslach, 1981). Emotional Exhaustion is a fatigued feeling that develops when educators believe that they are unable to give enough of themselves to students. Depersonalization is a way educators display distant or cold attitudes towards their students. Lack of Personal Accomplishment is a way where educators no longer feel as though they are effective and contributing to student development.

The findings from this study reflect the fact that the role of the special education teacher's job continues to be challenging in the area of excessive paperwork (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Embich, 2001). Another finding indicated that teachers working with students with severe/profound mental retardation reported a higher rate of depersonalization or negative attitudes towards their students. According to Katsiyannis, Zhang, and Conroy (2003), there is a nationwide shortage of teachers working with students with mental retardation. Additionally, there are an increasing number of teachers of students with mental retardation retiring each year.

Discussion of Findings Related to Amount of Teaching Experience

Research Question 1. Is the number of years of teaching experience related to special education teachers' burnout?

Participants provided information regarding years they have spent teaching students with special needs and also the number of years they have taught in a general school setting. Although this study did not empirically establish a relationship between burnout and the amount of special education experience or number of years worked in general education, the mean amount of special education experience did increase as time progressed over other studies (Zabel & Zabel, 1983, 2001). Table 11 illustrates that this study had a higher mean amount of special education experience from previous studies. This may be a reflection of the length of time from the implementation of IDEA in 1975, which mandated special education services to students with disabilities.

Table 11

Amount of Special Education Teaching Experience

Year	Number	Mean Years	Standard Deviation
1983	601	5.34	4.58
2001	300	11.00	7.64
2001	301	11.00	7.60
2006	224	15.23	8.30

Embich, (2001); Zabel & Zabel, (1983); Zabel & Zabel, (2001); Goetzinger, (2006).

As a result of these findings, it was concluded that the relationship between experience and the three subscales of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment) did not contribute significantly to burnout for teachers in this study. This trend was also reported by Zabel and Zabel (2001) in Kansas where there were no significant correlations established between the amount of special education teaching experience and burnout. For teachers to be participants in this study they needed a minimum of three years of special education teaching experience; therefore, most teachers in this sample may have remained teaching in the area of special education longer than participants in previous burnout research.

Discussion of Findings Related to Types of Teachers' Certifications

Research Question 2. Are the types of special education teachers' certification related to burnout?

A multiple regression was run to determine whether different types of teacher certification were related with special education teacher burnout. Results of the analysis reflected that the overall model was not significant, however, the model reflected that teachers with the certification of Severe Profound did tend to have more depersonalized attitudes toward their students with special needs. There were no relationships with other certifications, therefore no comparisons were done.

Billingsley and Cross (1991) conducted a survey to investigate why certain special education teachers chose to remain in teaching, but left their special education assignments. A stratified random sample of 633 was drawn from the Virginia Department of Education personnel files in order to identify special educators who were endorsed in areas of special education. The analysis was based on 286 teachers who were

former special education teachers that were currently teaching in the regular classroom. The authors reported that teachers who were leaving the area of special education blamed stress in working with students with severe disabilities, as their reason for departure. According to the authors, teachers working with this particular population encountered problems such as too much time working with the same students and encountered a lack of student progress. These problems may account for the depersonalized attitudes found in the present study.

Discussion of Findings Related to Special Educator's Caseload

Research Question 3. Is the current number of students per caseload related to special education teachers' burnout?

The findings in this study regarding the number of students per special education teacher caseload is consistent with findings in other studies in how excessive paperwork affects special education attrition (Adams, 2001; Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Metzke, 1988). Special educators reported that higher caseloads resulted in more paperwork, which places additional demands on their jobs and students receive less time for instruction. Another concern of special educators is the frustration that is tied with paperwork requirements in order to be in compliance with federal and state regulations (Adams, 2001). Adams study confirms that the number of students on special education teachers' caseloads affects why some special education teachers leave their special education assignments.

Adams (2001) surveyed 51 special education teachers in Utah to address why these teachers left the field of special education to become general education teachers. The results reflected that 47% of these teachers were very dissatisfied and 30% somewhat

dissatisfied with the non-instructional aspects associated with special education teaching positions. The non-instructional aspects of teachers consisted of paperwork, student discipline, lack of support from other educators, caseload or class size, legal issues, students with special needs placements, and attending meetings. The main concern of the teachers surveyed was frustration with the time demands of paperwork requirements that is part of special education.

Billingsley and Cross (1991) reported that excessive paperwork was the major reason for special educators who left the field of special education and transferred to general education. The authors also found that stress among special education teachers was attributed to excessive paperwork and heavy caseloads. Lastly, paperwork itself may not be the problem, but when the amount of paperwork prevents teachers from completing other tasks it becomes an obstacle that frustrates special education teachers.

Discussion of Findings Related to School Size

Research Question 4. Is school size related to special education teacher burnout?

To determine if school size was related to special education burnout a t-test was conducted for independent means. The Pearson correlation reflected that there was no significant difference between school size and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The t-test indicated that there were no significant differences between rural and urban school sizes and burnout; therefore there was no significance between school size and special education teacher burnout.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research Implications

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between special education teacher burnout and teaching experience, types of teacher certification,

number of students per caseload, and school size. Since this study utilized self-reported data by school districts throughout a southwestern state, it reduces the generalizability of the study, as this sample may not be representative of special education teachers in urban, suburban, or rural areas in other states. The topic of burnout as measured in this study may have not accurately captured why teachers leave the field of special education. Additional research needs to be conducted with more school districts in other states to examine a variety of special education programs, which may affect teacher attrition.

As with any research, a number of threats may have impacted the internal validity of the study. The federal 2001 No Child Left Behind Act is the law that requires that all teachers be “highly qualified” in the subjects they teach by 2006. Due to the impact of this mandate, teachers may have needed to attain additional certification or education, which could have affected the attitudes of teachers who responded to this survey, since they may view this requirement as burdensome. Also, some research participants dropped out due to lack of interest in completing the questionnaire, thus failing to return the survey to the principal investigator. Maintaining the participants’ interest in completing the instrument was beyond the researcher’s control, nonetheless every attempt was made to construct the questionnaire in a format that facilitated ease of completion.

Another limitation of the study was that special education teachers had to complete paperwork to participate in this study. Since these teachers report that the excessive amount of time they have to spend on paperwork in their jobs is a major reason they leave the field, making them complete additional paperwork may have unduly influenced the results. Also, this study’s questionnaires allowed special educators to share their experiences from the entire school year, which may have negatively impacted

their perceptions of how much paperwork is required within one school year. The very teachers that are burned out might also be the teachers that chose not to complete the survey, therefore the sample may represent biased findings.

Finally, the present study was implemented towards the end of a school year, which is a demanding time for all teachers. Considering that the data were self-reported at the end of the school year by all special education teachers in the study, the reliability and validity of responses could be questioned. Realizing that teacher demands at the end of the school year do exist, the findings may not adequately represent the views of special education teachers in this area.

However, the findings of this study, do reflect that time spent on paperwork is related to teacher burnout. An approach to prevent burnout and alleviate teacher fatigue would be to improve technological support available, or provide additional assistance in completing the required paperwork. User-friendly computerized IEP programs can assist teachers with the increased paperwork and allow them to be in full compliance with federal and state requirements in special education. Also, states should provide professional development opportunities with school districts in instructing teachers how to use the computerized IEP programs.

Although the majority of the findings were non-significant, this could be viewed as a positive outlook for the state of Oklahoma in the area of special education. The special education teachers in this study had a higher sense of personal accomplishment in the work place compared to the normed sample of the MBI-ES, (1996). If burnout is not a problem or at least a major cause of shortages, other factors need to be explored including

recruiting teachers into the field and movement of teachers within and out of special education.

Of the teachers within the sample, 50% had received additional training beyond their bachelor's degrees. Because these teachers are more focused in the various areas of special education and they tend to have more experience in the field, they have the tools to be successful when dealing with day-to-day concerns. More research is needed to examine why teachers choose to stay in the area of special education.

Additional studies should investigate support programs currently available in school districts. This could be provided with additional qualitative data that query the type of administrative support, specific resources within the work environment, and recognizing special education models within schools. An examination of current support systems in school districts throughout the state may help prevent further attrition in this crucial and growing area of education.

REFERENCES

- Abel, M. H. & Sewell, J. (1999). Stress and burnout in rural and urban secondary school teachers. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 92, 5, 287-296.
- Adams, E. (2001). A closer look at special education teachers who transfer to general education, Unpublished master's thesis, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.
- Bensky, J. M., Shaw, S. F., Gouse, A. S., Bates, H., Dixon, B., & Beane, W. E. (1980). Public Law 94-142 and stress: A problem for educators. *Exceptional Children*, 47, 24-29.
- Berkeley, T. R., & Lipinski, T. A. (1991). An inquiry into rural special education: A discussion with Judy Schrag, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, United States Department of Education, *Rural Education Quarterly*, 10 (4), 18-20.
- Billingsley, B. S., & Cross, L. H. (1991). General education teachers' interest in special education teaching: Deterrents, incentives and training needs. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 14, 162-168.
- Billingsley, B. S., & Cross, L. H. (1992). Predictors of commitment, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching: A comparison of general and special educators. *The Journal of Special Education*, 25, 453-471.
- Billingsley, B. S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition in special and general education: A critical review of the literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 27, 137-174.

- Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H., Bobbitt, S. A., & Terhanian, G. (1997). The shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 21*, 1-21.
- Boomer, L., & King, T. (1981). Teaching identification of behavior problems among junior high school students: A preliminary study. *Behavioral Disorder, 6*, 219-222.
- Borg M. G., & Riding, R. J. (1991). Towards a model for the determinants of occupational stress among schoolteachers. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 6*, 355-373.
- Bornfield, G., Hall, N., Hall, P., & Hoover, J. H. (1997). Leaving rural special education positions: it's a matter of roots. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 16*, 30-37.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1976). The experimental ecology of education. *Educational Researcher, 5*, 5-15.
- Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1993). Understanding special education attrition: A conceptual model and implications for teacher educators. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 16*, 270-282.
- Cavin, C. (1998). Maintaining sanity in an insane classroom: How a teacher of students with emotional behaviors can keep from becoming an emotionally disturbed teacher. *Education and Treatment of Children, 21*, 370-384.
- Center, D., & Callaway, J. (1999). Self-reported job stress and personality in teachers of students with emotional and behavior disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 25*, 41-51.
- Cole, J. T., & Leeper, L. H. (1995). What a long, strange trip its been. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 14* (2), 53-56.

- Council for Exceptional Children, (2001, June/July). Special educators share their thoughts on special education teaching conditions. *CEC Today*, 5 (9), 1, 5.
- Embich, J. L. (2001). The relationship of secondary special education teachers' roles and factors that lead to professional burnout. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 24, 58-69.
- Farber, B. A. (1991). Crisis in education. Stress and burnout in the American teacher. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Freudenberger, H.J. (1975). The staff burnout syndrome in alternative institutions. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 12, 72-83.
- Fridman, I. A. (2000). Burnout in teachers: shattered dreams of impeccable professional performance. *Psychotherapy in practice*, 56, 595-606.
- Goetzinger, E. K. (2001). Burnout among special education teachers: Do experience, certification, caseload, and school setting make a difference? Unpublished manuscript.
- Gold, Y. (1984). The factorial validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a sample of California elementary and junior high school classroom teachers. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 44, 1009-1016.
- Helge, D. (1984). The state of the art in rural special education. *Exceptional Children*, 50, 294-305.
- Hiebert, B., & Farber, L. (1984). Teacher stress: A literature survey with a few surprises. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 9, 14-27.
- Iwanicki, E. F., & Schwab, R. L. (1981). A cross-validated study of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 41, 1167-1174.

- Katsiyannis, A., Zhang, D., & Conroy, M. A. (2003). Availability of special education teachers: trends and issues. *Remedial and Special Education, 24*, 246-253.
- Lauritzen, P. (1986). Comprehensive assessment of service needs for special education. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Lawrenson, G. M., McKinnon, A. F. (1982). A survey of classroom teacher of the emotionally disturbed: Attrition and burnout factors. *Behavioral Disorders, 8*, 41-49.
- Leiter, M. P. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. Professional burnout: *Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 237-250). Washington D. C.: Taylor and Francis.
- Lemke, J. C. (1995). Attracting and retaining special educators in rural and small schools: Issues and solutions. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 1* (2), 25-30.
- Marrs, L. W. (1984). A bandwagon without music: Preparing rural educators. *Exceptional Children, 50*, 334-342.
- Maslach, C. (1976). Burned-out. *Human Behavior, 5*, 16-22.
- Maslach, C. (1981). Burnout: A social psychological analysis. In J. W. Jones (Ed.), *The burnout syndrome*. Park Ridge, IL: London House Press.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S.E. (1979). The measurement of experienced burnout. Berkeley: University of California, Department of Psychology.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behavior, 2*, 99-113.
- Maslach, C. & Jackson, S. E. (1993). Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual. (2nd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, N. M. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*. (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslach C., & Leiter, M. P. (1997). *The Truth About Burnout*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C. & Schaufeli. (1993). Historical and conceptual development of burnout. *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research*. Washington, D.C. : Taylor & Francis.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). *Annual Review of Psychology*. 52, 397-422.
- Metzke, L. K. (1988). A study of the causes of teacher attrition in regular and special education in Wisconsin (Doctoral dissertation, Marquette University, WI, 1988). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 50, 42A.
- Miller, M. D., Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1999). Factors that predict teachers staying in, leaving, or transferring from the special education classroom. *Exceptional Children*, 65, 201-218.
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education. (1990, May). Special education faces a mounting crisis: How to recruit, train, and hold on to qualified teachers and related services personnel. *Liaison Bulletin*. Washington D.C.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1990). *Digest of education statistics*. Washington, D. C. Author.

- Nelson, J. R., Maculan, A., Roberts, M. L. & Ohlund, B. J. (2001). Sources of occupational stress for teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 9, 123-130.
- Nichols, A. S., & Sosnowsky. (2002). Burnout among special education teachers in self-contained cross-categorical classrooms. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 25, 71-86.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Office of Special Education Programs. (2002). Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. Washington, DC: U. S. Office of Special Education Programs.
- Office of Special Education Programs. (2002). Beginning special educators: Characteristics, qualifications, and experiences. Web site:
<http://www.spense.org/results/html>.
- Oklahoma State Department of Education, (2006). State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule Beginning 2005-2006. Web site:
<http://www.sde.state.ok.us/pro/salary.html>.
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma State Department of Education. (2002). Teacher Supply and Demand Report.
- Sack, J. L. (1998, April 29). Special educators fault workload. *Education Week on the Web* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1998/33cec.h17> [1998, Oct. 12].
- Singer, J. D. (1992). Are special educators' career paths special? Results from a 13-year longitudinal study. *Exceptional Children*, 59, 262-279.

- Smith-Davis, J., & Billingsley, B. (1993). The supply/demand puzzle. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 16, (3), 205-220.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census. (2001). Census Bureau regions and divisions with state PIPS codes. Website: http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, (1991-2001). Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, D. C.
- United States Office of Education, Office of Special Education. (1995). Seventeenth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Washington D.C. U. S. Department of Education.
- Zabel M. K. & Zabel, R. H. (1983). Burnout among special education teachers: The role of experience, training, and age. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 4, 255-259.
- Zabel, R. H., & Zabel, M. K. (2001). Revisiting burnout among special education teachers: Do age, experience, and preparations still matter? *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 24, 128-139.

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form for Research Being Conducted

Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

This document is an informed consent form to participate in a research project titled Burnout Among Special Educators: Do Experience, Certification, Caseload, and School Size Make a Difference? This project is being conducted by Eleanor K. Goetzinger of the University of Oklahoma and is part of a doctoral requirement.

I am examining the effects of experience, certification, caseload, and school size regarding the burnout factor of special educators. Burnout is a process, not an event, which begins in perceived stress afflicting the individual. Knowing that in the public school setting there is a definite shortage of special educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This project is designed to examine the satisfaction and frustration of special education teachers who are at different stages in their careers, who are in different certification areas, and who are in school districts of different sizes.

If you decide to participate in this project, you will be asked to participate in completing two questionnaires that will last approximately fifteen minutes each. Completing and returning the questionnaires will be taken as evidence of your willingness to participate and your consent to have the information used for the purpose of this study. These questionnaires are numbered to ensure anonymity and so that each questionnaire may be compared with other teachers completing the same surveys.

I see no foreseeable risks of participation in this project for you. Your participation will help special educators to learn what factors may contribute to burnout during their teaching career. You may gain insight from participating in the study through examining your concerns and issues that may affect burnout among special educators.

Your participation in this project is strictly voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. You may withdraw at any time without penalty as well. All information from this project will be kept in a secure location by the principal investigator, and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the investigation.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at: Phone: (405) 748-5368, or my University supervisor Dr. David Lovett at phone (405) 325-5974. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Oklahoma's office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757.

Eleanor K. Goetzinger, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate, Special Education

CONSENT STATEMENT

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Statement of the Problem:

Although attrition of special education teachers can be attributed to many factors, there has been an ongoing concern about the role of professional burnout. Analysis of relationships between measures of burnout and teachers experience, certification status, caseload, and school setting affect the special educator in their personal accomplishment within their work.

Interview Instrument:

1. Counting this school year, how many years in total (including part-time) have you worked in the public school system?
2. How many of those years, have you been working with students receiving special education or related service?
3. What academic degrees do you have?
4. In what areas are you certified?
5. What title best describes your current position within your school?
6. During this school year, where do you work with students with disabilities?
7. During this school year, how many students are currently on your caseload?
8. During this school year, what type of disabilities are you serving at this time?
9. What type of public school system best describes your current teaching setting?
Rural, urban, suburban
10. Have you ever taught special education in another setting? If so, how was it as far as workload in comparison to the other setting?
11. Is teaching special education your primary job?
12. Any additional hours worked outside of teaching special education?
13. In what areas are you certified?
14. What title best describes your current position within your school?

15. During this school year, where do you work with students with disabilities?
16. During this school year, how many students are currently on your caseload?
17. During this school year, what type of disabilities are you serving at this time?
18. What type of public school system best describes your current teaching setting?
Rural, urban, suburban
19. Have you ever taught special education in another setting? If so, how was it as far as workload in comparison to the other setting?
20. Is teaching special education your primary job?
21. Any additional hours worked outside of teaching special education?
22. Estimate how much time you spend on different aspects of your job? How much time per day do you estimate that you work directly with students?
23. How much per day do you estimate that you work on paperwork?
24. How much time per day do you estimate that you give to other non- teaching tasks?
25. Do you feel as though your efforts to teach students with disabilities are supportive by administration? Please explain.
26. Do you feel as though your efforts to teach students with disabilities are supportive by regular educators in your school? Please explain.
27. Do you feel as though the parents of the students with disabilities are supportive of you?
28. Within your geographical area, are there effective transitional services for students who are disabled?
29. Do you feel that you have been properly trained for your position? If not, why? Please explain.
30. Is there any training offered in professional development that can help you minimize the stress level in your position?

APPENDIX C

Special Education Teacher Questionnaire

Background

1. What is your gender?

Male1

Female2

2. Which best describes your ethnicity? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

American Indian or Alaskan Native1

Asian2

Black or African American3

Caucasian4

Hispanic5

3. Which best describes your school size?

Rural-a population of 25,000 or less

Urban-a population of 25,001 or more

Rural1

Urban2

4. What state do you live in? _____

5. Counting this school year, how many years in total (including part-time) have you worked in the public or private school setting? _____ Years

6. Counting this school year, how many years have you been working with students receiving special education or related services? _____ Years

7. What is the highest level of education you have completed? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

Bachelor's degree.....1

At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's, but not a

Graduate degree.....2

Master's degree.3

Education specialist or professional diploma based on course work past a Master's degree4

Doctoral degree5

Nationally Board Certified6

8. Which of the following credentials do you have to work with children with disabilities? CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ON EACH LINE.

	Yes	No
a. Emergency credential.....	1	2
b. Special education credential or endorsement (for more than one disability category).....	1	2
c. General education credential.....	1	2
d. Speech/language license.....	1	2
e. Alternative certification	1	2
f. Other professional license, credential, or Endorsement (Please Specify): _____	1	2

9. Do you have certifications in the following areas? CIRCLE "YES" ON EACH NUMBER LINE THAT APPLIES WITH YOUR STATUS.

Early childhood.....	Yes
Early childhood special education.....	Yes
Elementary education	Yes
Secondary education	Yes
Mild/Moderate disabilities	Yes
Severe/Profound disabilities	Yes
Specific Learning Disabilities.....	Yes
Mental Retardation.....	Yes
Orthopedic Impairments.....	Yes
Emotional disturbance.....	Yes
Autism.....	Yes
Hearing Impairment.....	Yes
Visually Impairment.....	Yes
Deaf-Blindness.....	Yes
Multiple Disabilities	Yes
Other Health Impairments.....	Yes
Traumatic Brain Injury.....	Yes

10. What is your job title? _____

11. Which of the following best describes your teaching assignment in this school?
CIRCLE ONLY ONE NUMBER.

- Resource room.....1
Self-contained.....2
Inclusion3
Alternative education.....4
Home based teacher.....5
Consultation.....6

12. How many grade levels do you teach? _____

13. How many students do you teach daily? _____

14. How many students do you serve on a consulting basis? (“monitored IEPs”) _____

15. As a special educator, how many IEPs do you sign off as a special education teacher on the IEP? _____

16. How many students on your caseload are fully mainstreamed in the general classroom? _____

17. Approximately how many IEP/MEETS/Reevaluations/ Behavior Intervention Plans/Manifestation Determination meetings will you conduct in one annual year?

18. How many students that you serve are on behavior intervention plans? _____

19. The average amount of time I spend on special education paperwork weekly.

20. How much time are you given per day for planning? _____

21. There is support or collaboration among fellow educators in your work place.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

22. Do you have an adult in the classroom (teacher assistant, paraprofessional)? _____

23. How much time are they in your classroom? _____
Per Day? _____
Per Week? _____

24. Do they provide effective support for you? _____

25. I have special education administrative support.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

26. I have general administrative support.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

27. Building administrators in my school are knowledgeable of special education policies and legal requirements.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

28. Parents/guardians of my students are generally supportive.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

29. What percentage of parents support my discipline, plans, or programs? _____

30. What percentage of parents attends meetings? _____

31. I am responsible for teaching more than one subject in a class period.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

32. I have students with various disabilities on my caseload.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

33. My job requires too much paperwork.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

34. My job is challenging due to legal requirements, e.g., confidentiality.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

35. There are consistent school-wide discipline practices.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. My duties outside of the classroom (lunch, recess, bus duty) are similar or equal to the general educators at my school.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

37. I am teaching with adequate resources and materials.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

38. Most of the parents I work with have realistic expectations for their children.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

39. The students I teach are confident that they can learn.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

40. My class schedule is consistent throughout the year.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

41. There is coordination between agencies serving my students.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

42. There is structure in my classroom even though students with cross categorical disabilities are being taught in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

43. I am satisfied with the intellectual challenge of my job.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

44. Being a special education teacher is an important part of who I am.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

45. I worry about school problems when at home.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

46. My sleeping habits have been affected by my job.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

47. I have sought medical attention due to the effects of my job.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

48. I plan on continuing in my present position next year.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

49. I plan on pursuing other options in education during the next three years.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

50. I plan on leaving the field of education in the next three years.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

51. I am contemplating on moving to another state because of financial incentives.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

52. Overall, I am satisfied with teaching special education.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

53. What could your administrators do to show support for you/your program?

54. What number and type of students am I comfortable working with? _____

55. If I could change one aspect of my job, it would be: _____

56. What aspects of my teaching could use improvement?

APPENDIX D

Maslach Survey

Educators Survey

HOW OFTEN:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

HOW OFTEN
0 - 6

Statements:

1. _____ I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. _____ I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. _____ I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. _____ I can easily understand how my students feel about things.
5. _____ I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.
6. _____ Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
7. _____ I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.
8. _____ I feel burned out from my work.
9. _____ I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
10. _____ I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
11. _____ I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
12. _____ I feel very energetic.
13. _____ I feel frustrated by my job.
14. _____ I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
15. _____ I don't really care what happens to some students.
16. _____ Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
17. _____ I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.
18. _____ I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.
19. _____ I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
20. _____ I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
21. _____ In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
22. _____ I feel students blame me for some of their problems.

(Administrative use only)

cat. cat. cat.
EE: _____ DP: _____ PA: _____

APPENDIX E

Pilot Study OU-IRB Study Approval



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

January 11, 2002

Ms. Eleanor K. Goetzinger
10125 N. Pennsylvania, #9
Oklahoma City, OK 73120

SUBJECT: "Burnout Among special Educators: Do Experience, Certification, and School size Make A Difference?"

Dear Ms. Goetzinger:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your requested revisions and extension to the subject protocol. The project has been extended through March 18, 2003.

Please note that this approval is for the protocol and informed consent form reviewed and approved by the Board on September 18, 2001 and the revisions noted in your letter of January 6, 2002. If you wish to make additional changes, you will need to submit a request for change to this office for review.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 325-4757.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Wyatt Sedwick".

Susan Wyatt Sedwick, PhD
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus

SWS:lk
FY2002-82

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB
Dr. Barbara A. Greene, Educational Psychology

APPENDIX F

OU-IRB Study Approval



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

August 25, 2003

Ms. Eleanor K. Goetzinger
10125 N. Pennsylvania, #9
Oklahoma City, OK 73120

SUBJECT: "Burnout Among Special Educators: Do Experience, Certification, Caseload, and School size Make A Difference?"

Dear Ms. Goetzinger:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your requested revisions and extension to the subject protocol. The project has been extended.

Please note that this approval is for the protocol and informed consent form reviewed and approved by the Board on October 10, 2001 and the revisions noted in your letter of August 19, 2003. If you wish to make additional changes, you will need to submit a request for change to this office for review.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 325-8110.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven O'Geary".

Steven O'Geary, Ph.D.
Director, Human Research Participant Protection
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus (FWA #00003191)

JSO
FY2002-82

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB
Dr. Barbara A. Greene, Educational Psychology