FROM BURNOUT TO BALANCE: A TEACHER'S JOURNEY

BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

By

Lauren Martinez, B.A.

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Education

in

Elementary Education

University of Alaska Fairbanks

May 2021

APPROVED:

Maureen P. Hogan, Committee Chair
Diane L. Kardash, Committee Member
Lynn A. Defilippo, Committee Member
Joan E. Hornig, Chair
    School cf Education

Abstract

This project used self-reflection to investigate my experience with teacher burnout. What began as an effort to explore effective teaching practices for new teachers, quickly evolved into a critical examination of self. Through the use of the self-study research approach, reflection became a powerful tool in determining the ways in which my beliefs about teaching conflicted with my actual practices. In an attempt to align theory with practice, a literature review helped to reveal specific causes of burnout as well as solutions for overcoming it. While the final project includes a series of strategies to address my teaching challenges, larger self-realizations emerged throughout the research process. The overarching theme, however, became the uniqueness of the teaching experience. Rather than attempting to generalize my experience as true for all teachers, the final project illustrated how a teacher can use reflective practice to identify their own areas of meaningful professional development.

Table of Contents

From Burnout To Balance:

A Teacher's Journey Back to the Classroom

The purpose of this project was to create a guide for implementing effective teaching practices in the classroom. However, it quickly evolved into a critical examination of my own experience with teacher burnout. I had long been concerned with my inability to consistently and sustainably implement educational best practices in the classroom and struggled with feelings of ineffectiveness and self-doubt. It was during a conversation with my advisory committee that I realized that the challenges I was having in the classroom may not be solved by best practices alone. I had been previously unaware of the narrative I had created around my teaching experience and it was not until I shared it with others that I understood that it may not reflect the typical teaching experience. With this I felt as though I finally had permission to acknowledge the stressfulness of my unique experience and the effect it was having on the different aspects of my life.

There are widely held beliefs about what makes for effective teaching, however these approaches are only successful if they resonate with the individual teacher. As Hutchinson, Hamilton, and Pinnegar (2020) wrote, "when we focus on practices, we can indeed 'train' teachers to enact those practices, but it is from the basis of their personal practical knowledge that teachers resist, embrace, enrich or impoverish their enactment" ("Attending to the Practical" section, para. 9). While the final project does include strategies for integrating best practices into the classroom, the use of autobiographical narratives personalized the guide to address my specific sources of stress, frustration, and dissatisfaction with the teaching profession, in a manner that aligns with my teaching beliefs. Although the personal nature of the guide may prevent the strategies from being

applicable to all educators, my intention was to illustrate how a teacher can use reflective

practice to identify areas of meaningful professional development.

Rationale

Considered an occupational phenomenon by the World Health Organization,

burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic, unmanaged workplace stress (World

Health Organization [WHO], 2019). Furthermore, three dimensions characterize it:

feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (WHO, 2019).

Helping professionals, or those individuals who provide health and education services to

others (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020), are at greater risk of burnout

due to the very nature of "professional helping" (Spicuzza & De Voe, 1982, p. 96). As

Spicuzza and De Voe (1982) wrote:

> …[B]alancing the issues of caring and objectivity, attempting to be flexible and
>
> spontaneous, listening and reacting to an array of problems, and rendering
>
> difficult decisions, continuously places workers in stressful positions that can
>
> easily develop into distressful situations (p. 96).

Helping professionals, such as teachers, are more prone to burnout because of their

dedication and commitment to their work. Spicuzza and De Voe (1982) described this as

the helping professional's "insatiable need to assist everyone" (p. 96).

While there is a great deal of information on burnout, there is limited statistical

evidence that connects burnout with teacher turnover. Educational statistics categorizes

teacher turnover in three ways: *movers-same district, movers-other districts, and leavers*

(Cano, Amor, & Pierson, 2019, p. 2). For the purpose of this study, information on

leavers, or those individuals who no longer work in education (Cano, et al., 2019, p. 2),

was of particular interest. The data provided by the National Center for Education

Statistics (2016) is based on 2012-2013 statistics, which reported that 8% of teachers left

the profession and were currently working in an occupation outside of education (p. 1).

Focusing on Alaska, a 2012-2018 longitudinal study found that the percentage of teachers

who left the profession was significantly higher, at around 13% (Cano et al., 2019, p. 9).

And even more disconcerting is the rate in areas similar to where I work, rural Alaska,

which averages at about 23% each year (Cano et al., 2019, p. 12). While this data does

not reveal the specific reasons why an individual leaves the teaching profession, burnout

could be regarded as a contributing factor.

Measures of teacher satisfaction may provide a more realistic picture of the

prevalence of burnout, but again national studies on the topic are limited and outdated.

The MetLife Survey of The American Teacher (2011) found that teacher job satisfaction

was lower than it has been in decades, with less than half of teachers reporting that they

felt very satisfied with the profession (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013, p. 45). Similarly,

teachers who reported lower job satisfaction were more than twice as likely to report

feeling extreme stress several days a week or more (Markow et al., 2013, p. 48).

A 2017 study found that while nearly all teachers report experiencing high levels

of stress at some point in their career (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2018, p. 96),

not all teachers will experience stress to the extent that they find it necessary to leave the

profession entirely. This may be due, in large part, to the fact that burnout is an extremely

personal experience (Spicuzza & De Voe, 1982, p. 95). While studies have found that

internal factors such as personality traits (Fabbro, Fabbro, Capurso, D'Antoni, &

Crescentini, 2020) and coping strategies (Herman et al., 2018) can identify those

individuals at greater risk for burnout, it is important to consider that the causes of burnout can be diverse and multidimensional.

Or at least they were for me. I left the profession under rather difficult circumstances. Although the initial reason for my departure was for maternity leave, I am not sure that I would have lasted much longer in the profession. After an extremely terrifying experience where a student became physical towards me, while I was pregnant, I even considered ending my contract early. Not only was I frustrated with the administration's response to the incident; I no longer felt safe. As I finished out the school year I tried to prevent the stress from affecting my teaching, but it definitely affected other aspects of my life. I began withdrawing from friends and colleagues and, unfortunately, stopped doing many of the stress-relieving activities that had supported me in the past, such as yoga, running, and meditation. I lived in a constant state of anxiety and dreaded doing anything related to the school.

Admittedly those same anxious feelings arise at the mere thought of returning to the classroom. There are times when I cannot imagine going back, especially with a new baby at home. I know that it would be unfair to my family, and my students, if I were to return to the classroom under similar conditions. With several years still to go as I extend my maternity leave, I have the opportunity to examine those aspects of my practice (and myself) that have contributed to my feelings of stress. Not wanting to dwell on external factors out of my control I have decided to take a critical look at my whole self -as a teacher, mother, wife, sister, friend, and colleague- in order to identify not only the causes of my burnout, but also the practices that will help me to overcome it. Just as the experience of burnout is personal, so too should the approach for addressing it. This

project documents my journey from burnout towards a place of balance, in an attempt to address my reticence about going back to the classroom.

Literature Review

Although burnout is considered a temporary mental disability and not a mental disorder (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p. 14), mental-illness-related stigma often prevents individuals from seeking the support they need (Mitake et al., 2019). This is due to the fact that burnout was initially thought of as 'pop' psychology and was regarded as such in both professional and medical settings (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993; Schaufeli, 2017). Up until the 1990's burnout as a phenomenon was either denied all together or perceived as only affecting a small subset of mentally disturbed people, limiting the quantity and quality of research into the topic for several decades (Maslach, 1993, p. 1).

Even though there is now wide acceptance of burnout as an important socio-cultural phenomenon (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 111.), employees, especially those in helping professions (Spicuzza & De Voe, 1982), are often ashamed to admit that they are experiencing burnout, as it can imply that they are not well suited for their chosen profession (Mitake et al., 2019). The effects of burnout are not limited to the workplace, as this upset to one's professional identity affects individuals at the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels, impacting the quality of their relationships at work, at home, and with themselves (Maslach, 1993).

When individuals deny or refuse to admit that they are experiencing burnout it only serves to increase the severity and pervasiveness of burnout symptoms (Mitake et al., 2019). Burnout should be considered a process with symptoms that worsen after prolonged exposure to occupational stress (Malsach & Schaufeli, 1993; Sokmen & Kilic,

2019). Therefore, it is important to understand the ways in which burnout can manifest in order to provide early targeted interventions (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Manifestations of Burnout

There are a few studies that have identified personal characteristics, mainly personality traits, which can increase the likelihood of an individual exhibiting symptoms of burnout syndrome. These traits include, but are not limited to: having a tendency towards neuroticism, introversion, and/or self-criticism (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 132). However, research has found that job factors contribute to burnout far more than personal traits (Maslach 1993, p. 7), and that burnout often affects the most dedicated and compassionate employees (Spicuzza & De Voe, 1982).

One of the defining characteristics of burnout is that it typically occurs in people who have not suffered from prior psychopathology (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 499). While signs that one was 'burning out' (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 112) may seem apparent in hindsight, the symptoms can be subtle and nondescript. The three dimensions of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy) speak to the complexity of the syndrome. The manner in which these dimensions manifest will differ on an individual basis (Maslach & Leiter, 2008) and is greatly impacted by an individual's ability to cope during periods of prolonged stress (Herman et al., 2018). Furthermore, the three dimensions can interact among each other or can occur independently, with varying degrees of intensity and duration (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Although the diversity of burnout causes and symptoms makes understanding the phenomenon difficult, there has been extensive research into the three dimensions of burnout and their possible manifestations (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). The dimensions

of burnout, and their impact on teachers, are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Burnout and emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is often the most common and pronounced manifestation of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2017). Some researchers argue that emotional exhaustion is actually the only symptom of burnout, whereas cynicism can be referred to as a coping strategy, and inefficacy the result of prolonged stress (Doerr & Nater, 2017 p. 94). Emotional exhaustion generally refers to the feeling of being depleted of one's emotional resources (Maslach, 1993, p. 2) and can manifest itself as physical symptoms similar to those associated with stress and anxiety, such as fatigue, lethargy, and overall weakness (Neckel, Schaffner, Wagner, 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

The emotional labor of teaching. Emotional labor is the phrase coined by sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983), which she used to describe the often unmentioned aspect of working in human services: the professional requirement that one must suppress or manage their own feelings or emotions while at the workplace (as cited in Steinberg & Figart, 1999). It is referred to as labor because when an incident or encounter triggers an emotional response, it becomes the responsibility of the employee to regulate themselves in order to generate an appropriate behavioral reaction (Grandey, 2000, p. 100).

The concept of emotional labor challenges the altruistic ideal that teaching is a "selfless labor of love" (Higgins, 2011, as cited in Dahlbeck, 2017, p. 2) and suggests that, for most, emotional labor is not a trait that comes naturally, but a skill that must be continually developed and reinforced (Steinberg & Figart, 1999). Hochschild (1983) identified two emotional labor techniques, referred to as *surface acting* and *deep acting*

(as cited in Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 129). Surface acting is considered an "antecedent-focused emotion regulation" because it involves displaying a mandated expression regardless of what the employee may be actually feeling (i.e. maintaining a smile while being yelled at), whereas deep acting requires a more detached approach, using cognitive measures (reframing, self-talk) to change the employee's actual response (i.e. showing empathy for the person yelling) (Grandey, 2000, p. 101). A third technique was identified by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), and is classified as *natural acting* (as cited in Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 129). Natural acting is characterized as an "automatic emotion regulation" and it represents the natural and spontaneous expression of emotion without any interference from the individual (Yin et al., 2019, p. 2).

Zaretsky and Katz (2019) suggested that one factor contributing to teacher burnout is that teachers are often unaware that the use of emotional labor techniques is an inherent component of their work. The daily and complex interactions between teachers and students greatly increases their use of emotional labor and, without appropriate strategies, emotional labor can quickly evolve into emotional exhaustion (Yin, Huang, Chen, 2019; Zaretsky & Katz, 2019). The overuse of emotional labor has the potential to exacerbate the effects of burnout because emotional labor sometimes involves enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions in order to align with professional and societal expectations (Grandey, 2000, p. 95). Physically, the suppression of emotions overtime has been shown to tax the cardiovascular and nervous system, compromising the immune system, and causing general dis-ease (Grandey, 2000, p.100). Psychologically, many teachers perceive this act as an inauthentic display of emotions, and attach feelings of guilt and shame with these exchanges (Chang, 2009).

Burnout and cynicism. Cynicism, specifically *organizational cynicism,* is the other primary measurement of burnout (Maslach, 1993). Organizational cynicism encapsulates all of the defining features of cynicism (contempt, distrust, resentment, etc.), but these negative feelings and beliefs are directed towards one's clients, coworkers, employers, and/ or the greater organization where one works (Abraham, 2000; Akar, 2019). Framed as a unidirectional model of progression, cynicism occurs as a response to the emergence of stress and stress-inducing experiences (Friedman, 2000, p. 256). Cynicism begins at the cognitive level with negative thoughts and feelings and ends when these beliefs are expressed through one's behavior (Abraham, 2000; Akar, 2019).

Cynicism is strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion (Grandey, 2000; Maslach & Leiter, 2008) and Hochschild (1983) found that the continued suppression and regulation of one's emotions required in emotional labor can ultimately lead to the use (and overuse) of detachment or depersonalization as coping strategies (as cited in Grandey, 2000; Leiter & Maslach, 1988).

Detachment and depersonalization. The dimensions of burnout, especially emotional exhaustion, are exacerbated by an employee's inability to detach from their work while at home (Kilroy, Bosak, Flood, & Peccei, 2020, p. 53). Psychological detachment and depersonalization are considered dissociative disorders (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018) and are the most common ways that individuals cope with emotional exhaustion and organizational cynicism (Benita, Butler, & Shibaz, 2019; Leiter & Maslach, 1988). However, although they are both considered coping strategies, detachment and depersonalization are found on opposite ends of the behavioral cynicism scale (Benita et al., 2019, p. 1106).

Psychological detachment is considered a functional reaction to emotional exhaustion (Friedman, 2000) as it provides employees with an opportunity to replenish the energetic (physical, mental, emotional) resources needed to perform their job (Kilroy et al., 2020, p. 54). Psychological detachment refers to intentionally refraining from thinking about or completing job-related activities during non-work time (Kilroy et al.). In this manner, cynicism, when displayed through psychological detachment, may serve as a mediator between work stressors and behavioral outcomes (Steinberg & Figart, 1999). As Matthews (2001) noted, working can become a "psychological liability" if one is not able to compartmentalize and separate themselves from their job (p. 6).

Depersonalization, on the other hand, is considered a dysfunctional reaction to emotional exhaustion (Friedman, 2000). Depersonalization occurs when an employee develops a negative attitude towards their clients and/or coworkers and disengages from them while at work (Benita et al., 2019, p. 1105). Experiences of depersonalization can induce further stress, because although the individual may appear to be unreactive or emotionless (APA, 2018), they often become ashamed of their behavior in the workplace (Friedman, 1993).

Effects of depersonalization on teachers. Yin et al. (2019) found a strong relationship between a teacher's well-being outcome (burnout vs. teaching satisfaction) and the emotional labor and dissociative coping strategies they tend to adopt (p. 2). Doerr and Nater (2017) suggested that the use of depersonalization might be the defining characteristic of burnout in helping professionals because this dimension can greatly impact the quality of interpersonal relationships. Relationships are viewed as an important aspect of their work, as helping professionals are required to have constant and

perpetual contact with their clients during work hours (Spicuzza & De Voe, 1982, p. 95).

The mediating effects of positive teacher-student relationships have been extensively researched, with much evidence to support the benefits of high-quality relationships on students' academic achievement and socio-emotional health (O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Depersonalization undermines these effects, as affected teachers disengage from students and develop negative attitudes towards them (Benita, Butler, & Shibaz, 2019, p. 1106).

Burnout and efficacy. While the interrelationships among the three dimensions of burnout are complex, Leiter and Maslach (1988) theorized that the progression of burnout typically follows a specific trajectory, with one aspect predicting the other in varying degrees of severity. Within their research Leiter and Maslach found that the first phase is often emotional exhaustion, which is a result of the emotional demands of one's job, followed by the use of a cynical coping mechanism (either detachment or depersonalization) (p. 300). Once an individual begins to exhibit depersonalizing behaviors, they begin to feel less successful and can develop a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, or professional efficacy. As Leiter and Maslach observed, emotional exhaustion can be seen as a predictor (or at least a precursor) to depersonalization, and depersonalization a predictor of reduced professional efficacy. In other words, emotional exhaustion will only lead to a sense of inefficacy if accompanied by depersonalizing attitudes and behaviors.

Self-efficacy. It is important to note that most of the research on burnout and, more specifically, the professional efficacy dimension of burnout, focuses on an

individual's perception of personal accomplishment and not the actual professional tasks one has completed. Referred to as self-efficacy in the literature, this concept was defined by Bandura (1998) as the belief "in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). A person's belief in their efficacy can affect many aspects of their personal and professional lives including their ability to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, and how much stress and depression they experience when coping with difficult situations (Bandura, 1998, p. 3).

    Teacher self-efficacy. For teachers, self-efficacy affects the manner in which they instruct, manage, and interact with their students (Sokmen & Kilic, 2019, p. 711). This is supported by Cherniss' (1993) theory that teacher self-efficacy consists of three domains: task (teacher's actual instructional and management skills), interpersonal (teacher's ability to develop and maintain relationships with others), and organization (teacher's contribution to the larger educational system) (as cited in Friedman, 2003, pp. 192-193). Friedman and Kass (2002) extended the definition of teacher self-efficacy further, by categorizing these three domains into two contexts: classroom and school (p. 677). This distinction was deemed necessary because although teachers are often thought of having some level of autonomy in the classroom regarding lesson delivery and management styles (Sokmen & Kilic, 2019), the greater school organization can directly impact a teacher's sense of control and agency (Friedman & Kass, 2002, p. 683)

    When teachers become uncertain about their competency, they are left vulnerable to self-doubt and low self-esteem (Matthews, 2001, p. 35). While self-esteem and self-efficacy are different concepts, Hajloo (2014) found that low self-efficacy can be a

predictor of low self-esteem, and that both concepts can affect an individual's perception of self. As seen in the phenomenon of burnout, when low self-efficacy is coupled with high levels of emotional exhaustion and the use of depersonalization, teachers actually become less effective because they feel less effective. This has implications not only on the well-being of the teacher, but also the students they teach (Brown, 2012; Stronge, 2007).

Strategies to Overcome Burnout

Maslach and Leiter (2008) have theorized that a person's psychological relationship to their job is a continuum, with the negative experience of burnout on one end, and the positive experience of engagement on the other (p. 498). This would suggest that burnout could be viewed as a temporary, stress-induced condition and not a mental disorder (Mitake et al., 2019) and, more importantly, that it is possible to alleviate the symptoms of burnout and move towards increased job satisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach, 2017).

Evidence suggests that interventions have a positive effect in reducing burnout (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 106); however, one of the critical issues with burnout interventions is whether the effort should be put towards "fixing the job" or "fixing the person" (Maslach, 2017, p. 147). In the beginning, most of the literature on burnout and burnout related symptoms recommended that interventions should be aimed at the organizational level and provided guidelines for ways to alter the specific working environments where individuals are most prone to burnout. It was only later on that the focus turned towards the individual; namely the individual factors that contributed to burnout (i.e., personality traits and coping strategies) and personalized interventions that would support the

individual's well-being (Heinemann & Heinemann, 2017).

Since the 1990's most of the literature on the phenomenon has discussed the importance of viewing burnout within a multidimensional framework; including the complex and dynamic relationship between the contributing factors (exhaustion, depersonalization, inefficacy), and the inclusion of appropriate interventions that target both the individual and the organization (Maslach, 1993). As Maslach (2017) has suggested, it is important to reframe the either/or question (job *or* individual), and begin thinking about burnout as the result of the interaction of the person *and* the job (p. 145).

While viewing burnout within a multidimensional framework is important for the future of burnout research, the aim of this project was to focus solely on aspects that are within the control of the teacher and to include strategies that could be implemented at the individual level. The strategies discussed in the following sections include: adopting a reflective practice, focusing on alterable variables, and increasing emotional intelligence. A final thought on burnout is also discussed at the end.

Reflective practice. A teacher's reflective practice is the careful review of one's own teaching practice, and utilizes continual self-evaluation and self-critique as tools for learning and improving (Stronge, 2007, p. 31). Marzano and Boogren (2012) have argued that reflective practice is one of the critical components for developing teaching expertise because it is through this type of sustained and deliberate practice that one identifies areas of improvement.

With regard to burnout, Maslach (2017) suggested that having an awareness of one's strengths or weaknesses, in terms of their personality, needs, and motives, would better equipped a person to understand not only why they are experiencing burnout, but

to also accurately identify the specific behavioral changes needed to overcome that experience (p. 147). Change, from a psychological perspective, is most likely to occur when an individual can bridge the conscious mind with those aspects that take place out of one's conscious awareness, connecting one's overt (seen) and covert (unseen) behaviors. According to Zimbardo (1988), mental processes that are concealed from one's conscious attention can result in maladaptive behaviors if reactions are done mindlessly, especially if the situation requires thoughtful modifications to one's behaviors and beliefs (p. 230).

Reflective practice can also be an important tool for improving teacher self-efficacy because it recognizes the value of a teacher's practical knowledge (Zeichner, 2005, p. 10). While teachers do incorporate educational learning theories gleaned from teacher preparation programs and professional development workshops into their practice, the most significant and most deeply embedded influences are the images, models, and conceptions of teaching derived from their own experiences as learners (Brookfield, 2017, p. 153). Given that a teacher's beliefs about teaching are more or less established before entering the classroom, Anspal, Eisenschmidt, and Lofstrom (2011) found that adopting components of reflective practice early on, as student teachers and beginning teachers, can be beneficial in shaping one's teacher identity (p. 2). As is the case for reflective practice, creating meaningful change often requires one to look backwards in order to move ahead (Gamelin, 2005, p. 191).

Reflective journals. There are many different ways in which a teacher can incorporate reflective practice into their teaching experience; however, the most common method is journaling ("Reflective Teaching," 2017). Journaling is the practice of

recording one's thoughts, feelings, and life experiences. As Monk and Folit (2019) wrote,

journaling allows one to "capture" their lived experiences for later review, when one can

more objectively explore both the known and unknown aspects of themselves. As

Goleman (2010) noted, when an individual is capable of honest reflection about their

competencies, it provides the necessary groundwork for authentic introspection and

meaningful personal growth (as cited in Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenco, 2019, p.

747).

Grimmet, Mackinnon, Erickson, and Riecken (1990) proposed that teacher

reflections tend to fall within three perspectives. These include the instrumental

mediation of action (i.e., thoughtfully applying research findings and educational theories

to one's practice and documenting the results), deliberation among competing views of

teaching (i.e., determining the alignment (or disconnect) between one's beliefs and

practices), and the reconstruction of experience (i.e., considering how one's lived

experiences have affected their present self) (pp. 23-26). Each type of reflection can be of

value and used interchangeably depending on the teacher's long-term goals and

ambitions.

It is important to note, however, that reflecting can be rather subjective in the

beginning (Mazzoni & Vannucci, 2007, p. 203), as individuals have a tendency to focus

their attention on their interpretations of emotionally charged experiences. But when

practiced over time, reflective practice can produce evidence-informed and reality-based

insights into one's own practice (Pollard, 2008). Teachers are already using their personal

practical knowledge to reflect and act in the moment, several times throughout each day

(Hutchinson et al., 2020). But as Herman et al. (2018) suggest, the intentionality of

reflective practice provides a platform for critical self-examination and meaningful professional growth.

Alterable variables. Many of the problems that educators face in public schools would require educational reform. This not only takes time, but also demands action at the state and federal levels. Therefore, it is important to consider those practices that an individual teacher can do right now in their own classrooms. Alterable variables are those factors that both impact student learning and can be controlled by the teacher. Individual teachers can make a tremendous difference in the quality of their teaching experience by focusing on those factors they can control. These typically include: the critical dimensions of curriculum and instruction, the pace and sequence of lessons, the type and frequency of student response, and how and when students are praised or reprimanded (Twyman & Heward, 2018, p. 78). Bandura (1998) has suggested that when an individual is able to exert influence in those areas they can control (however limited this sense of control may be), they are more capable of creating desirable change and positive outcomes in their lives (p. 1).

Self-efficacy. While taking actionable steps can greatly improve a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, one of the most influential variables a teacher can change is their mindset and their beliefs about themselves. A person's self-efficacy is determined by their perception of self (Bandura, 1998), even despite clear evidence to the contrary. In situations where an individual feels mental distress it can be both empowering (and overwhelming) to understand that one's thoughts and beliefs have the ability to influence their actions. Human behavior is not the result of objective realities but from our interpretation of them. As a result, it is our mental processes (what we think,

believe, and anticipate), rather than biological mechanisms or stimuli, that are responsible for the actions and changes in one's self (Zimbardo, 1988, p. 386). To have feelings of stagnation, inadequacy, and self-doubt becomes a choice, not defining personal qualities.

Building self-efficacy and improved confidence in effective practices can serve as a point of entry for reducing teacher stress and burnout while improving outcomes for students (Herman et al., 2018, p. 92). Researchers have found that self-efficacy can be a protective measure against burnout (Kaya & Selvitopu, 2019; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019) because teachers with high levels of self-efficacy feel confident in their ability to remain in control and handle the many different types of situations that arise in the classroom. High levels of self-efficacy also results in teachers being more willing to take an initiative in improving their practice, especially when the need arises for them to be more autonomous (Sokmen & Kilic, 2019, p. 715). As Bandura (1998) wrote, "the more people bring their influence to bear on the events in their lives, the more they can shape them to their liking" (p. 2).

Connecting insights with theory. Connecting one's personal insights with educational learning theories is one of the fundamental ways to improve self-efficacy. This process can be extremely self-affirming and self-confirming, as it reinforces the legitimacy of a teacher's personal practical knowledge (Gamelin, 2005, p. 192). This is especially important when a teacher is feeling ineffective in the classroom.

Attempting to connect insights with theory is also a way to identify and challenge those beliefs or assumptions about teaching and student learning that are limiting and/or self-defeating. Brookfield (2017) discussed how one's default teaching style is deeply

rooted in the complex interaction between formative memories and past experiences of learning (p. 153). Teachers will undoubtedly be influenced by their experiences as students and these memories can dictate one's practice, whether it is through the total avoidance of those aspects that were considered negative, or the indiscriminate inclusion of those aspects that were deemed positive. Being cognizant of this tendency can help teachers question whether their long-held beliefs about effective teaching are helping or hindering them in their pursuit of becoming a more effective teacher.

Emotional intelligence. Teachers will regularly experience a wide range of both positive and negative emotions, and these emotional experiences have the power to greatly influence a teacher's well-being, job satisfaction, and sense of efficacy (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 130). By bringing "intelligence to emotion," Goleman (1995) found that understanding one's emotional habits can offer insight into why individuals experience moments when their feelings seem to overwhelm all rational thought, and how best to subdue these emotional impulses (p. xii-xiii). Acknowledging that emotions are just as influential to shaping one's decisions and actions as their thoughts, Goleman argued that it was necessary to expand the definition of what it meant to be 'smart' in order to include *emotional intelligence* as well (p. 34).

The ability to identify, discuss, and regulate one's emotions has become an integral, albeit challenging, part of the teaching experience (Brackett, 2019, p. 26). Teachers are often required to make critical decisions at a moment's notice and it is important that teachers utilize appropriate emotional labor techniques when necessary (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 129), in a manner that does not leave them feeling emotionally depleted (Wilkinson et al., 2017). There are individual differences in

people's ability to reason with their emotions (Brackett, 2019, p. 26), which may explain

why some teachers experience burnout, while others, even those working in similar

working conditions, do not.

Modeling (also referred to as guided instruction, scaffolding, or explicit

instruction) has long been considered an important way to transfer knowledge (Thayer-

Bacon, 1997) and a vital component of effective teaching (Stronge, 2007). But students

learn more than academic skills from watching their teacher, they also learn how to

process and convey their emotions. Teachers can set the tone of the classroom by

controlling the manner in which they respond to distractions or defiant behaviors, as this

indicates to students how emotions are to be dealt with in this environment (Kaya &

Selvitopu, 2019, p. 418). If teachers do not want students to display explosive reactions to

emotional responses, they need to model restraint themselves.

Emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is defined as the process of

presenting or repressing emotions, typically done through the use of facial expressions,

bodily gestures, and/or verbal expressions, in order to appropriately match the situation

and context (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 128). Regulating one's emotions is not easy and,

as discussed previously, the continual suppression of emotions is what can eventually

lead to emotional exhaustion and/or burnout (Chang, 2009; Grandey, 2000).

According to Zaretsky and Katz (2019), there are two strategies for emotional

regulation: adaptive or non-adaptive. Adaptive strategies include the acceptance of

emotions, the re-examination or realistic evaluation of the situation, and the reframing of

the emotion to determine an appropriate response (p. 128). This set of strategies can be

illustrated in the following example: a teacher is providing direct instruction and students

are talking and not paying attention. Acceptance of the emotion would involve naming

the emotion and considering any underlying issues (*I am frustrated that students aren't*

listening and this makes me feel disrespected), re-examination would consider alternative

views (*Perhaps the way in which I am presenting this isn't making sense to them),* and

finally, reframing would determine an appropriate response (*We may need to take a break*

and return to this later). This can be modeled directed to students by saying this out loud,

or done internally, with the manner in which you respond being observable to students.

Using this same example, non-adaptive strategies would mean that the teacher

ignores the behavior, suppresses their emotion related to the situation, and continues

teaching. While this may seem like an appropriate use of an emotional labor technique, it

is not a sustainable approach for the teacher, nor does it show students how to

appropriately respond to emotional events (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 128). Teachers who

are aware of their own emotional reactions can more easily identify their students'

emotional states and adapt their teaching (including their interactions) to meet the current

needs of their students (Fernandez-Berrocal & Extremera, 2005, as cited in Valente et al.,

2019, p. 748). This not only limits disruptions and distractions from students, but also

reduces stress-invoking responses from the teacher.

Accepting all emotions. Teachers are often expected to avoid expressing those

emotions that are considered overly negative (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019), but that does not

mean that teachers do not feel them. Emotional intelligence is not about repressing or

suppressing emotions, but rather the ability to deal with strong emotions in an appropriate

way (Valente et al., 2019). Perpetual happiness cannot be the goal of teachers because

this is not indicative of real life; teachers are humans too (Brackett, 2019). But that does

not mean that teachers can't develop the skills to experience and express emotions in a healthy way and model this to students, just as they would any other academic skill.

A final note on burnout. In any discussion about burnout, it is important to understand that there comes a time, after the introduction of interventions and other mediating strategies, when it is necessary for the individual to consider the possibility that the professional stressors they are experiencing is due to a misalignment between themselves and their job. Maslach (2017) referred to this as the *job-person fit* and developed the areas-of-work-life model (AW) to identify the different areas where imbalances could take place. The AW model identified six key areas where interventions can be targeted towards: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values; and concluded that the greater the perceived mismatch between the individual and the job, the greater the likelihood of burnout (p. 149). When interventions prove unsuccessful, it may simply be due to the fact that the demands of the job are too great for the individual to handle effectively. It is at this point then that an individual may have to consider leaving the specific organization where they work, or the profession entirely.

Theoretical Framework

While there are several educational and psychological theories that were used throughout the process of creating the guide, the purpose of this section is to discuss the research paradigm that influenced the overall structure of the project. The self-study research approach was an appropriate theoretical framework for this project because of the personal nature of teaching. Although teaching is by no means an individual activity, the manner in which teachers respond to teaching challenges is unique and personal.

The self-study research approach emerged in the early 1990s, at a time when the field of education was experiencing a shift from predominantly quantitative research to

an inclusion of qualitative data (Craig & Curtis, 2020). This is also a time when the focus

shifted from "expert knowledge" to an emphasis on the "authority of experience" as

educational researchers began to acknowledge the value of teachers' personal practical

knowledge in the research process (Hutchinson et al., 2020), and turned away from

generalizations to focus on unique teaching situations (Craig & Curtis, 2020, p. 23).

According to Vanassche & Kelchtermans (2015), self-study is related to other

types of practitioner-owned research approaches, such as action research, teacher

research, and reflective practice (p. 508). However, one defining characteristic of self-

study is that the research question is based on a fascination or problem rooted in the

researcher's own practice (Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Zwart, 2011, p. 407). Self-study,

therefore, requires deep introspection in order to identify the motivations, beliefs, and

concerns one has around a specific aspect of their practice (White & Jarvis, 2019).

Through a systematic investigation of their teaching (Vanassche & Kelchtermans,

2015), educators can become "…producers of research and knowledge rather than mere

recipients of information generated elsewhere" (Kompf & Rust, 2013, as cited in Craig &

Curtis, 2020, p. 14). Self-study research has the potential to impact the field of education

because it focuses on changing one's self; where "…change is least likely, but most apt to

occur" (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015, p. 520). The assumption is that by allowing

teachers to act as agents of change, they will become empowered enough to critically

engage with and make lasting changes to their practice (Craig & Curtis, 2020).

Statement of Bias

This project used self-study and self-reflections to investigate my experience with

teacher burnout. With this comes inherent personal bias, as I was extremely invested in

the outcome of this project. However, both of these research methodologies are not

without merit, and this is a lot that a researcher can do to acknowledge and address how personal biases affect the validity and trustworthiness of the information they present.

Self-Study

Practitioner-owned research methodologies, such as self-study, are inherently biased because the researcher is also the participant. As is typically the case with self-study, the focus is on the micro-level, or the immediate classroom environment, and the pedagogical interactions between teacher and students (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). However, because educators are using this methodology to study and improve their own practice, there would be little incentive to represent falsified information. Hutchinson et al. (2020) believed that trustworthiness in self-study research comes not from its objectivity, but because it is so subjective and representative of the teaching experience.

As Vanassche & Kelchtermans (2015) wrote, the knowledge developed in and through self-study cannot (and should not) be disconnected from the complex reality it refers to (p. 516). This is similar to the constructivist paradigm, which recognizes that a researcher's lived experiences influence the interpretation of the information gathered during the research process (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). With this understanding, self-study does not aim to generalize, but to share one's insights in order "...to see if the case for me is also the case for you" (Ham & Kane, 2004, as cited in Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015, p. 518).

Self-Reflection

While self-reflection can be a powerful tool, it is important to understand that it is dependent upon one's perception of self, which are mental constructs that are not always

based in reality. As Maslow (1954) so poignantly stated, "...articulations rest not only on the nature of the reality that it discovers, but also on the nature of the human nature that does the discovering" (p. 1). Through personal recall an individual can learn more about their preferences, abilities, and beliefs, all of which are necessary to achieve self-understanding (Ross, 1989, p. 341). However, it is important to note that because memories are mental constructs, these recollections can be inherently flawed, biased, and/or represent a false depiction of reality (Mazzoni & Vannucci, 2007, p. 203). Recognizing that one's memories may be flawed does not undermine the value of self-reflections, but should serve as a reminder to remain honest with oneself during the reflection process.

Being vulnerable, honest, and open about one's experiences is one of the ways that researchers can use self-reflection to establish trust with the reader, because, ultimately, it is the reader who will judge the quality and validity of the study (Hutchinson et al., 2020, S-STTEP Research Methodology section, para.11). It becomes the researcher's responsibility to portray their observations and interpretations in a manner that feels authentic and real to the readers.

Methods

The self-study research approach does not adhere to a strict set of methodological procedures. Vanassche & Kelchtermans' (2015) review of self-study research found that although the majority of methods are qualitative in nature, there is not one specific method assigned to the approach (p. 514). This allows self-study researchers the flexibility to apply research methods that are appropriate for their specific inquiry and fit within their research paradigm. However, although the type and method for collecting

and analyzing data will be different for each researcher, the data will focus on one's experiences and practices in teaching.

For this project, it seemed appropriate to use self-reflection to explore my feelings of burnout. Autobiographical writing can be a way for teachers to "...link their experiences in life with their life in teaching" (Alvine, 2001, p. 6). Teacher stories, or personal accounts by teachers of their own experiences in their classrooms, have long been used in educational research as a way of providing practical and specific insights into actual school settings (Creswell, 2002). As Hutchinson et al. (2020) found, a teacher's deeply ingrained teaching beliefs become visible not only in the actions they take in their practice, but also in the way they talk about it. Through the creation and recounting of autobiographical narratives, researchers can construct a sense of self based on the forming and reforming of "…who they have been, are presently, and hope to become" (McAlpine, 2016, p. 33).

Research Question

Research questions within the self-study research paradigm tend to fit within four broad categories of issues or themes. This project focused on one such category, described as "encompassing one's self as a 'living contradiction,'" (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015, p. 512). Through writing and analyzing my self-reflections I was able to identify my beliefs and aspirations about teaching and consider the disconnection between these beliefs and my actual teaching practices (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015, p. 513). With an understanding of these contradictions, it became easier to narrow down the multitude of effective teaching strategies to just those few that were appropriate for my specific teaching challenges.

Developing the Guide

  Data collection. The data collection process began with a review of effective teaching strategies. While conducting the research, I not only considered emerging themes in the research but also reflected on my own reaction to the perceived effectiveness of each concept and strategy. Self-reflection, therefore, became an appropriate tool in determining which strategies would be included in the final project.

  The first narratives I wrote focused on my rationale for choosing the different sections of the guide (Appendix A). There were five narratives in all and each focused on a different experience I have had in the past five years while living and working in a rural Alaska Native village. The narratives were structured like a reflective journal entry and there were no parameters set for the length or organization of the narratives. However, while there was variability in the formatting, each story concluded by selecting a specific focus area of effective teaching and assigning it with the teacher evaluation performance standards used by my school district.

  Each narrative highlighted areas for further research, which prompted a subsequent literature review specific for finding practical strategies for the guide. In addition, literature on overarching themes was reviewed as well, including information on burnout.

  Reflection tool. A second set of narratives was written using a reflection tool that I developed, the *Reflect, Research, and Reframe Worksheet.* I created this worksheet because I wanted to be intentional and deliberate about connecting my beliefs with the strategies that would be included in the final product. The reflection portion of the worksheet promotes the identification of personal teaching beliefs, and questions whether

these are limiting or false beliefs. Next, it encourages research into topics related to those beliefs as it pertains to one's teaching practice. Finally, it suggests the reframing of those beliefs and considers ways to incorporate affirming beliefs into one's practice. While the worksheet does not focus on burnout per se, it could be beneficial to others who would like to adopt reflective practice but are unsure of how to begin. My completed worksheets are found in (Appendix B).

Data analysis. I followed the steps outlined by Creswell (2009) for analyzing qualitative research. The process began with an initial read through in order to develop a general sense of the information. The next step was to reread the data and begin coding.

Coding narratives involves taking the stories and segmenting the text into different categories. Codes can be predetermined, emerging, or both (Creswell, 2009, p. 187). I used a combination of both. I remained open to the on-going creation of themes throughout the analysis, but I also focused on identifying codes that addressed larger theoretical notions. While the predetermined codes included themes such as possible strategies, barriers to implementation, and theory-practice division, the emerging themes were much more personal. These involved identifying negative feelings about teaching, persistent thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as acknowledging any positive self-talk that appeared in the narratives.

Interpreting the data. According to Creswell (2009), the final step in analyzing qualitative data is to interpret or make meaning of the data. This was done through the completion of the guide. After several cycles of reflecting, researching, and reframing, I wrote each section of the guide on the Google Site. Each section contains information on the effective teaching focus area, at least three specific strategies to try, and links to

additional resources. Although I did rely heavily on research-based, evidence-based strategies, I also included strategies and techniques discussed on teaching blogs and websites in an attempt to feature real teachers' practical knowledge. While it became apparent that the content in the guide might not be applicable to all, the process of using reflective practice to understand more about one's identity as a teacher is what may resonate with a wider audience.

Findings

Table 1 summarizes the information derived from the initial set of narratives, which focused on several of my teaching experiences. It was necessary to connect each effective teaching focus area to a professional performance standard used by my district, because although self-efficacy is subjective and relevant to the teacher's perception of self, each school district has an established set of effective teaching standards that teachers are required to adhere to, and ultimately, this is what I will be evaluated on once I return to the classroom.

Table 1

Self-Reflections: Focus Areas and Related Performance Standards

Guide section	Focus area	Performance standard	Example quote from narratives
Understand	Parent/Teacher Collaboration	B.4 Maintains relationships with parents, families, and community	"The mom and I were each coming from a place of defensiveness: she was defending her child and parenting skills, I was defending my teaching...My inability to find common ground with the mom forever affected my relationship with Student A."

Guide section	Focus area	Performance standard	Example quote from narratives
Connect	Psychological Detachment	B.2 Maintains professional relationships with students C.3 Creates a positive and engaging learning environment	"Being an 'outsider' in the village kind of levels the playing fields with the students. When we first arrived we didn't know how to complete the most basic tasks...[Student B] was extremely helpful and respectful. I had always believed that Student B found it difficult to go from a relationship of equals, to one where I was the authority...[F]or some students, developing a bond out of school actually helps with behavior in school...But for some students, like Student B, it was detrimental."
Respond	De-escalation Techniques / Self-Efficacy	C.1 Manages the classroom in a manner that maximizes student learning C.2 Manages student behavior effectively	"...I would have to say that I have strong classroom management structures...I feel capable in my ability to establish routines and guidelines that most students follow...[However] when a disruption occurs, I begin to react physically...Depending on the severity of the incident this feeling can last for hours...I have preventative, proactive management down but I need to now focus on conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques."
Teach	Differentiation	A.12 Differentiates instruction to meet needs of diverse learners	"I really don't understand how you can differentiate without having to create lessons for each student. You can group students, but then you are still making at least four different lessons. Differentiation is a learning theory that I definitely see the validity in, however, I am not sure how to actually implement it in a realistic and sustainable manner."

Guide section	Focus area	Performance standard	Example quote from narratives
Balance	Time Management / Productivity	B.6 Participates in professional development and growth	"Even though I love teaching, it is something that definitely interferes with this desire to control my time...As prepared and planned as I try to be, something always shows up unexpectedly. Since I began teaching it has always felt like a constant 'race against the clock.' Each moment feels like it is spent trying to accomplish something now, to save time later, but it never seems to help."

Note. The performance standards are those developed by the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) and outlined in the LKSD Teacher Evaluation System (LKSD, personal communication, June 4, 2015).

Self-Realizations

The themes that emerged during the process of completing the *Reflect, Research, and Reframe Worksheet* are represented in terms of self-realizations. These realizations highlighted certain aspects of my teacher identity (both positive and negative) and illustrated the narrative I had created around my teaching experience. These realizations also provided the framework for developing and personalizing the project to address my specific causes of burnout. Gaining self-awareness, coupled with an understanding of how concepts such as inefficacy and emotional exhaustion contributed to the manifestation of burnout symptoms, motivated me to look critically at the way in which I thought/talked about my experience in order to identify some of the main disconnects between my beliefs and my practice.

While there were many different things that I learned about myself during the process, I limited this discussion to two key findings. These self-realizations are outlined in the following sections.

The power of reflection. It is important to note that I did not begin this project with the understanding that I was experiencing burnout. I was already well into my literature review on effective teaching practices when I began to come across literature on the phenomenon. Of course I had heard about it before, but I was unaware of the different dimensions of burnout and how they could manifest in an individual. Also, it was a loaded term for me, as I was told on many different occasions that I was going to "burn out" if I kept going on as I was. To me, burnout demonstrated weakness and mental instability, and these were qualities that I never wanted to use to define myself. I thought of myself as passionate, hardworking, and extremely dedicated.

The realization that I was experiencing burnout actually occurred after I had left the classroom. The thought started to creep into my mind after sharing some of my experiences with my advisory committee and, after hearing their reactions, I realized that I had been minimizing my teaching struggles. But it really began to ring true when I realized that it had been almost a year since I had left the classroom, and here I was still experiencing the symptoms. While burnout is considered an occupational phenomenon (APA, 2018), the symptoms of burnout are not limited to the workplace (Maslach, 1993). The physical responses, the volatile reactions, the inability to let go of past events, even the way I felt when I wrote about my past experiences, it all showed me that the story I had created about my time in the classroom was not a pleasant one. I also noticed these types of feelings were beginning to affect me in my new job, as a mom.

As Scott and Morin (2020) discussed, adopting a reflective technique, such as reflective journaling, allows for the clarification of thoughts and feelings about a certain topic or experience, and provides a safe outlet for dealing with traumatic and/or emotional charged events. This differs greatly from the type of documentation that teachers are expected to do, because they are required to suppress all emotion related to the event in an effort to present only the facts. Once I started honestly reflecting on my experiences in a private space, without worrying that it would seem unprofessional, I was able to learn more about my patterns of behavior and finally had to admit to myself that yes, I was experiencing burnout, and more importantly, it did not magically go away once I left the classroom.

The root cause of my burnout. While developing this project I thought it would be interesting to reread the philosophy of education that I wrote at the end of my pre-service teacher training, roughly six years ago. While my naïveté was almost laughable, what I wrote is actually still indicative of my teaching beliefs. Upon reading it I was quickly reminded of the enthusiasm I had about entering the profession. I wrote about the importance of developing meaningful connections with my students and incorporating the local culture in the classroom.

When I became a teacher, however, I let the demands and stress of the profession create a disconnection between these beliefs about teaching and my actual practices in the classroom. Cynicism quickly clouded my optimism and I was too physically and emotionally exhausted to put any additional effort into my teaching. While formal observations and evaluations claimed that I was 'proficient' or even 'exemplary' in certain aspects of teaching, the praise felt undeserved because I knew that I was not being

my authentic teacher self.

As I wrote in my philosophy of education several years ago, I wanted to be someone that my students could trust and count on, someone who would support them and care for them unconditionally. While this belief never changed, it became difficult to sustain when my interactions with certain students turned negative and confrontational. This is where I believe my feelings of burnout began, as I found it impossible to detach from these adverse experiences and move past them.

Burnout is prevalent among educators because many teachers start their careers with idealistic expectations, but, as the years pass by, they experience disappointments with these expectations (Maslach & Jackson, 1984, as cited in Sokmen & Kilic, 2019, p. 710). Through the power of introspection, I found that one of the greatest disappointments I have experienced as a teacher was realizing that connecting with students was not always enough to overcome challenges in the classroom. I had a misunderstanding of what relational pedagogy really entailed, and, more importantly, that my underlying issues (lack of self-efficacy and limited emotional intelligence) were affecting the quality of my interactions with students. This is what prevented me from feeling effective in the classroom, not my inability to sustainably implement educational best practices.

Discussion

As I set out to create a guide to become a more effective teacher, it became necessary to incorporate these self-realizations into the final project. By carefully selecting strategies, I hope that my feelings of cynicism and self-doubt become less pervasive when I return to the classroom. I became intentional in my desire to create a

balance between my teaching beliefs and my practice, and I specifically focused on how to be a caring teacher without sacrificing myself. This idea of self-cultivation rather than self-sacrifice became another theme consistent throughout.

The guide may be the final outcome, but it was the process of reflection that became the defining component of the project. Self-study research encourages teachers to develop greater agency over their practice. By choosing specific aspects of one's practice to examine, the researcher is able to design a project that is relevant, realistic, and addresses a real teaching concern. Applying the self-study research methodology to this project changed the purpose of the project entirely. Rather than coming from a place of expertise, I approached the project from a place of honesty. I had to first be honest with myself, by acknowledging that I was suffering from burnout, and then use the process of reflecting, researching, and reframing to identify the causes of burnout and assemble a series of steps for moving forward.

Meaningful Professional Development

I was awarded an opportunity that most of my colleagues will never have. I had the time, the previous experience, and the resources to create something to address my specific challenges. Although I have not yet implemented the strategies mentioned in the guide, there was so much that I learned during the research process that will benefit my teaching practice. While the benefits of adopting a technique such as reflective practice is not a new concept, the amount of time and energy it takes is often overlooked. Reflective practice is a process that requires sufficient time and energy to understand and change teaching behaviors (Marzano & Boogren, 2012; Stronge, 2007), and extra time is typically not a luxury afforded to many teachers.

Looking at my school district specifically, teachers are required to spend 10 days, or roughly 70 hours, in site in-services and professional development trainings (Lower Kuskokwim School District, personal communication, February 26, 2020). While these training sessions can be beneficial, they often provide teachers with general knowledge unconnected with teachers' classrooms. Sabol and Pianta (2012) suggested that it is only when teachers are provided with knowledge, skills, and support specific to their individual classroom contexts that they are capable of creating lasting change to their teaching practices (p. 222).

As was discussed in the literature review section, one of the causes of burnout, specifically within the exhaustion and cynicism dimensions, is the inability to detach from one's professional life while away from the job. Therefore, I would recommend that rather than expecting teachers to find time off-contract to adopt a reflective practice, schools and school districts should begin incorporating reflective practice into the time already allocated for professional development. Giving teachers the time and resources to reflect and determine how their teaching beliefs and their personal practical knowledge supports, or hinders, their sense of effectiveness in the classroom (Hutchinson et al., 2020, Attending to the Practical section, para. 11) could help transform their teaching. And for those teachers experiencing burnout, it could mean the difference between staying in the classroom and leaving the profession entirely (Herman et al., 2018, p. 93).

Final Product: Burnout to Balance Guide

The Burnout to Balance Guide, in its entirety, can be found at

https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/burnout-to-balance/home. The Google Site includes

my personal stories and insights, specific strategies and resources relevant to each

section, and links to additional resources. The six main sections of the guide are outlined

below.

Reflect

The nature of reflective practice, and the self-study research approach in

particular, is that it creates a "living educational theory" that is continuously adjusted as

one's practice is further examined (Hutchinson et al., 2020). The information in the

Burnout to Balance Guide is specific to the struggles I had when I left the classroom;

however, once I return I will need to be intentional about maintaining this cyclical

process of reflecting, researching, and reframing in order to address the new challenges

and concerns that will inevitably arise.

Teachers are expected to monitor, observe, and collect data related to student

learning outcomes and academic achievement and use this information to adapt or modify

their instruction. My feelings of ineffectiveness had less to do with these types of

observable evidence (grades, standardized test scores, etc.) and more to do with self-

efficacy. With this understanding, the strategies that I included in this section focused on

identifying those practices and behaviors that would make me feel more effective and

confident in my teaching. I also wanted to be realistic about the time and energy each

strategy will require, as the demands of being back in the classroom will limit my ability

to do an in-depth literature review. The strategies are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Reflect: Reflective Teaching Strategies

Strategy	Summary	Time requirements
Goal Setting	• Establish 1-2 goals using information gleaned from reflective journaling activity. • Connect specific strategies to each goal and commit to repeating each strategy for a specific period of time. Focus on documenting the feelings that arise when this strategy is used in order to determine if modifications are necessary. If the strategy does not improve self-efficacy, substitute with a new strategy and repeat the process.	Weekly self-reflections Quarterly analysis of writing Quarterly goal setting
Videotaping Lessons	• Set up a camera (on laptop) and commit to videotaping an entire lesson or portion of the day. • Focus is on the teacher and not the students. • After school re-watch the video (alone or with colleagues) and document strengths and weaknesses.	Monthly videotaping and review
Student Surveys	• Develop a student survey (general template or create one specific to goals) and distribute to students. Review answers and use the information in students' responses to adapt behavior, find new research topics, or continue strengthening those areas that students respond well to.	Quarterly

Note. These strategies are adapted from Marzano, R.J, & Boogren, T. (2012). *Becoming a reflective teacher*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Lab.

Understand

During my four years as a certified teacher there has only been one parent that I have had an adversarial relationship with. While I could consider this a success, because this would also mean that the majority of my interactions with parents have been positive or at least neutral, this experience was so intense and detrimental that it still continues to affect me several years later.

Even though this was my first experience dealing with a challenging parent, it will certainly not be my last. Regardless of what that specific parent actually did or said, the

truth of the matter is that I am ashamed of the way in which I reacted during our

encounters. While I do not remember being unprofessional, I was defensive and

emotional. I felt as though the parent did not understand the amount of time and energy I

had put into helping their student. But with this I also realized that the lack of

understanding went both ways, because I also did not understand them, their lived

experiences, or their struggles.

With this realization, I decided that it would be beneficial to not only come up

with strategies for dealing with 'challenging' parents, but also look for ways to better

understand them. This would be especially beneficial given that I am working in a cross-

cultural setting. Not every parent is going to like me, and that is okay, as long as I know

that I am doing everything I can to remain respectful and compassionate during our

interactions and try to understand where they are coming from. Parents and teachers share

a common goal- we both want what is best for the student- and it would be much easier to

accomplish this if we can work together. The strategies are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Understand: Strategies for Parent-Teacher Interactions

Strategy	Summary	References
Be proactive	• Spend the first few weeks of school actively investing in cultivating a positive parent-teacher relationship. • Identify any possible cultural differences that interfere with effective communication and develop strategies for overcoming these barriers. • If possible, interact with the local community where the school is located. Attend non-school community events and participate in activities that are important to the community. • Get to know parents and create opportunities for parents to share their skills with the class.	• Davis & Yang (2005)

	• Be specific about the ways in which parents can be come involved and personally invite them into the classroom.	
Make the Most of Parent-Teacher Conferences	• Spend time preparing for each conference by creating a list of strengths and weaknesses, and consider writing out specific talking points. • Be intentional about creating a positive and welcoming environment for parents and their small children if necessary. • Understand that how information is shared is just as important as what information is shared. • Develop specific goals and strategies with the parents in order to deal with the student's challenges together. Incorporate parent input as much as possible.	• "Difficult Conversations with Parents" (n.d.)
Remain Professional	• Reframe beliefs and views about dealing with challenging parents. Try to empathize with their situation and understand that it is never easy to hear criticisms about one's child. • Focus interactions to a single issue and redirect parents if necessary. • Ask for support from administration and consider having someone present during difficult conversations. • Keep careful documentation on any and all conversations between the teacher and student/parent.	• Breaux & Breaux (2003) • "Difficult Conversations with Parents" (n.d.) • Mendler (2013)

Connect

While I deeply believe in the importance of cultivating positive relationships with

my students, I can see that my insatiable need to go above and beyond was one of the

root causes of my burnout. My inability to detach from my students, and their problems,

left me no time for myself and contributed to feelings of emotional and physical

exhaustion.

Without establishing boundaries and creating a life outside of work, emotional

and physical exhaustion can manifest into depersonalization, where teachers begin to

detach from students while at school (Benita et al., 2019). The solution is to cultivate and maintain caring relationships with students during the school day, but find ways to detach when back at home. Additionally, it is important to consider those alterable variables that teachers can (and should) control, while letting go of those aspects of students' lives that teachers cannot control.

This was one of the most difficult sections to write because it really challenged the identity that I had created as a teacher. It forced me to realize that while it may seem altruistic to become so emotionally-invested in my students, it was actually a disservice, as it blurred the lines between teacher as a professional, and teacher as a friend. Table 4 summarizes the strategies in this section of the guide.

Table 4

Connect: Strategies for Healthy Detachment

Strategy	Summary	References
Establish Boundaries	• Understand the professional boundaries of teachers and know when even a well-intentioned action may be inappropriate and unprofessional • Limit roles to just that of teacher • Develop and strengthen one's own emotional intelligence so that they may begin to separate their own emotions from those of others. • Allow others to experience their own emotions, in their own ways. • Notice how it feels when boundaries are crossed in order to recognize when boundaries need to be set or reinstated.	• Alaska Association of School Boards (2018) • Brackett (2019) • Eklund (2008)
Identify what can and cannot be controlled	• Controllable variables include various aspects of curriculum and instruction, classroom management strategies, and classroom environment. • Uncontrollable variables include the manner in which students engage and respond to instruction, the teacher, redirections and consequences, and their	• Tustin (2017) • Twyman & Heward (2018)

	peers. • Uncontrollable variables also include various aspects of students' home life, such as the student's family dynamic, poverty level, or mental health issues.	
Create a life outside of work	• List meaningful activities that are unrelated to school and work. Consider learning something new. • Create something that has a finished product • Find support in order to understand any underlying issues that have cause one's self-worth to become dependent upon their work.	• Ackerman (2020)

Respond

Classroom management is an important component of effective teaching. Classroom management includes various aspects such as the physical layout of the classroom, time management, behavior management, and how teachers communicate and motivate students (Kaya & Selvitopu, 2019, p. 410). Strong classroom management can play an effective role in creating positive teacher-student interactions (Valente et al., 2019, p. 714) and can increase a teacher's self-efficacy in many different aspects of their teaching (Kaya & Selvitopu, 2019; Zaretsky & Katz, 2019).

Kaya & Selvitopu (2019) found a significant relationship between classroom management self-efficacy and burnout, where teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy were less likely to experience symptoms of burnout, specifically emotional exhaustion, and vice versa (p. 419). This can be attributed to the fact that it becomes difficult for teachers to control their feelings of frustration and anger if students continually misbehave or disrupt the class (Wrobel, 2013, as cited in Zaretsky & Katz, 2019, p. 130).

While I do believe that I have strong classroom management structures and clear

classroom expectations that most students follow, a major source of my emotional

exhaustion and diminished self-efficacy came from my inability to remain calm when

students became non-compliant, aggressive, or violent. In order to address this concern,

this section included strategies for how to de-escalate extreme situations in the classroom,

with a focus on what the teacher can do to remain confident in their ability to diffuse an

emotionally-charged and/or violent situation. These strategies are outlined below.

Table 5

Encourage: De-escalation Strategies

Strategy	Summary	Resources
Understand teacher triggers	• By identifying teacher triggers and where they originate from, teachers are better equipped to recognize when they are being triggered and can substitute their emotional response with a more appropriate approach. • The idea is that if teachers approach an agitated or violent student with the same intensity as the student, the situation will only escalate further and will become harder for the student to calm down. • It is important that teachers remain calm during these times, and understanding their emotional triggers is an important first step.	• Aguilar (2015)
De-escalation strategies to implement in the moment	• While it is impossible to prevent students from becoming emotional or violent, teachers can prepare themselves by becoming familiar with common de-escalation tactics. • These include: looking for warning signs, giving the student personal and mental space, diffusing the situation through body language and nonverbal communication, listening more than talking, and given students clear choices. • If these techniques do not calm the student down, or the teacher themselves is feeling triggered, finding another staff member to talk with the student is the	• Crisis Prevention Institute (2016)

	next important step.	
What to do after an event	• The first thing to do after an incident is to document everything that occurred. • Next is to contact all of the necessary people (parent, administration, social worker, counselor, etc.) • Then, the teacher should meet with the student with the end goal of creating a specific plan for moving forward.	• How to calm the agitated student: Tools for effective behavior management (n.d.) • Strategies for working with emotionally unpredictable students. (n.d.)

Teach

Differentiation is a learner-centered instructional model that acknowledges and incorporates the diverse needs and abilities of students (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2018, p. 8). It assumes and accepts that students will enter the classroom with varying academic and social abilities and that it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the supports necessary to maximize student learning. This is typically done through the consistent use of formative assessments, in order to adapt, scaffold, and modify the content to meet the needs of students (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2019).

While I understand and whole-heartedly believe in its benefits, differentiation is one of the most difficult educational best practices for me to sustainably implement. One of the greatest challenges to its implementation is that our current educational system does not support differentiation (Osborne, 2019). Large class sizes, gaps in academic achievement, and limited space and resources are just some of the reasons why differentiation appears to be a daunting task. And for those teachers who are just struggling to make it through the day, the additional thought and planning required to differentiate instruction is nonexistent.

With a strong desire to align my beliefs with my practices, I have decided to focus

on just one of the components of differentiation. While all aspects of differentiation are

equally important, I decided to just focus on creating the time to meet with students

individually and/or in small groups to reteach or extent the content. This is the type of

individualized instruction that I am most comfortable with, and I find it benefits students

academically and allows me to increase my positive interactions with them. But in order

to find the time to meet with students, I need to make sure that students are able to work

independently. Therefore, the strategies in this section of the guide focused on ways to

encourage independence in the classroom so I actually have the time to differentiate. The

strategies are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

Teach: Independent Work Time Strategies

Strategy	Summary	Resources
Establish routines and structures	• Students need to know the specific steps and expectations necessary for them to work independently or in small groups, without needing constant support from the teacher. Anchor charts or visuals aids can be used for students to refer to during independent work periods. • Different routines and structures to establish include: directions for the task (including where to turn in completed tasks and activities to do once work is completed), the group norms for working together as a group, and how to ask for help.	• Alber (2017)
Choose appropriate independent activities	• It is important to carefully consider the different activities that students are being asked to complete without teacher support. • Independent activities should be easy to comprehend, developmentally appropriate, review of materials, and engaging.	• Sousa & Tomlinson (2018)
Practice cooperative learning	• For independent work periods to go smoothly, especially with group work, students will need to be taught explicitly how to work together. Cooperative learning strategies are beneficial because they can be easily adapted in a variety of settings and across curriculum. • Cooperative learning activities are not meant to be	• Johnson & Johnson (1999)

	done during independent work periods, however, they will provide students with the opportunity to practice and develop the social skills required to work productively without teacher support.	

Balance

As a result of completing this project, I have had to redefine what effectiveness means to me. For a long time I equated effective teaching with hard work and extreme dedication to the students, regardless of the detrimental effects it may have on the teacher. While I still think it is important for teachers to be committed to their practice, I have now come to realize that there needs to be a better balance between one's professional and personal aspects.

For many teachers, emotional exhaustion and persistent stress comes from the inherent demands of the job. Feeling as though there was a never-ending to-do list meant that I was never able to fully relax, even during the summer. Understanding that this contributed to burnout motivated me to look for ways to manage my time and redefine what an effective teacher looks like. Having a child has meant that my priorities have changed. I can no longer spend countless hours working and worrying about school, nor do I want to.

Acknowledging and accepting the fact that an effective teacher can still have a life outside of school, I wanted to find strategies to help me better manage my time. There are aspects of teaching that are necessary and will take time, but they can also be done in a more productive manner. The strategies I included in this section provide tips and techniques for lessening the time it takes to do certain teacher tasks and how to make time for what matters most. These strategies are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7

Balance: Time Management Strategies

Strategy	Summary	Resources
Make time for what matters	• This strategy is about being intentional about making time for one's priorities, both professionally and personally. • By taking time to track and analyze where most of one's time is being spent, there comes an opportunity to create a more balanced schedule. • This also allows one to better protect their time and say no to requests that interfere with their non-negotiable priorities.	• Effective Scheduling (n.d.) • Vanderkam (2016)
Streamline the grading process	• Grading is an inherent part of teaching, so rather than resenting this fact, it is better to accept it and find ways to make it easier and faster. • Some of the ways to do this include: adhering the grading guidelines mandated by the school district and not going above this requirement is possible, scheduling grading into the weekly planner, choosing assessments wisely, utilizing formal assessments, and giving opportunities for student self-assessments. • There are also tips for how to grade student writing, which include: focusing on only one or two writing skills at a time, incorporating peer editing opportunities, using a rubric, and conducting writing conferences.	• Bales (2020) • The 4 Steps of Student Assessment (2016) • Watson (2018) • Watson (n.d.)
Systems for lesson planning	• Planning lessons will also be near the top of a teacher's to-do list. But there are systems for making the process less time consuming. • Systems for lesson planning include: developing and maintaining routines so that lesson plans are structured in a similar way across subject areas, beginning the planning process with a unit or year-long overview of learning objectives, and creating a method for labeling and organizing past lesson plans for ease of use in subsequent years.	• Tips for lesson planning better and faster (2019)

Plans for Dissemination

When it is possible to do so, I plan on presenting the Burnout to Balance Guide to my former colleagues. While this guide is personalized for my specific teaching challenges, I think a lot of the information would be applicable to their classrooms as well. And, because reflective practice became such an important theme of this project, I would like to use the guide as an example of what teachers can create if they are given the time and resources to identify their own areas of meaningful professional development.

Developing this project has made me very passionate about reflective practice and teacher self-care. I plan on creating more tools and worksheets for teachers to use to guide them through the reflective process. But I also want to support teachers who need the time to do so. Before coming back to the classroom myself, I plan on volunteering in other teacher's classrooms in order to give them a chance to recharge, and hopefully reflect, on what they can do to change the quality of their teaching experience.

References

Abraham, R. (2000). Organizational cynicism: Bases and consequences. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, 126*(3), 269-292.

Ackerman, C.E. (2020). What is self-worth and how do we increase it? Retrieved December 5, 2020 from https://positivepsychology.com/self-worth/

Aguilar, E. (2015). Boost your resilience by managing emotional triggers. Retrieved December 7, 2020 from https://www.edutopia.org/blog/boost-your-resilience-managing-emotional-triggers-elena-aguilar

Akar, H. (2019). A meta-analytic review on the causes and consequences of organizational cynicism. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 11*(2), 149-164. https://doi.org/10.15345.iojes.2019.02.010

Alaska Association of School Boards. (2018). Professional boundaries of staff with students. Retrieved November 15, 2020 from https://aasb.org/wp-content/uploads/AR-5141.42-Professional-Boundries-of-Staff-with-Students.pdf

Alber, R. (2017). Deeper learning: A collaborative classroom is key. Retrieved December 15, 2020 from https://www.edutopia.org/blog/deeper-learning-collaboration-key-rebecca-alber

Alvine, L. (2001). Shaping the teaching self through autobiographical narrative. *The High School Journal, 84*(3), 5-12.

American Psychological Association (2018). Dissociative disorders. Retrieved August 17, 2020 from www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/dissociative-disorders/what-are-dissociative-disorders

American Psychological Association (2020). APA dictionary of psychology. Retrieved

     June 21, 2020 from https://dictionary.apa.org/helping-professions

Anspal, T., Eisenschmidt, E., & Lofstrom, E. (2011). Finding myself as a teacher:

     Exploring the shaping of teacher identities through student teachers' narratives.

     Teachers and Teaching, 1, 1-20. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.

     632268

Bales, K. (2020). 13 creative examples of informal assessments in the classroom.

     Retrieved December 19, 2020 from https://www.thoughtco.com/informal-

     classroom-assessments-4160915

Bandura, A. (1998). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of self control.* (2nd ed.). New York City,

     New York: W.H. Freeman. Retrieved from https://openlibrary.org

Benita, M., Butler, R., & Shibaz, L. (2019). Outcomes and antecedents of teacher

     depersonalization: The role of intrinsic orientation for teaching. *Journal of*

     Educational Psychology, 111(6), 1103-1118. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/edu000032

Brackett, M. (2019). *Permission to feel: The power of emotional intelligence to achieve*

     well-being and success. [Kindle version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com

Breaux,E., & Breaux, A. (2003). Dealing with parents, in *Real teachers, real*

     challenges, real solutions: 25 Ways to handle the challenges of the classroom

     effectively (pp.97-100). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved from

     https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Brookfield, S. (2017). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (2nd ed.). San Francisco,

     CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Brown, C.G. (2012). A systematic review of the relationship between self-efficacy and

  burnout in teachers. *Educational & Child Psychology, 29*(4), 47-63.

Cano, M.V., Amor, H.B, & Pierson, A. (2019). *Educator retention and turnover under*

  the midnight sun: Examining trends and relationships in teacher, principal, and

  superintendent movement in Alaska. Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

  https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/index.asp

Chang, M.L. (2009). An appraisal of perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the

  emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review, 2009*(21), 193-218.

  doi: 10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y

Childs, K. (2005). Just where do I think I'm going?: Working with marginalized and

  disaffected youths and their self-study. In C. Mitchell, S. Weber, & K. O'Reilly-

  Scanlon (Eds.), *Just who do we think we are?: Methodologies for autobiography*

  and self-study in education (pp. 141-153). New York, NY: Routledge

  Falmer. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Craig, C.J., & Curtis, G.A. (2020). Theoretical roots of self-study research. In J. Kitchen,

  A. Berry, S.M. Bullock, A.R. Crowe, M. Tayler, H. Gudjonsdottir, & L. Thomas

  (Eds.), *2nd International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher*

  Education, Singapore: Springer Nature. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.

  net/publication/341713256

Creswell, J. (2002). Narrative research designs. *Educational research: Planning,*

  conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (pp. *520-558).*

  Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

    approaches (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Crisis Prevention Institute. (2016). CPI's top 10 de-escalation tips. Retrieved December 5,

    2020 from https://www.crisisprevention.com/CPI/media/Media/download/

    PDF_DT.pdf

Dahlbeck, J. (2017, March 31-April 2). *The egoistic teacher: Teacher implications of*

    Spinoza's psychological egoism. [Paper Presentation]. Philosophy of Education

    Society of Great Britain Annual Conference, New College, Oxford. Retrieved

    from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315757098

Davis, C., & Yang, A. (2005). Parents and teachers working together. Turner Falls,

    MA: Northeast Foundation for Children. Retrieved from

    https://ebookcentral.proquest.com.

Difficult conversations with parents: A road map for success. (n.d.). Retrieved

    November 3, 2020 from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/

    53eed1c8e4b0058ebcda802f/t/55e5a437e4b0123f945329e1/1441113143497/DIF

    FICULT+PARENTS+PDF.pdf

Doerr, J.M, & Nater, U.M. (2017). Exhaustion syndromes: Concepts and definitions. In

    S. Neckel, A.K. Schaffner, & G.Wagner (Eds.), *Burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion:*

    An interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction (pp. 77-104). Cham,

    Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG. Retrieved from

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321154402

Effective scheduling: Planning to make the best use of your time. (n.d.). Retrieved

December 17, 2020 from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article
/newHTE_07.htm

Eklund, N. (2008). Boundaries and expectations. In *How was your day at school?: Improving dialogue about teacher job satisfaction* (pp.55-72). Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute Press. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.

Friedman, I.A. (1993). Burnout in teachers: The concept and its unique core meaning. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 53,* 1035-1044.

Friedman, I.A. (2000). Burnout in teachers: Shattered dreams of impeccable professional performance. *Psychotherapy in Practice, 56*(5), 595-606.

Friedman, I.A. (2003). Self-efficacy and burnout in teaching: The importance of interpersonal-relations efficacy. *Social Psychology of Education, 6,* 191-215.

Friedman, I.A., Kass, E. (2002). Teacher self-efficacy: a classroom-organization conceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18,* 675-686.

Gamelin, A. K. (2005). The sand diaries: Visions, vulnerability and self-study. In C. Mitchell, S. Weber, & K. O'Reilly-Scanlon (Eds.), *Just who do we think we are?: Methodologies for autobiography and self-study in education* (pp.183-192). New York, NY: Routledge Falmer. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral. proquest.com

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* New York, NY: Bantom Books. Retrieved from http://openlibrary.org

Grandey, A.A. (2000). Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(1), 95-110.

Grimmet, P.P, Mackinnon, A.M., Erickson, G.I., & Riecken, T.J. (1990). Reflective

    practice in teacher education. In R.T. Clift, W.R. Houston, & M.C Pugach (Eds.),

    Encouraging reflective practice in education: An analysis of issues and programs

    (pp. 20-38). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Retrieved from

    http://openlibrary.org

Hajloo, N. (2014). Relationships between self-efficacy, self-esteem and procrastination in

    undergraduate psychology students. *Iran Journal of Psychiatry Behavioral*

    Sciences, 8(3), 42-49.

Heinemann, L.V, & Heinemann, T. (2017). Burnout: From work-related stress to a cover-

    up diagnosis. In S. Neckel, A.K. Schaffner, & G.Wagner (Eds.), *Burnout, fatigue,*

    and exhaustion: An interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction (pp. 129-

    152). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG. Retrieved from

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321154402

Herman, K.C., Hickmon-Rosa, J., & Reinke, W.M. (2018). Empirically Derived Profiles

    of Teacher Stress, Burnout, Self-Efficacy, and Coping and Associated Student

    Outcomes. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 20*(2), 90-100.

How to calm the agitated student: Tools for effective behavior management (n.d.)

    Retrieved December 9, 2020 from https://www.interventioncentral.org/behavior

    _calm_agitated_student

Hutchinson, D.A., Hamilton, M.L., & Pinnegar, S. (2020). Quality, trustworthiness, and

    S-STTEP research. In J. Kitchen, A. Berry, S.M. Bullock, A.R. Crowe, M. Tayler,

    H. Gudjonsdottir, & L. Thomas (Eds.), J., *2nd International handbook of self-*

    study of teaching and teacher education, Singapore: Springer Nature. Retrieved

from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334448536

Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1999). Making cooperative learning work. *Theory Into Practice, 38*(2), 67-73.

Kaya, M., & Selvitopu, A. (2019). A meta-analysis of the effects of some factors on t eachers' classroom management skills. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 6*(2), 409-425. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.621313

Kilroy, S., Bosak, J., Flood, P.C., Peccei, R. (2020). Time to recover: The moderating role of psychological detachment in the link between perceptions of high-involvement practices and burnout. *Journal of Business Research, 108,* 52-61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jubsres.2019.10.012

Leiter, M.P., & Maslach, C. (1988). The impact of interpersonal environment on burnout organizational commitment. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 9,* 297-308.

Lunenberg, M., Korthagen, F., & Zwart, R. (2011). Self-study research and the development of teacher educators' professional identities. *European Educational Research Journal, 10*(3), 407-420. http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2011.10.3

Maslach, C. (1993). Burnout: A multidimensional perspective. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 1-13). Washington, D.C: Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263847970

Maslach, C. (2017). Finding solutions to the problem of burnout. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 69*(2), 143-152. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000090

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M.P. (2008). Early predictors of job burnout and engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(3), 498-512.

Maslach, C., & Schaufeli, W.B. (1993). Historical and conceptual development of burnout. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 1-16). Washington, D.C: Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 263847970

Maslow, A.H. (1954). *Motivation and personality.* New York, NY: Harper & Row. Retrieved from https://openlibrary.org.

Markow, D., Macia, L., & Lee, H. (2013). *The MetLife survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for school leadership.* Retrieved July 15, 2020 from https://www.metlife.com/content/dam/microsites/about/corporate-profile/MetLife-Teacher-Survey-2012.pdf

Marzano, R.J, & Boogren, T. (2012). *Becoming a reflective teacher.* Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Lab. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Matthews, S.F. (2001). *The relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of female teachers for kindergarten through grade 12* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations

Mazzoni, G., & Vannucci, M. (2007). Hindsight bias, the misinformation effect, and false autobiographical memories. *Social Cognition, 25*(1), 203-220.

Mendler, A. (2013). Rethinking difficult parents. Retrieved November 3, 2020 from https://www.edutopia.org/blog/rethinking-difficult-parents-allen-mendler

McAlpine, L. (2016). Why might you use narrative methodology? A story about

narrative. *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri, 4(*1), 32-57. http://dx.doi.org/10.12697/

eha.2016.4.1.02b

Mitake, T., Iwasaki, S., Deguchi, Y., Nitta, T., Nogi, Y., Kadowaki, A.,...Inoue, K.

(2019). Relationship between burnout and mental-illness-related stigma among

nonprofessional occupational mental health staff. *BioMed Research International,*

2019, 1-6. doi:10.1155/2019/5921703

Monk, L., & Folit, R. How to journal: Your complete guide to getting started with

journaling. Retrieved November 15, 2020 from https://iajw.org/how-to-journal-

complete-guide/

National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Teacher Turnover: Stayers, Movers, and

Leavers. Retrieved June 28, 2020 from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/

coe_slc.pdf

Neckel, S., Schaffner, A.K., & Wagner, G. (2017). Introduction. In S. Neckel, A.K.

Schaffner, & G. Wagner (Eds.), *Burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion: An*

interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction (pp. 1-27). Cham,

Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321154402

O'Connor, E.E., Dearing, E., & Collins, B.A. (2011). Teacher-child relationships and

behavior problem trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational*

Research Journal, 48(1), 120-162.

Osborne, J. (2019). How "differentiation" became a dirty word to teachers. Retrieved

December 15, 2020 from https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/how-differentiation-became-a-dirty-word-to-teachers-dbf4f3c176a3

Pollard, A. (2008). *Reflective teaching: Evidence-informed professional practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic. Retrieved from http://openlibrary.org

Reflective teaching. (2017). Retrieved October 22, 2020 from https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/ReflectiveTeaching

Ross, M. (1989). Relation of implicit theories to the construction of personal histories. *Psychological Review, 96*(2), 341-357.

Sabol, T.J., & Pianta, R.C. (2012). Recent trends in research on teacher-child relationships. *Attachment & Human Development, 14*(3), 213-231. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2012.672262

Schaufeli, W.B. (2017). Burnout: A short socio-cultural history. In S. Neckel, A.K. Schaffner, & G. Wagner (Eds.), *Burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion: An interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction* (pp. 105-128). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321154402

Scott, E., & Morin, A. (2017). The benefits of journaling for stress management. Retrieved from https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-journaling-for-stress-management-3144611

Spicuzza, F.J., & De Voe, M.W. (1982). Burnout in the helping professions: Mutual aid groups as self-help. *Personnel & Guidance Journal, 61*(2), 95-100. doi:1

0.1002/j.2164-4918.1982.tb00736.x.

Sokmen, Y., & Kilic, D. (2019). The relationship between primary school teachers' self-efficacy, autonomy, job satisfaction, teacher engagement and burnout: A model development study. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 5*(2), 709-721.

Sousa, D.A., & Tomlinson, C.A. (2018). *Differentiation and the brain: How neuroscience supports the learner-friendly classroom* (2nd ed.). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Steinberg, R.J., & Figart, D.M. (1999). Emotional labor since the managed heart. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 561*, 8-26.

Strategies for working with emotionally unpredictable students. (n.d.) Retrieved December 7, 2020 from https://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-interventions/challenging-students/strategies-working-emotionally-unpredictable-students

Stronge, J.H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Thayer-Bacon, B.J. (1997). The nurturing of a relational epistemology. *Educational Theory, 47*(2), 239-260.

The 4 steps of student self-assessment (2016). Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/practice/mastering-self-assessment-deepening-independent-learning- through-arts

Tips for lesson planning better and faster. (2019). Retrieved December 21, 2020 from

      https://www.teachervision.com/blog/morning-announcements/tips- for-lesson-

      planning-better-and-faster

Tustin, R. (2017). Learning to let go in the classroom: What you can and can't control.

      Retrieved November 17, 2020 from https://study.com/blog/learning-to-let-go-in-

      the-classroom-what-you-can-can-t-control.html

Twyman, J.S, & Heward, W.L. (2018). How to improve student learning in every

      classroom now. *International Journal cf Educational Research, 87,* 78-

      90. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.05.007

Vanderkam, L. (2016, October). How to gain control of your free time [Video file].

      Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_vanderkam_how_to_gain_

      control_of_your_free_time?language=en

Valente, S., Monteiro, A.P., & Lourenco, A.A. (2019). The relationship between teachers'

      emotional intelligence and classroom discipline management. *Psychology in the*

      Schools, 56, 741-750. doi:10.1002/pits.22218

Vanassche, E., & Kelchtermans, G. (2015). The state of the art in self-study of teacher

      education practices: a systematic literature review. *Journal cf Curriculum Studies,*

      47(4), 508-528. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2014.995712

Watson, A. (Host). (2018, March 4). How to streamline assessment and spend less

      time grading [Audio Podcast]. In A. Waston (Producer), *Truth for Teachers.*

      Retrieved from http://itunes.apple.com

Watson, A. (n.d.). 10 time-saving tips for grading student writing. Retrieved

December 21, 2020 from https://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/10-time-saving-tips-for-grading-student-writing/

White, E., & Jarvis, J. (2019). Self-study: a developing research approach for professional learning. *University of Hertfordshire, 4*(1). Retrieved from https://www.herts.ac.uk/link/volume-4,-issue-1/self-study-a-developing-research-approach-for-professional-learning

Wilkinson, H., Whittington, R., Perry, L., & Eames, C. (2017). Examining the relationship between burnout and empathy in healthcare professionals: A systematic review. *Burnout Research, 6*(2017), 18-29. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.06.003

World Health Organization. (2019, May 19). Burn-out an occupational phenomenon: International classification of diseases. Retrieved June 20, 2020 from https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/

Yin, H., Huang, S., Chen, G. (2019). The relationship between teachers' emotional labor and their burnout and satisfaction: A meta-analytic review. *Educational Research Review, 28*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2109.100283

Zaretsky, R., & Katz, Y.J. (2019). The relationship between teachers' perceptions of emotional labor and teacher burnout and teachers' educational level. *Athens Journal of Education, 6*(2), 127-144. https://doi.org/10.30958/aje.6-2-3

Zeichner, K.M. (2005). Research on teacher thinking and different views of reflective practice in teaching and teacher education. In I. Carlgren, G. Handal & S. Vaage (Eds.), *Teachers' minds and actions: Research on teachers' thinking and practice* (pp. 9-28). Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis Inc.

Zimbardo, P.G. (1988). *Psychology and life.* (12th ed.) Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman

and Company. Retrieved from https://openlibrary.org

Appendix A:

Initial Set of Narratives

Coding Themes

Predetermined
- Possible Strategies
- Barriers
- Theory-Practice Division

Emerging
- Negative Feelings (worry, anxiety, physical response, attacked-physically and emotionally)
- Persistent thoughts, feelings, actions (unable to let go of feelings or experiences)
- Positive Self Talk (connection, understanding)

Understand:

When I was pregnant I was plagued by nightmares. I had read that this was a common occurrence for many women and was influenced by overactive hormones and anxiety, among other things. Definitely no stranger to anxiety dreams, the difference was that these pregnancy dreams were often vivid enough to elicit a physical response when I was jolted awake. This is due in large part to the realistic nature of the dreams.

One dream that I had during this time took place at school. I had the dream almost two years ago but just thinking about it is enough to conjure up physical feelings. In the dream, one of my most challenging students, Student A, had me cornered and trapped in the hallway. It is important to note that I teach third grade and this student is small compared to the other students. I was not afraid for my life, but I remember being scared that the student was going to hurt my baby. However, throughout the altercation I kept thinking that it was going to be okay because we were in the hall and there were several cameras that were filming this. The mom would have to believe me now. Luckily the dream ended before anything actually happened and I woke up.

Every year I have a handful of students who really know how to challenge me. These are the students who get most of my attention because I am constantly worrying about how they will react and respond to specific activities throughout the day. Then, after school, I am constantly researching for things I can do to help them. Student A was one such student. I teach both second and third grade so I had this student the year before as well. Towards the end of second grade Student A uncharacteristically began acting out. These episodes typically included throwing supplies at other students, flipping desks, and ripping books.

Prior to this incident I had assumed that Student A lived with their grandmother. She was the person I always talked to during parent-teacher conferences or who I called home when Student A got sick. But then I met the mom. Student A has a younger sibling with a health condition so the mom is often out of town at various doctor appointments

throughout the year. She happened to be in town during one episode so she came to school. Although cordial enough, she definitely implied that this was totally uncharacteristic behavior and was looking for some explanation for why this happened. Asking me what *I* did to start this!

Knowing I was going to have this student again the following year I spent the summer thinking about incentives and behavior charts. I was really determined to get the mom's support and work towards providing a united front to help Student A. To say this didn't go well is an understatement. While Student A's episodes got continually worse, the mom become more adamant that it was something that I was doing to provoke her child. By Thanksgiving the mom was actively trying to get me fired.

I was eight weeks pregnant when the BIG episode happened. It was about a week after my dream and the similarities were uncanny. I was teaching math and the students were doing work on their individual whiteboards. We do a lot of collaborate learning so students would show each other their work before holding up their boards and shouting out the answer. Apparently a student told Student A they were wrong and Student A took the wooden whiteboard and hit the student on the head. I did a room clear, which they were already accustomed to because of this student, brought the students to another classroom, and stood in the doorway of my classroom just to keep eyes on the student. In the past Student A likes to go behind my desk and bang on the computer so I didn't really want that to happen again.

Student A began by throwing oranges at me. Then the student grabbed the whiteboard and began coming towards me. I began backing up more into the hall and then the student whipped the board, hitting me in the leg just inches below my belly. The student ran out of the school building and all the way home. I went to the office to get help. The principal called the mom and both her and the student returned. As expected the meeting did not go well and the mom made it clear that she believed her child, who said that they did not hit me or the other student. All I kept thinking of was the video. There was a camera in the hall and it must have recorded the incident. She would have to believe me now.

I was out of town when formal meeting took place, but apparently the mom did see the video. The principal mentioned a slight reaction, but the mom continued to claim that I was the instigator of these episodes and her campaign against me continued. She avoided interacting with me for the rest of the year, but continued to meet with the administration. Student A continued to have episodes and was suspended frequently. Ironically enough, very few of Student A's episodes actually occur with me and when I was on maternity leave Student A was suspended for the remainder of the year.

Even when writing this reflection I am experiencing a physical response. My legs feel heavy, my heart is racing, and my breathing is shallow. This happened almost two years ago but to my body, I am still in it. It continues to trouble me, not from a classroom management standpoint (I actually feel really confident in my management skills), but by the fact neither Student A nor the mom ever apologized to me. I still cannot get over the

fact that she saw my pregnancy progressing and never felt the need to talk to me. Years later, seeing me with my daughter, still nothing. Why couldn't she understand that I have always been coming from a place of compassion and concern?

Or maybe it was *my* inability to understand. Maybe I didn't really understand Student A, their family, their home life. The mom and I were each coming from a place of defensiveness; she was defending her child and parenting skills, I was defending my teaching. Although in my opinion I was acting professionally, the episodes did cause an emotional response from me and that probably triggered something for the mom.

It may not have prevented the incidents with Student A from occurring, but coming from a more emphatic place may have changed how I reacted to both Student A and the mom. I didn't like how I felt in those moments: the episodes, the phone call homes, the meetings. Rather than waiting for the apology or some sort of acknowledgement, I want to make sure that doesn't happen again.

This will definitely not be the last challenging student (and parent) I will have in my classroom. But moving forward I want to find strategies for strengthening my teacher-parent relationships. My inability to find common ground with the mom affected my relationship with Student A and caused a lot of unnecessary stress for us all.

- <u>Focus Area</u>: Parent/Teacher Collaboration
- <u>Teacher Performance Evaluation</u>:
  - Domain B: Professional Conduct and Responsibilities
    - Performance Standard 4: *Maintains relationships with parents, families, and community*

Connect:

Having lived in the village for several years, I have noticed that students change the moment they enter, or leave, the school building. While some students are better behaved in school, for many students being inside that building triggers a negative response. For some, this manifests itself into an inability to learn and aggression towards other students and staff.

This may have occurred at the other schools I worked with, but here it is easier to see. Living in the village and walking to and from school means that I get to interact with my students outside of school as well. This means that sometimes I see the change first hand.

I taught fifth grade my first year here. This was a struggle because I definitely relate better to younger children than older. And that year's class was not without its challenging students. One student, Student B, was one such student. Student B struggles academically and was in the process of being referred for Special Education. Student B's strategy was to deflect attention from their academic struggles by bullying other students, disrupting lessons, and flipping desks.

However, as much as we clashed with each other during the school day, Student B always waited for me after school so we (my husband too) could all walk home together. The funny thing is, Student B didn't even live near us! The moment we left the school building everything changed. Student B was talkative, excited, and eager to learn more about us. It was like interacting with two completely separate people. Nonchalantly my husband would often ask Student B if they were nice to me that day, but for the most part, Student B acted as if the school day never really happened.

It's been five years since I had Student B in my class and now my husband is one of their teachers and is struggling with the same thing. Student B isn't the only student we have experienced this with, but I do think that this may be a teacher concern that is unique to the village experience.

Being an "outsider" in the village kind of levels the playing field with the students. When we first arrived we didn't know how to complete the most basic tasks: shopping at the store, picking up mail, flying in and out. Everything was new and unlike anything we had ever experienced before. There were no signs on the buildings and everything seemed like it could be someone's house, so we often used the help of very eager kids to show us around. Student B was probably the second child I met in the village and, from the start, was extremely helpful and respectful.

Although very excited to learn that I was going to be their teacher, that same connection did not continue once school actually began. I have always believed that Student B found it difficult to go from a relationship of equals, to one where I was the authority. In our interactions out of school, I was often the one needing Student B's help or expertise. But in school, Student B's help was not necessary.

This is such a confusing aspect because for some students, developing a bond out of school actually helps with behavior in school. There have been many times when I was able to talk to a student about a difficult subject on our walk home and resolve it by the time I got to my door. But for some students, like Student B, it was detrimental.

As I look towards the Yupik teachers for guidance, I noticed that they are capable of gaining the respect of their students without the need to assume any other role than teacher. Even in those instances when teachers are actually related to their students, this familial bond often goes unnoticed because they treat these family members the same as they would any other student. Maybe it is my own insecurity as an outsider, shame over my privilege, and postcolonial guilt that makes me feel as though it is necessary for me to be more than a teacher to my students. I am embarrassed to say that I had the audacity to believe that I knew what was best for these children, more so than their parents, relatives, community members.

What is the true role of a teacher? How can a teacher be caring and compassionate without assuming a role of mother, sister, auntie, etc.? Maintain professional boundaries and detach from students' experiences rather than take them on as ones to fix?

Focus Area: Relational Pedagogy
- Teacher Performance Evaluation:
  - Domain B: Professional Conduct and Responsibilities
    - Performance Standard 2: *Maintains professional relationships with students*
  - Domain C: Classroom Environment
    - Performance Standard 3: *Creates a positive and engaging learning environment*

Respond:

If I were to honestly reflect on my strengths and weaknesses in the classroom, I would have to say that I have strong classroom management structures. I worked with an amazing mentor teacher and was shown how to organize the classroom environment and organize lessons to limit disruptions and distractions. After adapting her system to fit my own style, I feel capable in my ability to establish routines and guidelines that most students follow. In my evaluations, my administration always mentioned the quality of my classroom management skills.

While researching for this project I came across the term *proactive classroom management.* There is probably not a more perfect phrase to describe my classroom management approach. This is what I do. I think out of all of the potential problems and arrange my lessons accordingly. If we are using materials, I think about how they will get these items. If they are working with partners, I think about who works well together. Everything is always preplanned and well thought out.

But as I was giving myself praise and a hearty pat on the back, it made me think about the other side of classroom management…the active management. I realized that this is where I struggle and it a huge source of stress and anxiety for me.

When a disruption occurs, I begin to react physically. My face gets red, body temperature raises, palms sweat, and my heart rate increases. I get tightness in my chest and my voice begins to break as I struggle to get enough breath. If the disruption is serious enough, I even begin to notice my ears plugging. Basically, all of my functioning becomes compromised and I go into full flight or fight mode and am definitely reactive. Depending on the severity of the incident this feeling can last for hours.

This shouldn't be happening. I do yoga. I meditate. I model mindfulness activities for my students. Why am I unable to utilize these skills in the moment, when I need them the most?

In my research I also came across a lot of information about self-efficacy and its role in preventing teacher burnout. It made me think that perhaps by switching my focus from trying to remain *calm*, to trying to remain *confident* in the midst of a disruption/panic attack, it would help me overcome this issue.

From a professional standpoint, these panic attacks interfere with my work in two major ways. First of all, it takes me awhile to return to a place of calm and alertness. I am okay in front of the students but I definitely have those activities for them to switch to if I need to take a break for a moment, especially if an episode occurred during direct instruction. The second, most detrimental, effect that this feeling of stress and overwhelm is that because I am in a reactive state, it is hard for me to reflect when documenting the incident. I begin second guessing my memory of the situation and will internalize the student's behavior.

Conceivably, self-efficacy will come as a result of finding resources for handling situations in the classroom. I have the preventative, proactive management down but I need to now focus on conflict resolution and de-escalation tactics. Something specific that I can use next time this happens. Which, coincidently, may happen before I return to school, when dealing with a toddler.

- <u>Focus Area</u>: De-escalation techniques/Teacher Self-Efficacy
- <u>Teacher Performance Evaluation</u>:
    - Domain C: Professional Conduct and Responsibilities
        - Performance Standard 1: *Manages classroom in a manner that maximizes student learning*
    - Domain C: Classroom Environment
        - Performance Standard 2: *Manages student behaviors effectively*

Teach:

I know teachers love Fridays, but I may love them for a slightly different reason. Friday is what I call "Finish-Up Friday," and it is a time when students work on completing their to-do list from the week. Every Monday morning we create a to-do list together and students keep a copy in their desk to check off their work as they complete it. A completed checklist means getting to engage in a free time activity of their choice on Friday.

The to-do lists are one of my best teaching tools. Having a tangible list of all of the things that they need to do gives the students a sense of responsibility and control over their time in the classroom. If something doesn't get finished one day, it goes on the list. If a student is absent, make-up work gets added to the list. Students understand how the to-do list works and have definitely bought into the concept.

Friday is a half-day so students leave after lunch. This means that my entire morning is spend with students buzzing around the classroom racing to complete their to-do list. Their tasks are not always independent activities, so they are often urging each other to stay focused and finish so they can cross it off. It is high-energy environment, but very productive. Because I spent the week modeling each to-do list activity, a majority of the students can work on their own. This means that I get to spend my time wandering

around the classroom, checking in with students, and helping when necessary. This feeling of peaceful productivity, a full engagement in their tasks, is a perfect classroom environment. Of course, this in no way means that the day is without disruption; however, because everything else is working like clockwork I can easy handle a situation as it arises. And honestly, except for instances in the lunchroom, I have never really had a major outburst on a Friday.

My ultimate goal upon returning to the classroom is to structure it so that the "Friday Feeling" can occur during other times throughout the week. If I was to really break it down, Fridays are so great for me because:

1. My students are able to work independently.
2. Peer mentors- students working together. *My classroom management system involves class money, remember to tell students that one way to earn money is to help another student finish their work (monitoring this so students don't give answers but actually help- will need to model this before trying it out). Also, a lot of the activities on the list are independent, I could add more partner, small group activities too.*
3. I can check in with each student. This can be to help with an assignment or just chat really quick and see what they are up to, whether its work or free time.
4. Utilizes paraprofessional. They can help students with make-up or missing work if absent that week. *Organize a missing assignment folder (accordion folder for days of the week work or file tub for each student). Number each handout so absent students are already identified. Have a basket for collecting the day's handouts from absent students and at the end of the day, file papers into one of these receptacles. Have this be the paraprofessional's job. Student "paper passers" put the extra worksheets in the basket but the teacher aide empties basket and files it however they want. On Fridays, the teacher aide can meet with those students who were absent and may need help completing the assignment.*
5. I get a break from "being on." I have time to complete small little tasks to help get ready for the weekend (water plants, organize papers to grade once students are dismissed, organize my personal stuff and food). But I also have time to sit at my desk and drink some water for a few minutes while I watch my students. A moment to catch my breath and enjoy my time.

For some reason, I always forget all about to-do lists and I don't really prioritize them until second semester. Perhaps by introducing them right away, students can gain some responsibility right at the beginning of the year. Potential barriers to introducing to-do lists at the beginning of the year:

1. Students typically don't have access to their iPads yet so they are unable to complete assignments on the following digital learning programs:
   a. Reach for Reading (Reading Comprehension)
   b. Dream Box (Math Assessment)
   c. Imagine Learning (Literacy Development)
2. Not sure what level students are starting the year with. I could do review work.

I actually thought there would be more barriers than this but that is about it. So I can definitely incorporate to-do lists earlier. That really helps students become independent learners and can also help with peer mentoring. The other areas seem just as easy to recreate from those "perfect" Fridays.

1. To-Do Lists- helps with student independence
    a. Need to create a laundry list of different types of activities for students, not just worksheets.
2. Peer Mentoring- collaborative learning
3. Make time to check in with each student. "No Teacher Help" Light
4. Set clear expectations for paraprofessional. Really think of ways for them to alleviate the burden and help with monitoring the students, prepping, and even teaching.
5. Schedule mini-breaks into my day. Time when kids are working and I can go to the restroom, drink coffee, etc.

At the core of the "Friday Feeling" is differentiation. A smooth work period is contingent upon having work available for students that they can complete on their own, or with the help of a friend. But, for some reason I have a love-hate relationship with differentiation. It is a concept that I definitely believe in, but for some reason it seems impossible to actually implement. I really don't understand how you can differentiate without having to create lessons for each student. You can group students, but then you are still making at least four different lessons. Differentiation, along with contextualized learning, is a learning theory that I definitely see the validity in; however, I am not sure how to actually implement it in a realistic and sustainable manner.

- Focus Area: Differentiation
- Teacher Performance Evaluation:
    o Domain A: Instructional Skills
        ▪ Performance Standard 12: *Differentiates instruction to meet needs of diverse learners*

Balance:

One of my biggest sources of stress is time; specifically, feeling as though I do not have enough time. Even as a child, although not overly neurotic in general, I do remember having anxiety at night as I watched the time slip by until the early hours of the morning. To take my mind off of the clock and my inability to sleep, I would play, read books, or rearrange my bedroom furniture, which would keep me up even later. It even so bad that I stopped wanting to go out to dinner with my family because I was afraid they would stay out too late. Not that it mattered though because I was always wide-awake when they got home, often for several hours later.

As I got older, my anxiety about time has manifests into a need to control my time. This by no way implies that I utilize my time productively; it just means that *I* want to decide

how I use (or waste) my time. I feel as though my time is my greatest resource, I will never get it back, so I want to spend it only doing things that I want to do. Which is extremely childish, having just really thought about it for the first time now.

Even though I love teaching, it is something that definitely interferes with this desire to control my time. Even during those sacred prep time minutes, there is always something (or someone) that is vying for my attention and distracting me from, or adding to, my never-ending to-do list. As prepared and planned as I try to be something always shows up unexpectedly. Since I began teaching it has always felt like a constant "race against the clock." Each moment feels like it is spent trying to accomplish something now, to save time later, but it never seems to help.

For me, this constant race against time was so exhausting and never-ending. I think it really contributed to my feelings of burnout. Or at least it wasn't helping. So when I found out I was pregnant, I couldn't imagine having the time (or energy) to teach and be a parent. I know that so many parents work (either by choice or necessity), but given how stressed out and time-constrained I already felt pre-baby, I knew I couldn't do both. I am so fortunate that it worked out and now I get to spend as much time as necessary at home before I return to the classroom.

Teaching is still a passion of mine, so taking an extended maternity leave has given me time to reflect on my teaching practice and how I want things to change once I re-enter the classroom. The bottom line is that things need to change when I go back because now it is essential that I have enough time and energy to spend with my daughter when I am done with work.

- Focus Area: Time Management, Productivity
- Teacher Performance Evaluation:
    - Domain B: Professional Conduct and Responsibilities
        - Performance Standard 6: *Participates in professional development and growth*

Appendix B:

The Reflect, Research, Reframe Worksheets

<div style="border:1px solid black;">

Reflect, Research, Reframe

Identify Your Teaching Beliefs and Change Your Practice

</div>

Reflect: What are your teaching beliefs?

<div style="border:1px solid black;">

Some questions to ask yourself:

➢ How do students learn best?

➢ What is the teacher's role in the classroom?

➢ What makes for an effective teacher?

➢ What are some of your best memories as a student?

</div>

<div style="border:1px solid black;">

Reflective Journal Prompt #1

Write a few sentences describing one of your main teaching beliefs.
Where do you think this belief originates from? (Pre-service training, professional development, personal experience, etc.)

I believe that students learn best when they feel safe, welcomed, and cared for by their teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to create a positive learning environment that is supportive of all students' academic and social-emotional needs.

Throughout my own experience as a student, I have only had a few teachers who I truly liked. While I don't remember specifically what it was about them that made me like them so much, I do remember feeling safe and welcomed in their classroom. They made me feel confident enough to share my thoughts and ideas, which as a shy kid wasn't easy.

Interestingly enough, for those teachers who I didn't like, I can remember the exact details of the negative experiences I had with them. I can remember the times they made me feel embarrassed, my feelings minimized and my perception of self as a learner diminished. To this day, the comments made by one of my elementary teachers still affects my confidence as a writer. When I became a teacher I wanted to avoid ever making my students feel this way.

</div>

Reflect: How is this belief reflected in your practice?

Some questions to ask yourself:

➤ What are some of the observable actions of having this belief?

➤ How does (or could) this belief influence your behavior in and out of the classroom?

➤ How do students respond when this belief is portrayed through your teaching?

Reflective Journal Prompt #2

Is this belief reflected in your practice?

● If **yes**, give specific examples of **observable** action and behaviors.
● If **not**, consider the factors preventing you from doing so.

Yes and No.

Observable actions and behaviors include the intentional teaching of social and emotional skills through SEL curriculum. I also try to create and maintain a positive classroom culture by having "sharing circles," integrating cooperative learning opportunities into my lessons, and having fun with my students (dancing, acting silly, sharing stories about myself). I try to celebrate student successes by sharing their work and their ideas with the class. And I provide many different ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge in an effort to be respectful of different learning and communication styles.

So yes, this belief is evident when everything is harmonious in the classroom, disruptions are mild and manageable, and I feel in control of my own emotions. However, during stressful times I do not feel as though the observable actions mentioned above are enough to safeguard myself and my students from having these experiences negatively affect our learning environment.

Research: Connect Your Beliefs with Research.

What are possible topics or search terms related to this belief?

Possible Topics Include:

- ➤ Educational Learning Theories
  - ○ *Effective Teaching Strategies, Student Learning Styles, Classroom Management Techniques*
- ➤ Psychological Theories
  - ○ *Child Development, Attachment Theory, Social Learning Theory*

Research Notes

Relevant Search Terms / Research Topics:
- ❑ Relational Pedagogy
- ❑ Detachment and Coping Strategies
- ❑ Emotional Intelligence
- ❑ Classroom Management: specifically De-escalation Techniques
- ❑ Teacher Self-efficacy

Key Findings:
- ❑ Relational Pedagogy: the focus should be one positive *interactions* rather than positive *relationships* (you cannot and will not like all students)
  - **Relevant Researchers/Sources**:
    - ❑ Thayer-Bacon
- ❑ Detachment: inability to detach from students' behavioral issues affects both the teacher's and the students' wellbeing.
  - **Relevant Researchers/Sources**:
    - ❑ Brackett, M.
- ❑ Emotional Intelligence: inability to regulate strong emotions in the moment prevents healthy detachment. Whether they are cognizant of it or not, students are learning social and emotional skills from their teachers as well.
  - **Relevant Researchers/Sources**:
    - ❑ Brackett, M.
- ❑ De-escalation Techniques: proactive classroom management cannot prevent all misbehavior and disruptions, therefore it is necessary to develop the skills to safely de-escalate incidents in the classroom.
  - **Relevant Researchers/Sources**:
    - ❑ Crisis Prevention Intervention
- ❑ Teacher Self-efficacy: the belief in one's ability to remain in control is as important as their actual ability. A lack of self-efficacy affects teacher effectiveness, student-teacher/parent-teacher relationships, and overall teacher wellbeing.
  - **Relevant Researchers/Sources**:
    - ❑ Bandura, Watson, A.

Reframe: Is this belief preventing you from becoming an effective teacher?

Some questions to ask yourself:

➢ Is this belief supported by theory?

➢ Is this belief appropriate for your unique teaching situation?

➢ Is this a limiting or affirming belief?

Reflective Journal Prompt #3

Does having this belief make you feel effective?
- If **yes**, how can you make sure that this belief is continually supported by your actions, in a healthy and sustainable manner?
- If **not**, how can you reframe your thinking to develop a belief that is both research-based and aligned with your teaching philosophy?

Yes and No.

I had always attributed effective teaching with relational pedagogy and put a lot of time and energy in cultivating meaningful relationships with my students. I truly believed that if my students liked me they would not only behave, but would succeed academically. When this proved to be inevitably false, especially with my most challenging students, I had trouble moving past these negative interactions. These interactions forever strained my perception of these particular students and affected my relationship with those students moving forward, even after they had left my class.

Researching more into this topic made me realize that relational pedagogy is more concerned with having positive teacher-student *interactions* rather than developing teacher-student *relationships*. And, more importantly, that those positive interactions do not have to be contingent upon actually liking the student, or the student liking the teacher. It is a partnership built on mutual trust and respect.

In an effort to reframe my initial belief to incorporate this understanding, while I still do believe that students learn best when they feel safe, welcomed, and cared for, and that it is the responsibility of the teacher to create and maintain a positive learning environment, I now realize that this does not need to be done to the detriment of the teacher's wellbeing. I can be a caring and compassionate person while respecting the professional expectations of a teacher. And I do not need to assume any other role (mother, friend, etc.) and I do not need to fix their problems.