

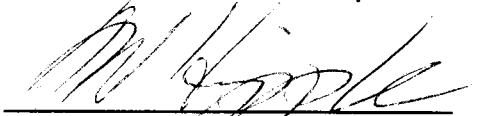
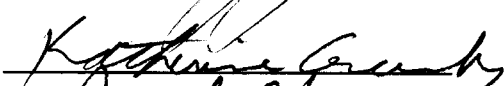
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Anne Slauson entitled "How Intern Teachers Experience Underachieving Students." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Education.



Thomas N. Turner, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:


Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

HOW INTERN TEACHERS EXPERIENCE UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INTERN TEACHERS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Anne Slauson
May 1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"To teach is to touch a life forever."

In keeping with this statement, I wish to thank the members of my committee who were chosen for various reason, but, most specifically, because they were outstanding teachers of mine during my tenure at The University of Tennessee. They are major professor, Dr. Thomas N. Turner, and other members, Dr. Ted W. Hipple, Dr. Katherine H. Greenberg, and Dr. Russel Hirst. I appreciate their input, guidance, and patience throughout this project. Thank you for touching my life.

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Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Dave, for his help and patience during the past four years, and my sons, Todd and Kurt, who had unfailing confidence in me. Thank you all.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to the students and interns who were the motivation for my research project and who inspired me, and continue to inspire me, to be a better teacher. I met many wonderful students through my volunteer work at the Adult Basic Education program in Blount County who had dropped out of school but returned to complete their education. In particular, I would like to mention Mr. Steve Robinson, a student whom I taught to read but who, in turn, taught me how illiterate persons survive in life and do it well.

In addition, I wish to mention the interns I have worked with the past four years through my supervisory capacity, my teaching responsibilities, and my research. I have been impressed with their dedication to the profession, and, in particular, with their commitment to students who have problems in school. They were all caring teachers, the kind we need to educate our nation's children.

ABSTRACT

This study was to determine the perceptions of intern teachers regarding their motivations to become teachers and the educational, professional, and personal resources they rely on to become more effective in the classroom. I focused on the interns' perceptions of their ability to teach children with problems that cause them to be underachievers. Three factors were investigated: (1) personal efficacy, (2) formal teacher education, and (3) a professional support system. Data were collected using two different methods: a survey of the elementary and secondary intern teacher population at The University of Tennessee during the academic year 1995-1996, and follow-up, in-depth interviews with volunteer participants. The results showed that while the interns were highly motivated, capable, and caring teachers, they often didn't feel effective in the classroom because of not knowing their students, problems they had with classroom management, and the lack of practical, effective strategies to deal with underachieving students.

Most interns felt their education courses provided useful general information but lacked specific instruction on difficult problems that came up during the internship. They felt that their personal efficacy, or belief in themselves plus the help they received from mentoring teachers and peers was often more useful in getting them through difficulties than their formal coursework.

In the school environment, they initially felt rather isolated, relying, again, on mentoring teachers to learn the way things were done. They sensed constantly that they were being observed, which sometimes led to competitive feelings towards other interns. Several resented doing the work of mentoring teachers without being paid, especially during the second semester.

Taking graduate classes during the internship experience provoked strong opinions. The interns felt frustrated and exhausted by the requirements placed on them, which at times did not seem to facilitate their needs or obligations in the classroom. Classroom responsibilities were deemed to be more important.

The results of this study suggest that intern teachers are highly motivated and committed to their students, and they want those students to be successful as learners. Listening to the true-life experiences of these dedicated teachers can only benefit and improve our program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The teacher is seen as a person, not a statistic or factoid. The teacher has a real voice and an important message to convey"...(Ornstein, 1995, p. 128).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of intern teachers regarding their motivations to become teachers, and the educational, professional, and personal resources they rely on to help them become effective teachers. A special focus was made on the interns' perceptions of their ability to teach those children with problems that cause them to be underachievers.

Three central factors of importance to intern teachers were investigated:

(1) Personal Efficacy, or a belief that they, as teachers, have the ability to influence learning and motivation. They must have confidence in their ability to accomplish the task of instruction while, at the same time, allow for learning to take place on the part of their students.

(2) Formal Teacher Education and how it affects perceptions of teaching efficacy. This is the belief that one can influence student outcomes, cause personal improvement, and transmit the social mores and customs necessary to contribute responsibly in our society.

(3) A Support System: The final component is a support system composed of mentoring teachers, principals, other school faculty, former professors, peers, supervisors, and family members. An intern teacher needs to have people with whom to compare notes during training that will help overcome feelings of isolation and discouragement, which may threaten self-confidence and undermine the belief that they can be effective teachers.

If any of these three important components is missing, or is lacking to a great extent, an intern can be overwhelmed, stressed out, or frustrated to the point of being "at-risk" themselves--of dropping out of the program, or after a few short years, the teaching profession. To better understand the internship experience, it was my intention to examine how well teacher interns at The University of Tennessee (UT) at Knoxville, felt they were prepared to be effective teachers particularly with students who underachieve in school, and how these three components each influenced their ability to teach them.

Approaches to the Problem

The study was approached in two phases. First, I conducted a survey of the total population of elementary and secondary intern teachers enrolled at the University of Tennessee in the fall of 1995 to determine their motivations for becoming teachers, their perceptions of their teaching efficacy, and their perceptions regarding underachievers and how prepared they felt to teach them.

In the second phase of the research, I conducted two separate interviews with eight practicing intern teachers who volunteered to participate in this study. Variables such as gender, subjects taught, grade levels, and school settings (*i.e.* suburban, inner city, and rural) were present. I also looked at the journals they kept, of those who wished to share them, because journal writing, in particular, is becoming an accepted means in teacher education of recording one's reflective thinking. Reflective thinking was important to this study because it "helps prospective teachers think critically and analytically about the events they observed and experienced in the classroom...to apply them to practice in their analysis of these events; to consider alternative strategies for solving problems; and to assess the consequences of these strategies" (Feyton and Kaywell, 1994, p. 58). These investigators found that, as the year progressed, the interns wrote with "less emphasis on self and a greater sensitivity to students."

For the purposes of this study, the four fundamental questions were:

First: "What motivated you to become a teacher?"

Second: "What is your experience in the intern teaching program with regard to students that have a variety of problems and manifest them in different ways that make them difficult to teach and, therefore, they may underachieve in school?"

Third: "How well were you prepared to deal with those students and help them learn?"

Fourth: "Have you needed support during the internship experience, and, if so, to whom have you turned for that support?"

The eight intern teachers who participated were pleased to have an opportunity to express their ideas and feelings, which is important in a qualitative study. While the situations and experiences varied, I looked for common themes to emerge from the interviews to better understand the internship year that might give information as to strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Definitions of Terms

Intern Teachers: In the context of this study, it became apparent that the term "student" sometimes meant the traditional student in, for example, an elementary or secondary school classroom, but might also refer to those "education students" who were serving as "student teachers." To minimize any confusion throughout this study, I have referred to "student teachers" and "preservice teachers" using the term "intern teachers," which describes the program here at the University of Tennessee. I have used the term "student" or "students" to refer to actual classroom students in an elementary or secondary school setting.

Underachievers or "At Risk" Students: The difficulty of precisely defining those students who have problems in learning was confounded by the fact that "this is a very diverse population of students, and their diversity makes description difficult" (Swanson, 1991, p.3). Definitions overlap and cross socioeconomic, cultural, and gender boundaries. Such students are variously referred to as being

at-risk, discouraged, defeated, disengaged, problem kids, and potential drop-outs. All are underachievers. It is important to understand that underachieving or "at risk" students may be found in any socioeconomic stratum. While we usually think of poor, low-ability, minority students as being the only underachievers, students of normal and above average intelligence fall into that category as well. Anywhere from five to fifty percent of students classified as "gifted" students may be found to be underachievers (Sapon-Shevin, p. 65). Any type of student who posed a problem or challenge in the classroom because of their underachievement was included in the concerns of this study.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction to the Problem

By the year 2000, between 30 and 40 per cent of the school population will be students of color, yet eighty-three percent of the teaching population is European-American, seventy-six percent of preservice teachers are female, and 91 percent are white (Zimpher and Ashburn, 1992, in Parker and Hood, 1995, p. 160). Potential problems exist because professors and education students have had "limited racial and racially different experiences" (p. 160). While the school population will be more diverse in the future, "courses in the teacher preparation curriculum are largely devoid of content and knowledge about various racial groups in the United States" (Holmes Group Forum, 1990, in Parker and Hood, p. 159). The make-up of the teacher population and the preparation they have for teaching is not the whole problem. "Increasing numbers of students can be expected to be disengaged from schooling because they differ substantially from the white, upper-middle-class students that public secondary schools have been designed to serve" (Louis and Smith, 1992, p. 119).

Teachers are and will continue to be expected to bring about changes in their practices to impact on "disengaged" students, but, unfortunately, "teacher education...tends to produce the status quo (Gollnick and Chinn 1990; Sleeter

1985; in Breault 1995, p. 266), or may even "strengthen the existing negative values held by intern teachers toward multicultural populations (Ginsburg and Newman 1985; Haberman 1991 in Breault, 1995, p. 266). Attempts to teach about multicultural diversity and related issues, for example, may be "superficial, lack a theoretical basis, and are sometimes counter productive" (Bondy, Schmitz, and Johnson 1993; Buttery, Haberman, Guyton, and Houston 1993; Marshall 1992; Reed 1993 in Breault 1995, p. 266).

Many researchers have found that teachers feel unprepared and uncomfortable teaching underachieving students (Glasser, 1993; Stephen et.al., 1993; Ramirez-Smith, 1995; Pogrow, 1995). Knoxville fifth grade teachers expressed the same concern in a recent survey (Slauson, Winstead, Lang, and Cleare, 1994, pp. 24-25). They reported a lack of interest regarding discipline, support, respect, and concern for students in general, but particularly with at-risk and mainstreamed students. They resented the fact that teachers were perceived as having all the answers or "quick-fix" solutions and were supposed to solve problems for which they were unprepared.

While intern teachers had positive experiences when they were in school and describe former teachers as nurturing, caring people (Mahlios and Maxson, 1995), as interns they often experience frustration and discouragement because of their lack of experience and inability to effect change (Tomlinson et al. 1994). Many become stressed out to the point of feeling ill. Approximately 30 percent of new teachers do not teach beyond two years, and, of the most talented, nearly 40

percent leave after five years. (Heyns, 1988; Scholechty and Vance, 1981; 1983 in Klausmeier, 1994). The fact that many leave the profession so quickly due to "burn-out" demonstrates that this is a serious problem throughout the country.

As to the students themselves, there is a "rising number of children who exhibit academic and emotional problems (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1990; U.S. Department of Education 1988). More recent statistics from NCES (1995) show that of those students identified as having multiple risk factors in eighth grade, only 60 percent graduated from high school on time compared to 90 percent of students with no risk factors. These students had records of repeated failure, have a "loser's mentality," and "frequently believe themselves to be incapable of learning much above the basic level" (Pierce, 1994, p. 39). Why isn't the teaching of these students more effective? "The primary problem classroom teachers face is the presence of low achieving students in their classroom" (Hargis, p. 20). This study sought to better understand how intern teachers learn from classroom teachers "on the job" or in the classroom which is, after all, a learning environment for interns as well as for their students,

Relevance of a Qualitative Study

The value of qualitative studies in educational research has been supported recently which, according to Ornstein, amounts to a new paradigm in investigations about teaching; a type of narrative inquiry "founded on field-based methods

including conversations, interviews, and case studies of one, two, or a few subjects, usually written in narrative or story form" (p. 125). Carter and Doyle state that "a more positive and optimistic perspective has begun to emerge...which places personal narrative and life history at the center of teaching practice and the teacher education process" (Carter and Doyle, 1995, p. 186).

One of the basic characteristics of a qualitative researcher is that they are interested and curious about the person or persons under study. They want to know about that person's behavior, especially how and why they function as they do in a particular setting. Basically they want to know the person's story as he or she sees it. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) describe the choice of methodology as being "consonant with the [researcher's] socialized world view." Rather than choosing a research problem that fits a certain type of methodology, the researcher is "attracted to and shapes the research problems that match his or her personal view of seeing and understanding the world" (p.9).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative studies, by their nature, apply to one particular experience with persons (or a person), time, place, and other specific variables, which hinder the data from being "generalizable" to other populations and experiences. Another limitation is the researcher's bias, which in this case was the belief that intern teachers were not well enough prepared to teach underachieving students who

have a plethora of problems that interfere with learning. It was also felt that the internship entails a certain amount of stress, some of which could be alleviated. These feelings of bias, however, also provided the motive to do this study. A final limitation is that the interviewees either volunteered to participate in this study or readily agreed to participate when solicited, so might be considered rather exceptional interns and, therefore, not representative of the entire intern population. It is hoped that the wide range of variables present in the population somewhat reduced that problem. Indeed, their willingness to participate might be considered to be a strength of the study.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Personal Efficacy, Images, Perceptions and Beliefs

Image of a Teacher Several studies confirmed that intern teachers have a strong image of what a teacher is and what a teacher's role is (Carter and Doyle 1995; Kennedy 1991). Researchers have suggested that that image might be one important reason why intern teachers have difficulty changing their teaching styles and implementing new strategies and ideas. Intern teachers "enter and leave teacher preparation programs with a relatively unchanged set of beliefs" (Tomlinson, et al. p. 106). The long apprenticeship they've undergone as students partially explains this phenomenon (Mahlios, 1995; Kennedy, 1991). "The role models [they] observed while they were children continue to hold tremendous sway" (Kennedy, p. 16).

The power of their 'apprenticeship of observation' and of the conventional images of teaching that derive from childhood experiences makes it very difficult to alter teaching practices and explains in part why teaching has remained so constant over so many decades of reform efforts (p. 16).

Lortie reported that the "prolonged apprenticeship of observation is far more powerful than teacher preparation experiences" (in Carter and Doyle, p. 186), and influenced how they thought about teaching and how they taught. It is difficult for intern teachers to imagine that their students will be different from the way they were in school. "Unfortunately, novices often disregard cases that differ from their

own previous experience" (Holt-Reynolds in Carter and Doyle, p. 189).

Stages of the Internship Experience It has been found that intern teachers go through stages of concern in the education process; (1) concern with self, (2) concern with the teaching task, and finally, (3) concern about their impact on students (Williams, 1992; Carter and Doyle, 1995). Describing these stages more fully, "survival" in the school and in the classroom was uppermost in the interns' minds during the "self stage," (Fuller in Williams, p. 20). At this point they wanted to have others see that they were conscientious about details, such as getting to class on time, learning students' names, and remembering where things were located in the school. They wanted to be liked as well as respected by teachers and other members of the school community. "Worries about teaching performance centered less on technique and more on whether their voice and demeanor were 'teacher-like'" (p. 20). They were easily distracted, and it was difficult for them to think about technique or teaching tasks during this time. They seemed to go through a process of being at a loss as to what to do, attempted to borrow practices from teachers they knew, their mentoring teachers or supervisors, and tried to "negotiate an understanding" as they dealt with the immediate problem. (Carter and Doyle, p. 189). The focus of planning was on "developing strategies and activities for involving students with content...they have difficulty seeing the pedagogical implications of student differences" (Reynolds, 1995, p. 213). Initially they do not develop a concern for their students because

their focus is on image--how others perceive them, how effectively they learn the routine of the school, and how they manage the school day.

In the second stage, the focus was on the act of teaching. They learned to coordinate teacher "tasks" such as grading papers and keeping records, in addition to various techniques and classroom management skills. There were still limitations, however, such as (1) they were not consistent in what they paid attention to in the classroom nor in how they interpreted what they saw and heard, (2) they were unable to differentiate ordinary and typical occurrences in the classroom from what is extraordinary and atypical and, (3) they could not distinguish what is important from what is not. (Berliner in Williams, pp. 22, 23). In their concern for presenting lessons and knowing content, they often didn't see students' misbehavior, nor did they know when students didn't understand. Intern teachers were unable to detect student behaviors that were "instant cues to experienced teachers that something is wrong" (p. 23).

There was a shift in focus from the teaching task itself to the impact of teaching on student learning in the third stage (Fuller in Williams, p. 23). Instead of being concerned with the "how" of teaching, there was more emphasis on how to do the teaching better. They deliberately sought advice from mentors on ways to improve their techniques, and on how to have a greater impact on their students. Because they were more "reflective" in this stage, they could work better with mentors on refining their skills.

Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation As intern teachers moved through the internship year, they experienced the feeling that certain "teacher behaviors" were constantly being observed and evaluated. They were aware that getting to class on time, writing lesson plans and learner objectives, monitoring, correcting homework, and other such tasks are the focus of teacher evaluations because they can be observed and measured. "Divergent thinking and humanistic or moral practices" were not appreciated and teachers who promoted those practices faced subtle discrimination" from other teachers (Craig 1993; Eisner 1993; Ornstein 1994 in Ornstein, p. 135). They were ignored in evaluations because they were "difficult to measure." An intern in Guyton's study (1994) reported that she was "not encouraged to teach 'creatively,' and felt some pressure to not do so because teachers thought she was trying to show them up" (p. 7). In addition, students' test scores are often used as measures of evaluation, although whether such tests actually measure knowledge or intelligence is an ongoing debate.

Traditionally, teachers were judged good or bad based on their pedagogical skill. Those who were considered "good" could communicate information, lead discussions, ask questions, wait for answers, prepare lesson plans, and write learner objectives. They "knew their stuff, i.e. math teachers knew math; English teachers knew grammar, writing, and literature" (Tuckman, p. 178). Little was done to measure and improve a teacher's "interpersonal style," composed of those affective behaviors that make teachers approachable and improve student learning. Examples of these behaviors are being warm and accepting, organized, dynamic,

charismatic, flexible, creative and imaginative; qualities which allow teachers to relate to students in a more meaningful way. This type of evaluation isn't used often because it can't be done easily and it relies on people's judgements so is therefore subjective (pp. 178-180). "While we attempt to improve a teacher's knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills through preservice and inservice training programs, as well as through supervision, we seem to do little to improve a teacher's interpersonal style" (p. 183).

Teachers (and certainly not intern teachers) have not been involved in the discussion regarding evaluation measures because they "lacked the specialized research skills and esoteric knowledge" (Brophy, 1988; Gitlin, 1992; Ornstein, 1995, p. 124) which was "remote and irrelevant" to them (Elbaz 1991, Kagan 1992 in Ornstein, p. 126). Such evaluation measures led to frustration and feelings of diminished self-worth.

Perceptions of Self-Worth and Efficacy In a three year study of intern teachers, Offutt (1995) found that self-esteem, or one's sense of self worth, is an important factor in an intern teacher's make-up. By analyzing journal writings, she found four additional categories or themes: (1) motivation; some students seem to be more internally motivated toward helping children than are other students, (2) priorities; some students had outside employment or had children of their own, which sometimes presented problems, (3) effort; some students persevered or did all they could to excel and rise above ordinary expectations, and (4) personal

effectiveness; some students did not have a "feel" on how they did on a lesson or convey an interest in what they were teaching. It was concluded that these factors should be taken into consideration before the internship experience in order to have teachers who are not only "well informed, [but] realistic about their abilities, and confident in their performance" (p. 288).

Soodak and Podell (1994) found that teachers made decisions regarding "difficult-to-teach" students based on their "efficacy," or the belief in their ability to effect change. They reported that "dramatic increases in special education enrollments, particularly in the areas of learning disabilities and emotional disturbance (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, and Thurlow, 1992) suggest that teachers are more frequently looking outside the classroom for help, and perhaps relief, with difficult to teach students" (p. 44). That special classes have been found to be "dumping grounds" was pointed out by Kozol (1991). "Classes for the emotionally handicapped, neurologically impaired, learning disabled and educable mentally retarded are disproportionately black...classes for the speech, language, and hearing impaired are disproportionately Hispanic" (Kozol, p. 119). Placement in special classes caused other problems such as the negative effects of labeling students, the "irrevocability" of placement, and the questionable efficacy of special education courses in general. This was one of the motives behind the movement to inclusion, and it's been found that students do better in regular classes even though teachers aren't always comfortable having mainstreamed students there (Soodak and Podell 1994). Knox County teachers expressed negative feelings

toward mainstreamed students and students with family and social problems because they felt inadequately prepared (Slauson, Winstead, Lang, and Cleare, 1994). They expressed a need for a forum to discuss their problems and find some real solutions.

Called to Teach Historically women, particularly unmarried ones, often felt "called to teach," from religious convictions as well as a more secular "Christian duty" to "serve" society (Evans, 1989, pp.70). They were considered for this type of service since they were the primary caregivers for children so the classroom seemed their "natural" domain. To Dame School and Common School teachers, Yankee "schoolmarms" who went south after the Civil War to teach former slaves, and pioneer missionary-teachers who taught on Indian reservations, the classroom seemed to be a woman's domain and an acceptable place to work in early American society. Emma Willard influenced thousands of teachers at Troy Seminary, adding to the "image of republican mothers raising virtuous sons" a "vision of female teachers instructing virtuous students of both sexes" (p. 71). Catherine Beecher wrote about women's moral superiority and their "moral mission" to "save the nation" with all of its social problems. Lucy Stone summed up the philosophy towards educating women as teachers by saying, "this work of supplying teachers is a great work, and it must be done, or our country is lost and the world will remain unconverted" (p. 71).

Some male teachers and principals felt "called as well...

If it was truly the case that a man's nature impelled him to teach, then there was nothing to be gained by dwelling on the hardships...accordingly, teacher-training programs of the 19th century sought to instill those standards of personal and civic virtue that would obviate doubt and reinforce commitment (Mattingly in Serow, p. 66).

Today many education students consider teaching a special "calling" as well, not merely a job (Serow, 1994). Several interns in a study by Guyton (1994) based their decision to teach on religious convictions. One stated that, "If the Lord intended me to be a teacher, I would get into the program" (p. 8). Teachers' beliefs are instrumental in the decision to teach in urban schools rather than in the suburbs. One intern felt a sense of "responsibility" and said, "This opportunity has put out the fire that I need to be contributing...my beliefs on equality are put to work here, and this is my hands-on effort, not helping people from a distance." She regarded teaching as an extension of her "need to work for a better community" (p.8). Parker and Hood (1995) found that minority students entered teaching because they saw it as their "mission" to help other minority students overcome academic and social barriers. An intern in their study reported that she wanted to help her students become "critical agents of change" (p. 172).

Shift to Service Ethic Intern teachers were generally good students when they were in school; and their success in school instilled in them "the desire to work with people--especially young people--and the desire to render service to society" (Breault, 1995, P.273). They hoped to pass on to others the values they

had been taught in school with the long range view to improve society (Serow, 1994), bring about social change, and "make a difference in the world" (Offutt, p. 286). Serow found they responded positively to the statement, "teaching will let me have an impact on other people," (p. 67) and they shared a "desire to help others." Teachers often came from teaching families and were strongly influenced by them and former teachers. Their favorite role model was a teacher who inspired them to be one also" (Offutt, p. 286). Many returned to the areas in which they grew up to teach to "give back" to the community in which they were raised. They returned there rather than working in the inner city, for example, because it was safe and familiar territory. "Familiarity, for most teachers, is very important" (Breault, p. 268). He found that culturally diverse students may have problems in the future because "given the nature of the teaching force, there is little life experience or knowledge on which to base decisions involving students from diverse backgrounds" (p. 266). Unfortunately, "teacher beliefs will not change unless teachers become more reflective about those beliefs and are presented with new values to replace the old" (Banks 1991; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1992; Nespor 1987, in Breault, 1995).

Beliefs About Teaching and Teacher Education

The Effect of Beliefs on Teaching Practices Brown and Rose (1995) studied how theoretical beliefs about teaching and learning affected the way their interns

felt about their students. While preservice and inservice teachers were supposed to implement new methods and strategies based on the latest research, they wanted to see why it was so difficult to get them to. One reason they found was that "beginning teachers experienced 'considerable tension' because of all the practical aspects of daily teaching, and were not likely to implement strategies which supported research on learning" (Russell, 1989; in Brown and Rose, p. 22).

In the past, teachers were not thought to develop professionally because of an "absence of pedagogical knowledge" (p. 21). Even in the case of experienced teachers, "formal education and/or teaching experiences did not contribute to an educator's understanding of the principles of learning" (Schubert, in Brown and Rose, p. 21). Teachers entered the profession with beliefs and thoughts that were..."well-formed, powerful, resistant to change, and often, from the perspective of teacher educators, wrongheaded" (Sykes and Bird in Brown and Rose, p. 22).

It is important to determine what teachers believe should be done to address the needs of students with academic difficulties and whether teachers' acceptance of the responsibility for remediating a student's academic problems relates to their beliefs about the student and/or themselves. In other words, what beliefs do teachers hold that might influence their decisions about the instruction of difficult-to-teach students? (Soodak and Podell, 1994).

Recent information on theories of learning and cognition did change some teachers' thinking about students' learning. Brown and Rose found that teachers knew about constructivism and information-processing theory and the need for students to relate new information to previous and future learning experiences.

They also understood that children should have opportunities to share information with other children to develop new ideas and modify existing ideas as "active players in the learning process." Yet while they felt aware of students' understanding of the information presented, they still did not take into consideration their students' thinking. A multitude of factors in the presentation of curricula and instructional strategies influenced them, so there was still a concern as to how much they incorporated "progressive learning theories into their practice" (p. 23). Parental expectations, lack of time needed to implement new methods, and large classes, particularly with large numbers of students from disadvantaged homes, were other reasons given for not implementing new methods.

Classroom Management Latz studied interns in a field experience to see if it helped them get a "feel" for the classroom by writing their perceptions and concerns regarding classroom management and discipline. Those areas were of particular concern, because they are the major problems for both novice and experienced teachers (Barots and Lotven, 1980; Cruickshank, Kennedy and Meyers, 1974; Ingersol, 1976; Pigge, 1978 in Latz, 1992). Most of the interns' comments dealt with student behavior and discipline such as keeping students on task and controlling disruptive behavior.

Latz felt the interns could make a theoretical distinction but not, perhaps, a practical one. He noted the strong link between a teachers' instructional approach and classroom management, but did not feel that preservice teachers understood

how they related to each other. Intern teachers seemed narrowly focused in their solutions, looking for "prescriptive, quick-fix methods" for dealing with individual problems. "As the beginners became more experienced, they came to understand the global and dynamic nature of the classroom, and as a result, their methods became more preventative" (p. 3).

Ross and Bondy (1993) looked at classroom management as well, and also found that intern teachers were more focused on controlling behavior rather than promoting responsible citizenship in the classroom. "Effective" teachers were perceived by superiors as those who maintained order, and teachers were considered "ineffective" if they couldn't maintain order. "Traditionally, classrooms have been organized according to authoritarian power relations" (p. 328). "While teachers and students are not equals in the classroom, and every teacher faces individual children who have moderate to severe problems functioning in the classroom," (p. 327), they should all participate in making classroom rules. Modeling good citizenship and teaching students to be responsible citizens should be emphasized, not controlling behavior. Tomlinson et al. (1994) concurred that "survival" concerns dominated interns' thoughts at the beginning of the year, and other persons' opinions and evaluations were so important that the interns became "negative, rigid, and authoritarian--shifting from a more idealistic or humanistic vantage point to a more controlling and custodial one" (p. 107). They were concerned that they were modelling behavior as it had always been done.

Morine-Dersheimer and Reeve analyzed various metaphors that interns used in video-taped lessons to study ideas on classroom management because metaphors are thought to "reflect accurately the underlying assumptions people have," and have a "powerful influence on teachers' behavior" (pp. 29-30). Teachers demonstrated interactive behavior with the students and pupil engagement was high when lesson management showed "shared progress toward a clearly articulated goal." When lesson management showed "dubious progress toward an indeterminate end," there was little interactive behavior and pupil responses were low. They found that successful interns emphasized "pupil involvement and attention to pupil performance, while less successful interns emphasized pupil control and paid minimal attention to performance" (p. 38).

They concluded that metaphors did reflect beliefs about teaching and learning, and those beliefs can be discussed, questioned, and compared to journals and other written work to see what changes occurred during teacher preparation. They encouraged students' "questioning of beliefs about teaching and learning." In conclusion, this information helped teacher educators with "systematic program evaluation" (p. 39).

Mahlis and Maxson (1995) studied metaphors as well to find certain patterns that revealed an intern's feelings about schooling, life, and childhood. They looked at the relationships between an intern's self-esteem and the ways they described their school experiences through metaphors. They found elementary intern teachers remembered their elementary school experience as a "focused,

cohesive, positive social activity, as in being in a family or on a team" (p. 196). When asked to describe the ideal teacher, administrator, and parents, they felt they should be "caring" above everything else. In addition, this study demonstrated that interns believe teachers should have academic qualities as well as interpersonal ones (p. 197), a finding that differed from other studies.

This supported Comeaux's (1992) finding that intern teachers differentiate between the way they preferred to learn as students and the way they taught. As students they enjoyed learning in groups and dialoging with their teacher when they were students, yet they designed lessons for pupils utilizing "didactic methodologies" (p.197).

The question remains to be further investigated as to why this happens.

Reflective Teaching Feyton and Kaywell looked at "reflective teaching," (Zeichner and Liston, 1985), as the way for interns to assess "the origins, purposes, and consequences of their work at all levels." They found that important changes in the conceptions interns had were made during their internship. At first interns focused on (1) routine concerns and specific tasks, (2) nervousness about the teaching endeavor, (3) expressions of idealism, (4) a desire to impact on students, and (5) feeling that the profession itself was important. As the year progressed they realized that teachers needed to be well prepared, they needed to possess certain qualities and strengths such as patience, fairness, and openness, and that fatigue was a factor in teaching. They maintained their feelings of idealism and still felt that teaching was an important profession where they could have an impact on students.

There were times, however, when they expressed fear of their students and a sense of inadequacy to motivate them and relate to their different needs. Allen (1993) and LeCompte (1985, in Breault, 1995) reported that interns felt fear, anxiety, resentment, and frustration towards underachieving or at-risk students. Some of these negative feelings were teacher-oriented; "feeling unprepared to deal with students," "feeling an inability to interact...in an appropriate manner," and "feeling frustrated with their lack of experience with diversity" (p. 8). In these studies interns worried about getting to know students as individuals. After the internship was completed they felt challenged by the opportunity to deal with student differences and teach students of diverse needs, and they retained a "faith" that students genuinely wanted to learn. Through reflection they analyzed their students and generated more effective teaching strategies to address their problems. The emphasis shifted from "self" to a more sensitive awareness of the students (Feyton and Kaywell, 1994).

Bacon (1992) also showed that interns change their perceptions of students. In field experiences with at-risk students, he found that interns had certain biases towards them and believed they were "different from conventional students as learners, and, more importantly, as people" (p. 1). Secondly, they assumed they could teach these students without concerning themselves with the students' environment and lifestyles. The experience proved valuable in that they re-examined their beliefs and interests to become teachers in the first place, and some decided they were interested in working with underachievers; others realized

they preferred a more conventional situation. "They were able to come to a new appreciation of teaching as a profession that involves helping people as opposed to simply disseminating information" (p. 16).

Guillaume, Zuniga-Hill, and Yee studied California interns who lived where there was a need for teachers who were prepared to teach a multicultural population. There again teachers felt inadequately informed and unprepared to deal with the needs of diverse students and were biased against students from diverse backgrounds (Wayson in Guillaume et al. p. 69). Prospective teachers expressed "resentment toward immigrants for taking jobs from others," and felt that "minorities are poor because they are lazy" (Ahlquist in Guillaume et al. p. 69). Those attitudes might stem from the large numbers of illegal immigrants in California, and, consequently, might have a bearing on their attitudes towards the students, their parents, and the cultural values of the community which could effect their ability to teach those children. While interns showed some initial interest in multicultural education (Ahlquist in Guillaume et al.), they did not readily select student teaching placements in multicultural settings (Sleeter, in Guillaume et al.).

At-Risk and Other Underachieving Students

Because of the special focus of this study on how interns regarded the teaching of underachieving students, it is necessary to discuss, briefly, the students themselves. Underachieving or at-risk students have serious problems

especially with regard to education. In a profile compiled by Stephens, Varble, and Taitt (1993), it was found that many of these students came from non-English speaking homes, they were more deficient in basic skills, and their self-esteem and self-confidence was low. For various reasons, their test scores were lower, absenteeism was high, and they had behavior problems. Many of these children worked or were responsible for the care of siblings. Some had little or no parental support, or had parent-related problems such as single parenting, abuse, neglect, drug problems, and low income homes. These problems often overlapped or were interrelated, which complicated the situation and made simple solutions impossible.

Definition of Terms There is a difficulty with the definition of underachieving students because "this is a very diverse population of students and their diversity makes description difficult" (Swanson, 1991, p.3). Definitions overlap and cross socioeconomic, cultural, and gender boundaries. "Having multiple definitions for any phenomenon will make maintaining focus and understanding problematic" (Sagor 1993). However, in order to understand the difficulties that student intern teachers will face, it is necessary to define several problem "types" that may be present in their classrooms.

The simplest and most common definition was suggested by Slavin who described students who are "at-risk" are those who, on the basis of several risk factors, are unlikely to graduate from high school. Among those factors would be "low achievement, retention in grade, behavior problems, poor attendance, low

socioeconomic status, and attendance at schools with large numbers of poor students" (Slavin and Madden, 1989, p.4). There are "predictors" of who will likely be the drop-outs, which increase as children move through elementary school. By sixth grade, grades, attendance, and retention are very high predictors (p.4).

Sagor's focus is on the students who cause most problems to teachers. This is the child who is not succeeding but should be; the child who is disrupting the learning of others in addition to his own. His definition of an at-risk student (adapted from the work of Prof. Arthur Pearl) is, "someone who is unlikely to graduate on schedule with both the skills and self-esteem necessary to exercise meaningful options in the areas of work, leisure, culture, civic affairs, and inter/intra personal relationships" (Sagor, 1993, pp. 3,4).

Jerry Conrath describes these students as "discouraged and defeated learners" (in Sagor, p. 11). They have little self-confidence and lack feelings of self-worth. They "avoid" other students and adults because they're behind in classes which reinforces their low self-esteem. They don't trust adults and adult institutions because they've been "unfair, unresponsive, and abusive--mentally, intellectually, and physically" (p.11). They don't see the future as bright or positive. They are behind in academic skills by middle school, and see themselves as "dumb" rather than lacking in skills. School is often "nice" to them, making lower demands and fewer challenges (p.12). Some come from abusive situations; others from homes with well-educated parents who don't understand their child's feelings of helplessness. Many live in poverty. Some students are very lonely, yet often are

unresponsive to school attempts to socialize. They have difficulty with sitting for long periods of time listening to lectures in classrooms with little variety, more so than other students, and are seen as "disruptive" when they get impatient or ask the question, "Why do we have to do this?" The "disruptive" label leads to predictive chain of "difficult, dumb, delinquent, and dropout" (p. 12).

Alderman concurred that they do not make links between their effort and achievement, and even when they have success, they think they were just lucky or that it was easy. When they do poorly they blame someone or something else, or "the fact" that they are dumb. They don't think talent or effort has much to do with achievement, so external rewards such as praise means nothing to them. Typically they do not understand cause and effect relationships so do not learn from their mistakes, nor do they accept personal responsibility for their actions, good or bad. "Some students persist and work on their own for their own intrinsic interest, while others work because they are required to and do not believe their actions are related to success and failure" (Alderman, 1990, p. 27).

Heacox defined students who fall behind in school and in learning "underachievers," and agreed that these students have negative feelings about themselves, thought school was boring and that it had no relevancy in their lives. This referred to children of either gender, and to any age, race, or socioeconomic background. Traditionally, poor, low-ability, minority students were considered to be the only underachievers, but students of normal and above average intelligence fall into that category as well. Anywhere from five to fifty percent of gifted students

are found to be underachievers.

Gifted students often feel they are "different" and suffer from labels such as "nerd" or "egghead." Putting them in special classes may result in feelings of insecurity and isolation (Sapon-Shevin, p. 65). Low self-esteem has been found to be a highly significant factor in gifted underachievers (Fine and Pitts, 1980; Davis and Rimm, 1985, and Whitmore, 1980 in Greenberg et.al. p.94).

Baum, Renzulli, and Hebert (1994) looked at bright underachievers and found that students fell behind in classwork because of (1) emotional issues, (2) peer group pressure, (3) lack of an appropriate curriculum, and (4) undiagnosed learning disabilities and (5) poor self-regulation strategies. Many of these underachievers don't want to admit they are having trouble learning and so they blame their poor performance on an unresponsive teacher or boring subject matter. "Once they pursue a self-determined goal, however, they are more willing to admit that poor learning strategies hinder their progress" (pp. 50, 51) and by allowing them to pursue topics of personal interest and in their preferred styles of learning often resulted in high levels of achievement and reversed the cycle of underachievement.

Characteristics of underachievers include students who want to maintain some control in their lives by refusing to comply with adult wishes. They may be perfectionists and demand too much of themselves or may not want to accept any responsibility for their success. Many suffer from family problems and the problems are often so interrelated and overlapping that many schools tend to

underestimate the range and complexity of students and their problems (Wehlage, 1989). "All youth, at risk or not, need to acquire a personal sense of competence and success, to develop a sense of identity and social integration, and to acquire the socially useful knowledge and skills to make that individual a good worker, parent and citizen" (p.25).

Even when the problems are identified and known, it is sometimes difficult for teachers to know how best to help the student. Sometimes their empathy gets in the way of being effective and helpful. Ramirez-Smith (1995) described the problem that teachers "empathized" with the children too much instead of pushing them to accomplish goals in spite of their problems. "Teachers could no longer excuse poor achievement by saying, 'This child's parent is incarcerated.' A new mindset was, 'Yes, this child's parent is incarcerated, but can she read?' Now every teacher expects every child to learn something every day" (p. 18).

Newman wrote that one of the reasons that students fail in school or find that they are not adequately prepared for their role in life is that they are taught fragmented pieces of declarative knowledge. "They have not been educated to cope successfully with the demands of personal, vocational, and civic life in contemporary society" (Newman, p. 459). These students saw no point to their learning, did not develop in-depth understanding, and therefore, they become "disengaged." Normal but low achieving students, often labeled as learning disabled, are "curriculum casualties" according to Hargis (1989). One problem here is that schools don't distinguish between achievement and potential to

achieve, particularly in a variety of areas. (pp. 4-5). He faults the schools, not the students for the lack of student achievement.

Even when strategies to prevent problems were utilized, many children lacked the social skills to interact effectively with classmates (Manning, 1993). And while teachers' attitudes differ greatly, it has been found that expectations for these students are lower and the curriculum is less challenging and more repetitive. There was little emphasis on student-centered learning, or collaboration with peers, cooperative learning groups, and use of alternate assessment methods. Consequently, students came to believe they were "dumb and incompetent" and many simply dropped out, more than 50 percent in some inner cities (p. 116).

Statistics might not be accurate when the dropout rate is lower because principals sometimes reported students as truants who had actually dropped out. "Number juggling...to appease the public and show progress is familiar all over the nation" (Kozol, 1991, pp. 112-113). A teacher interviewed by Kozol lamented the fact that the administration expected half of her class to be gone by Christmas. "It's awful when you realize that the school is counting on the failure of one half my class. If they didn't count on it, perhaps it wouldn't happen...we have children who just disappear from the face of the earth" (pp. 111, 113). These children are literally forced out of the educational system.

Many students who make it through high school still lack basic skills and so universities and colleges complain that students aren't adequately prepared for college work and need remediation in freshman courses. Students who enroll in

a course called "Efficient Reading and Study Skills" have stated that they feel inadequately prepared for coursework at a large university. Daggett (1995) discussed the fact that the math and technological reading and writing curriculum has not kept pace with the needs that businesses and other organizations will need in the future so even high school graduates are not prepared for the world of work.

The college preparatory curriculum does a good job transmitting culture, but it's highly theoretical and students often have difficulty applying what they've learned. The vocational curriculum seems more relevant, but the academics too often are watered down (p. 47).

He recommended one curriculum for all that is both "rigorous and relevant." "Applied" or practical courses carried a stigma because lower-level students, who were perceived as less capable, were encouraged to take them. The situation that resulted from this type of tracking is that all students were inadequately prepared for technological demands especially--vocational students didn't receive adequate academic preparation, especially in science and language arts, and college preparatory students didn't have the ability to apply the theoretical curriculum they received. Students in the middle or general track had "neither rigor nor relevance so they were in the worst position of all," and there was a growing fear that going to college does not necessarily lead to a good job.

Some students have the potential but simply do not do "quality work." Unless they're convinced something new and better is happening for them in the classroom, they won't seriously consider putting forth the effort to do more than enough to get by. Glasser sees this as a growing problem, writing that almost all

students never even think about doing really quality school work. "In the best schools...no more than half the students do good work; almost none do quality work" (pp. 3-5). This leads to those students in college preparatory programs that do not finish college. "When you add in the number of students who drop out of high school or never go to college, you find that only one in five students obtains a college degree" (Daggett, 1995, p. 47). Many researchers have discussed the inability of students to apply the factual knowledge they learn in school. Gardner calls it the "correct answer compromise" when students answered questions on a test without really understanding how to use that information in a different context or setting (Gardner, 1993).

Low educational levels result in life-long low socioeconomic status, which, in addition to what it does to the person, is a drain on the economy of our country due to the rising cost of welfare, health care and other services needed by the poor. Money is spent in certain areas that could be spent better in others if solutions could be found for these problems. Finally, our nation's leaders are concerned that students in this country can't compete internationally. Many accuse the education system and teachers in particular. In defense teachers say they're forced to teach a curriculum set by others and in a proscribed manner.

Importance of Family Lamborn, Brown, Mounts, and Steinberg did a study that deals with "authoritative parenting" and discussed the importance of family in the educational process. This term explained that a parent can be demanding

(authoritarian) but also warm and loving towards their children, with high expectations that their child will succeed in school, and therefore, in life. Many research studies showed that these children do well in all areas of academic achievement, out-performing their peers from authoritarian parents (high on "demandingness," low on warmth) and permissive parents (low on "demandingness" and high on warmth). They had lower problem behaviors such as delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, and conformity to antisocial peer pressure (Newmann, Ed., p. 158). This used to be considered a middle-class phenomenon and is perhaps somewhat more "visible" there than in poorer classes, but research now shows that authoritative parenting crosses ethnic and social class boundaries (p. 158). "Across a broad array of social environments, adolescents reared in an authoritative manner excel socially and academically" (p. 160). Parental support is a concern of this study because of the importance to those students who are unsuccessful learners in the traditional classroom and need outside help and support. How interns perceive parents and their importance to education, particularly those with underachieving children, will be investigated in this study.

Problems of Educational Instruction

The goal of educational instruction is to integrate the latest information on learning styles, teaching methods, motivational techniques, and other strategies

which will help teachers to turn students into successful, life-long learners. The complexity of teaching is so consuming for the novice, however, that they are often frustrated in their attempts to understand and address the needs of academically diverse students (Tomlinson et al., 1994). What happens too often is that the emphasis remained on the teacher role and not the students themselves. Kennedy wrote that intern teachers must be taught not only content but how that content is learned. "If they learn a series of specific teaching techniques without understanding their rationale and without help in adapting them to particular students and classroom situations, they will be unable to make lasting changes in their practice" (Kennedy, p. 17).

Some teaching practices still used are "ineffective and counterproductive" because students fail to learn teacher program concepts (Pajares, 1992 in Mahlios and Maxson, 1995, p. 197), and therefore, educators feel "frustrated when students do not adopt professed program views of schooling, teaching, and learning" (p.197). Koehler found that a key problem is that some teachers do not see the skills and attitudes taught as "relevant or necessary" (Tomlinson et al., p. 197). According to Brown and Rose, educators "model progressive instructional strategies, present research findings, and encourage [education] students to relinquish more traditional teaching practices" (p. 20), but this often doesn't happen.

A contradictory view holds that educators and the education curriculum may be at fault. Some maintain that education courses promote "largely conservative

beliefs" which correlate with the students' life views. Or the problem may be that "too many faculty in teacher education programs operate with little knowledge of who their students are and the dominant beliefs they may hold upon entry into teacher education programs" (Mahlios and Maxson, p. 198). "Until very recently the ideas and beliefs education student brought with them to their teacher education courses have been largely ignored" (Bullough, 1991; Bullough, Knowles, and Crow, 1992; Carter, 1990; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Kagan, 1992; p. 192). "Faculty know little about the views their students hold, and have little, if any, knowledge of how these characteristics will interact with the dominant concepts in teacher education programs (p. 197). In addition to "ignoring" the image that student teachers have, some professors have been found to "view them with irritation as naive misconceptions that simply confuse issues and interfere with learning the correct way to teach" (Carter and Doyle, p. 186). Whether one hypothesis or a combination is correct, it appears that "novice teachers' attitudes about schooling are not radically shaped by experiences in their teacher training programs" (Tomlinson, 1994, p. 197).

Haberman (1995) wrote more forcefully that educational institutions perpetuate the myth that they can change their students deep-seated beliefs and values in important ways. It just doesn't happen, as previously mentioned studies have shown, for a variety of reasons. One reason may be that for admission to colleges of education is still determined largely by students' grade point averages (GPA) rather than the ability to interrelate with children, even though a high GPA

does not relate to teaching performance (p. 26) and a teacher's interpersonal style does (Tuckman, 1995). "Teaching requires the maturity to be concerned about the development and nurturance of others; typically young adults are appropriately concerned with the separation of themselves from parents and the development of their own identities" (Haberman p. 28).

Problems for Teachers

Beginning with A Nation at Risk in 1983 to the National Governors' Association report, Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report there has been a wave to restructure school organizations to meet the needs of at-risk students...The at-risk student may be served by prevention-type programs or remediation-type programs in regular classrooms. Thus, we find regular educators being asked to meet the challenge of addressing the needs of special education students and at-risk students along with the 'normal' students in the regular classroom. Researchers ask the question, "Are teachers ready to take on this challenge?" They also ask "What can teacher education do to help teachers become better prepared to face the challenge of educating at-risk and special students in the regular class?" (Williams, Gold, and Russell p. 1, 3)

Most teachers have some children in low track, low-ability classrooms who have problems functioning in the classroom (Ross and Bondy, 1993). Beyond the complexities of teaching "normal" students that overwhelm the intern and novice teacher, education programs have not provided enough information regarding multiculturally diverse students. Breault explained that new teachers lack a "security blanket" of familiarity with multiculturally diverse students because most of their teacher training and cultural knowledge was "situated in white, middle-class, rural or suburban schools" (p. 268). Because of the difficulty of changing

teachers' beliefs, they may see the implications of teaching culturally diverse students as "beyond their control" and therefore, the "effects of socioeconomic conditions or ethnic stereotypes become the unalterable fate of the child" (p. 267).

They have "inadequate understandings of student differences and how to find out about students" (Reynolds, p. 216). It was also found that beginning teachers were not able to create learning environments as well as not plan for individual differences. Haberman reported that we prepare teachers to teach in the "best of all nonexistent worlds" and that is "dangerous," especially for children of poverty. "Anyone trying to function as a teacher in a poverty school who is unaware of, insensitive to, or unprepared for the high stakes involved for the children becomes part of the problem and another obstacle they must overcome" (p. 25).

Both teachers and intern teachers have expressed feelings of prejudice regarding what underachieving students would be like and how they would behave, believing that these students would be difficult and hard to control. Lack of information or "familiarity" with students can cause stress on intern teachers who have little experience with a variety of students and who are different from the student population when they were in school. They may not be prepared to deal with them in the classroom, expecting a replication of their own experiences and wanting to teach in schools like the ones they attended, which are generally racially exclusive. "Being forced to accommodate culturally different populations for prolonged periods of time can create feelings of fear, hostility, and even physical

illness in some teachers" (LeCompte in Breault, p. 265). In schools where violence and disorder occurred, it was found that teachers lost enthusiasm for teaching, became demoralized, and often left for locations considered less stressful. "Some teachers, often the youngest and the most dynamic, considered leaving the profession or transferring to private or suburban schools" (Toby, 1993/94, p. 8).

Since the education professorate is composed of 91 percent whites with more than 70 percent of those faculty white males (in Parker and Hood, 1995), those professors have transmitted the conservative beliefs and practices which reproduced the status quo. Interns reflect the conservative beliefs and values of the professors because "each group has had limited racial and racially different experiences" (p. 160).

There is a need to "actively recruit education students of color who want to teach in urban settings with minority populations, (consistently argued by Haberman, 1989), and who want to teach in culturally diverse settings" (Parker and Hood, p. 172). DeMarrais and LeCompte reported, however, that the number of minority recruits is going down, partly due to lack of scholarship funds, the low status of teachers and low salaries, and other financial and social hardships for minority teachers. Admission standards delineate "excellence" but being "white, middle-class, and comfortable with the school culture" might prevent minorities from being accepted (p. 309).

Louis and Smith described the difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers in low socioeconomic areas, where student engagement was also low, as the

frustrating situation of "which comes first, the chicken or the egg" (Newmann, p. 119). They wrote that a serious problems exists when teachers are detached and alienated from their work ("Why waste my time on students who don't try?") and students who perceive teachers as boring and uncaring ("Why work for a teacher who doesn't really care or make learning stimulating?") (p. 120). They found a need for both teacher engagement and student engagement as crucial to learning.

It was found that more courses on cultural diversity were needed in the curriculum "to assist in diminishing the powerful negative messages about justice and fairness, about authority and power, about inclusion and participation that are interwoven in the very fabric of U.S. schools and its teaching force" (Holmes Group Forum, p. 40, in Parker and Hood, 1995). Tatum's research (1992) showed stages of racial awareness that interns go through, and he suggested that "there might be the potential to devise unique programs and long-term student support initiatives to help white students feel comfortable in settings where they are the minority, and specifically in schools with children of color" (p. 172).

Part of the problem may be that intern teachers don't really get to know their students as individual human beings. A lack of experience with children and a lack of knowing the qualities they possess indicated that "students may be operating from simplistic and naive view of children" (Mahlios and Maxson, 1995, p. 197).

During the internship, teachers continually went through an "internal debate" based on the education they'd received and their personal experiences in the

classroom. This debate impacted on how they related to students, other teachers, parents, and administrators. Their beliefs conflicted to a great extent with what they found in the real world of the classroom. "Everyday experience in schools washed out whatever changes in attitudes came about [in their education courses]" (Veerman, 1984 in Tomlinson et al., p. 107). They were mainly concerned with "solving problems rather than trying systematically to define problems and test possible solutions" (Reynolds, p. 214). Cole and Knowles found that the result may be "shattered images" (in Carter and Doyle, p. 189), and may lead to stress and their possible withdrawal from the program.

One intern, at least, expressed a positive attitude and wrote in her journal, "We really need to learn to interact with and teach students who are not like the ones we are used to being with and with whom we feel comfortable. I am looking forward to this experience because I know I need it and believe it will make me a better teacher" (Allen, p. 9). The internship program that Allen studied was located in a Chapter I at-risk school, and it achieved positive results. Interns' attitudes shifted from a concern that "things aren't the way they used to be" to "what can be done as they are?" One stated that, "Circumstances do not appear to be improving in many areas, they won't get better until we understand the learning process in children and work with the children we have!" (Allen, p. 9).

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The Approach

Design of the Study I collected data for this study by using two different methods: Stage 1: a survey of the total elementary and secondary intern population at The University of Tennessee during the academic year 1995-1996, and Stage 2: follow-up, in-depth interviews with volunteer participants. The focus of the study was on the three factors important to effective teaching, particularly with regard to those students who have problems in life and, therefore, underachieve in school. These were:

(1) Personal Efficacy which refers to inner feelings of confidence in the ability to teach, have an impact on students, and serve society as a whole. The sense of personal efficacy affects teachers' expectations concerning their students' abilities, particularly those who are underachievers.

(2) Formal Teacher Education and how it affects the perceptions of teaching efficacy, or the ability to apply content knowledge and pedagogical skills to influence student learning.

(3) A Support System, or the presence of people with whom to share information during the internship experience that will help overcome an intern's feelings of isolation and discouragement that threaten self-confidence and their ability to teach

effectively.

Purpose of the Study The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of intern teachers regarding their motivations to become teachers, and the educational, professional, and personal resources they rely on to help them become effective teachers. A special focus was made on their perceptions of their ability to teach those children with problems that cause them to be underachievers.

Data Collection: The Survey

Stage I The first stage of data collection consisted of administering a survey to the entire population of intern teachers at the University of Tennessee participating in the internship program in the fall of 1995. The survey was based on two other instruments. Part A was adapted from the study: Serow, R. C. (1994) Called to teach: a study of highly motivated preservice teachers in The Journal of Research and Development in Education, 27(2), 65-72. Part B was based on the Teacher Education Professional Year Evaluation Survey designed by Dr. Judith Boser and used at The University of Tennessee. To ensure as high a rate of responses as possible, I requested permission to attend various sections of graduate courses to personally administer and collect the surveys. Professors were very receptive and agreed to help me accomplish this task. I visited and administered surveys in ten classes. I gave surveys to three other professors to administer to their interns at distant sites. This stage was completed in the fall

semester and resulted in a high return of responses. The results are found in the section, "Data Analysis."

At the time the surveys were administered, I explained to the interns the purpose of the second part of the research design--the interviewing of interns who were willing to share their experiences as they went through the internship experience. They were invited to demonstrate their willingness to participate by signing a Letter of Intent, or by letting me know personally at a later time. It was made clear that their participation would be kept confidential.

The survey instrument consisted of two sections of statements and the interns were asked to respond on a Likert scale with a range from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." There was also a category "Not Applicable." Section A dealt with the interns' motivations to become teachers, their attitudes towards children, and their feelings regarding the idea of serving society. Section B dealt with how prepared they felt, as a result of formal education courses, regarding teaching methods, classroom management and discipline, and teaching underachieving or at-risk, culturally diverse, and mainstreamed students.

The results were tabulated as to frequency of response with the categories of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" being combined, and the categories of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" being combined to show a more complete picture of the majority responses. The data were then categorized into recurrent themes that related to the components that are necessary in the creation of effective teachers--personal efficacy, formal education, and a support system as well as others.

The results of these data are found in the section, Data Analysis, Tables 5.1 - 5.7. In addition, there was a section on the survey form where they could add any additional information they desired. Sixty-one interns wrote comments in this section. They were categorized according to the concerns of this study and are found in Chapter V., Data Analysis, as "Interns' Comments." A copy of the survey is found in the Appendix.

Data Collection: The Interviews

Stage II The second stage of this study consisted of a minimum of two interviews with those interns who were interested in being volunteer participants. At the time I administered the surveys, five interns volunteered, in writing, to participate in the interview stage. To achieve the desired number of interviewees, (eight), and to provide for a varied demographic population, I solicited three additional candidates, all of whom were very willing to participate in this study. Therefore, I was able to obtain a variety of subjects regarding gender, courses, grade levels taught, and school settings (i.e. urban, suburban, and rural). During the interviews, the interns were asked to discuss informally the internship experience with regard to each one's motivations to become a teacher, their feelings of personal efficacy, previous experiences that related to teaching, their educational background, and other general aspects of the internship year.

An important focus was on any problems they incurred in the classroom or

school, what they did to solve those problems, and who, if anybody, helped them in solving problems. They were asked to describe specific problems and challenges they faced, particularly with regard to students who were underachieving. I asked them to reflect and evaluate the experience they were going through and to provide any suggestions that might facilitate matters for future intern teachers. Then I discussed with them the presence of, or need for, emotional support during the time they were in training, since this can be a stressful period with many demands made on their talents, time, and energy.

Two interviews with each intern (16 in all) were conducted at separate times of the year. The original idea was to allow two or three months to intervene between the two interviews during which time it was assumed that experiential knowledge had increased and problem-solving techniques had improved, and that the ability of interns to reflect and analyze their experience had increased (Feyten and Kaywell, 1994). No attempt was made, however, to separate responses made during the two interviews for purposes of analysis. The questions that guided the interviews are found in the Appendix.

I also looked at some of their journals, because the use of writing, and journal writing in particular, is becoming an accepted means in teacher education of recording an intern's reflective thinking and an "essential tool for teacher preparation" (p. 53).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this study it was important to ascertain how the interns at The University of Tennessee (1995-1996) felt about the internship experience and their motivations to become teachers, with a special focus on students who underachieve in school. To examine these ideas, the elementary and secondary intern population (251 interns) was surveyed. From the surveys distributed, a total of 187 were returned, or 74.5 per cent. The results were tabulated as to frequency of response with the categories of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" being combined, and the categories of "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" being combined to show a more complete picture of the majority responses. The data were then categorized into eight themes that related to the three components that are necessary in the creation of effective teachers--personal efficacy, formal education, and a support system.

The data are presented in three parts. Part I contains data from the survey; Part II lists comments made by the interns in an open-ended section of the survey, and Part III contains excerpts from the 16 interviews gathered during the 1995-1996 academic year. Those parts have been subdivided according to the three factors: Personal Efficacy, Formal Education, and A Support System. Part II and III have been subdivided into categories or "themes."

Part I: The Survey

The results of the survey were grouped according to what I perceived to be three major factors important in effective teaching; personal efficacy and the motivation to teach, formal education in teaching, and the effectiveness of support groups.

Personal Efficacy and Motivations to Teach The first category was that of the "calling" to be a teacher of having a strong sense of serving society through education. This category included statements referring to helping and influencing children, the desire to teach a particular subject, pleasing parents, the benefits of the job, improving education, improving society, having an "image" of teacher and a teacher's role, and having the long-time goal of being a teacher, i.e. from childhood.

The results were that for every question that dealt with helping children as a reason for becoming teachers, the interns showed a very high response rate indicating that they did indeed want to help, influence, and teach children.

In response to statements regarding motivations to become teachers, interns responded most positively to those relating to wanting to influence children and instill in them a love for learning. They responded positively to statements that showed a love for children. They responded positively to those regarding education as a means to improving society. They responded positively to a

statement that their parents would be pleased if they became a teacher. They responded negatively, however, to a statement regarding the teaching profession's having many "benefits" and being a low-risk occupation, and negatively to a statement regarding their ability to improve education, generally. The results of these data are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Survey Results Regarding Personal Efficacy and Motivation for Teaching; "Do Intern Teachers Feel Called to Education as a Career Because They Want to Help Children?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
I really like the idea of influencing children every day.	178	3
I love children, especially some of those everyone else ignores.	172	4
It would be good to have a strong influence on impressionable young minds.	152	10
I am happiest when I'm explaining something and helping people grow.	173	5
I want to develop in young people basic skills and a love for learning.	197	3
As a teacher, I can have an impact on others.	186	1

Responses regarding personal efficacy and motivations for becoming teachers were strongly positive (Table 5.2) as were those focused on having an

image of a teacher and a teacher's role (Table 5.3). The responses regarding having an impact on children's lives were positive (Table 5.4.)

Table 5.2: Survey Results Regarding Personal Efficacy and Motivation for Teaching; "What Other Motivators Are Important for Students Choosing The Teaching Profession?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
I am excited about a particular subject and would enjoy teaching it.	130	16
My parents would really be pleased if I were a teacher.	117	19
Teaching is a fairly secure, low-risk occupation with many attractive benefits.	49	94
I don't like the cold and calculating business world, and teaching seems like a more humanistic option.	116	30
The instruction I had in school was not very good, and I think I can do better.	74	83
I want to develop in young people basic skills and a love for learning.	197	3
Education is important to our future and I want to be part of it.	176	3
Teaching is a way to improve things in our society.	178	2
As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to teach.	93	59

Table 5.3: Survey Results Regarding Personal Efficacy and Motivation for Teaching; "Do Intern Teachers Have a Strong Image of What a Teacher is and the Teacher's Role?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
I really like the idea of influencing children every day.	178	3
It would be good to have a strong influence on impressionable young minds.	152	10
As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to teach.	93	59
Education is important to our future and I want to be part of it.	176	3
I don't like the cold and calculating business world, and teaching seems like a more humanistic option.	116	30
Teaching is a way to improve things in our society.	178	2
As a teacher, I can have an impact on others.	186	1

Table 5.4: Survey Results Regarding Personal Efficacy and Motivation for Teaching; "Do Intern Teachers Believe That They Can Personally Make A Difference With Those Problems That Cause Students to be Unsuccessful Learners?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
I love children, especially some of those everyone else ignores.	174	2
It would be good to have a strong influence on impressionable young minds.	152	10
I am happiest when I'm explaining something and helping people grow.	173	5
I want to develop in young people basic skills and a love for learning.	197	3

Teacher Education Regarding teacher preparation and the interns' perceptions of being prepared, the results were positive in most areas, particularly those that dealt with knowledge acquisition and preparing materials for methods classes. Most felt comfortable with preparation regarding different learning styles.

There was a negative reaction to the question regarding preparation in classroom management and discipline. Interns also felt that too much time was spent on theory and not enough time spent on practice or application in methods classes. Most interns felt they understood the university's expectations of them during the internship. The results of these data are shown on Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Survey Results Regarding Teacher Education; "Are Intern Teachers Comfortable With Their Educational Background for Classroom Teaching?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
The content of my methods classes was practical in that I am now applying it as an intern.	96	62
Materials I developed in my methods classes have been helpful during my actual teaching.	80	53
I feel too much time was spent on theory in my methods classes.	96	45
I feel enough time was spent on practice or application of ideas in my methods classes.	52	115
My methods classes prepared me for dealing with classroom management and discipline.	44	113
During my education I learned a variety of teaching styles.	124	43
I have a clear understanding of the school's expectations of me during the internship.	101	51

Responses were positive with respect to teaching children of diverse needs and those who came from varied backgrounds. They were less positive with regard to children of culturally diverse populations, and almost equally divided

regarding children who are "at-risk." They felt generally prepared to teach gifted children in the classroom, but less prepared to teach mainstreamed students as shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Survey Results Regarding Teacher Education; "Are Intern Teachers Comfortable With Their Level of Preparation for Classroom Diversity and For Students Who May Have Problems or Aptitudes that May Alter Learning?"

<u>Related Survey Question or Statement</u>	<u>Responses:</u>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
During my education I learned about teaching students with diverse needs.	114	49
During my education I learned about teaching students from varied backgrounds.	107	56
I feel adequately prepared to work with culturally diverse populations.	82	51
I feel adequately prepared to work with at-risk and unsuccessful learners.	67	66
I feel adequately prepared to work with gifted children in the classroom.	100	52
I feel adequately prepared to work with mainstreamed special-needs children in the classroom.	55	87

A Support System Regarding interns' feeling the presence of adequate support groups, the responses were very positive with regard to having a person, or persons, to whom to go for help. They were less positive regarding the teacher

evaluations as providing an opportunity to express their feelings, but very positive in feeling that professors had clearly articulated the goals of the program as shown in Table 5.7. The results will be discussed further in the "Discussion" section.

Table 5.7: Survey Responses Regarding Support Systems: "Do Intern Teachers Feel They Are Supported by Others and Can Learn From Others and Are Part of a Support Group?"

Related Survey Question or Statement	Responses: <u>Agree</u> <u>Disagree</u>	
When I have a problem with classroom management or discipline, I go to others such as the principal, my mentoring teacher, the parents, the UT supervisor or a former UT professor.	153	12
I think my evaluations offer sufficient opportunity to express my concerns and feelings.	73	39
Faculty members in my unit or program area clearly articulated the philosophy and principles on which my program is based.	117	29

Part II: Interns' Comments

As a structural part of the initial survey (see Appendix), all interns were given the opportunity to make any specific comments that they wished after completing the survey questions. These spontaneous intern comments were often more revealing than the responses to the actual survey questions themselves, and I grouped the comments again as they related to the same three background components necessary for the creation of effective teachers used previously: personal efficacy and motivation for teaching, formal education, and a support system.

Personal Efficacy and Motivations to Teach The comments made that might fall into the category of personal efficacy and motivations were all rather negative.

1. The internship program does not allow me to do my best at teaching. I am forced to sacrifice my performance and involvement with the classes I teach, the classes I take, work and family. I would not choose this program if I could start all over nor would I recommend it to anyone under the same circumstances that I am in.
2. I feel lost at this time. But I want to do well despite my shortcomings.
3. I feel adequately prepared to work with culturally diverse populations but not because of UT.
4. Sometimes I feel sort of out of touch with UT. When not out of touch I feel bogged down. I feel like I am not doing a 100% job at anything, school, teaching, parenting.

Teacher Education Interns' comments regarding teacher preparation, the comments that were positive were:

1. Unlike many interns, I am very happy! I feel as though I have been prepared adequately--as much as one can be prepared out of the classroom. I love my unit and feel as though my professors are doing their best to prepare us.
2. Our methods courses concentrated more on concrete planning and such, rather than how to handle things when they don't go according to plan. But that's why I was thrilled with the internship program to get experience with support.
3. I love ____ Elementary School! All my experiences here have been learning ones so far. The teachers I work with are helpful, encouraging, and understanding. I am learning a lot about open classrooms and multi-age classes.
4. I feel the 5th year internship allows the intern to become better prepared for the future. The in-class experience (1 year vs. 6 weeks) enables the intern to receive more tips and experience in classroom management, teaching styles, and student expectations.
5. I really think UTK is a wonderful university with an outstanding teacher prep-program. Many items on this survey can, in my opinion, be learned best through experiences. Such experience is provided for during the internship year.

Negative comments regarding teacher preparation were grouped into different sub-categories: Undergraduate Classes, Graduate Work During the Internship, and Classroom Management, Discipline, Planning, and Students.

Undergraduate Classes

1. I have learned more during the first two months of my internship than I did during my undergrad. and grad. level classes at UT.
2. [We] need more practice in methods courses.
3. I think the teacher ed. program has a lot of problems. I know a lot of philosophy, but little practical knowledge. I wish professors spent more time modeling teaching styles.
4. Undergrad. is a joke. Basically unapplicable gibberish.

5. On questions 12-15 in this page--I am doing most of these things. However, I would feel better about my ability to deal with differences if this had been emphasized more in course work.
6. The methods courses came too late. Some of those classes in the 15 hour [menu?] could be condensed so that we could take methods classes before the internship. Then, I can also see the value of taking the methods courses during the internship as well.
7. The undergraduate education courses are a major waste of time.
8. [I'm] learning a lot [as an] intern but the methods courses are not benefitting me (as well as most of the students I've talked to.)
9. I wish more time had been spent on the whole realm of teaching rather than 3 1/2 years of everything else and two years on teaching.
10. I feel my undergraduate classes were a complete waste of time - what I learned could have been taught in a 2 hour seminar.
11. I feel that I was not adequately trained to deal with some of the problems I am facing. The beliefs I was taught at UT do not always help in real life.
12. I feel too many classes contain the same information. It needs to be combined in one class, not repeating it in 3 or more. We are smart and would like much more information instead of going over the same thing time after time. Also different professors say different things. This needs to be cleared up--which one do we listen to!!
13. The methods classes did not place enough emphasis on teaching or "how" to teach. There was too much emphasis on theory and in general, unuseful information.

Graduate Work During the Internship

1. Theory is not reality. As an intern, reality is day to day. Theory is Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoons in my graduate courses at UT.
2. I feel many of our classes have redundant and nonnecessary information. Expectations should have been much more clearly stated before the year began.

3. I believe that the internship courses look at a more idealistic view of education opposed to a realistic view. Also, the classes are too much alike. We should coincide them ALL since they seem to relate so well.
4. I have found that the majority of my education is being gained in the classroom during my internship.
5. The teachers in methods need to answer our questions, not treat us like H.S. students and not give us busy work like daily journals and reflections.
6. The internship program does not allow me to do my best at teaching. I am forced to sacrifice my performance and involvement with the classes I teach, the classes I take, work, and family. I would not choose this program if I could start all over nor would I recommend it to anyone under the same circumstances that I am in.
7. I feel that the majority of the pressure I have received as an intern has come from my UT professors. Their expectations as far as the amount of work they wanted done in a week, seem unreasonable!
8. I feel that the courses offered (other than Edu. 574) should be completed prior to [the] internship - even if [the] internship begins later and is more intense (start with 2 classes) because 26-30 young teen minds are a bigger priority to me than my own grades.
9. It has been hard to meet the needs of applying UT course-based work in the classes I am teaching as an intern. The time expectations are unrealistic, although the pedagogy is valid (applied course work.)
10. My internship has been a positive experience so far, however mainly due to my school, not UT. The material and curriculum is better this year, but overall, I feel it is unorganized.
11. We are being taught at UT to integrate literature into everything (holistic) yet the professors do not model what they teach.
12. I think I have been educated as a teacher at a very awkward time. No one is sure of anything, therefore we have been taught very little that we can really hold on to. Also there has been such an emphasis on practical application that we have received very little of the ideas behind work we do.

13. The middle school and the elementary hold different philosophies and this was not discussed to a reasonable extent.
14. I do not feel that what I'm being taught in my education courses is applicable in the real world of teaching. It all sounds wonderful on paper, but when applied it just doesn't seem to work.
16. I think it is ludicrous to expect interns to take a class on teaching English while they're teaching English. Students lose. This practice is unfair!
17. In addition to added focus on gifted, talented, and mainstream students and cultural differences, the university should eliminate some of the repetitiveness of some of the classes. We had so much focus on how to design a unit and less time on how to control the class, provide an equal education for all.

Classroom Management, Discipline, Planning

1. There is a lot of talk about needing to meet the needs of all kinds of students, but not any practical strategies to address these needs except in a vague all-over way.
2. The methods classes were adequate to develop a basic understanding of the research and current methods. This fell short in some practical applications. Dealing with discipline problems is one area my education is lacking. And the ability to communicate with secondary school students, and asking coherent questions are areas other than areas that were not addressed sufficiently.
3. I feel like all of my learning has taken place this year through hands on experience. The courses at UT did not help me a whole lot. I especially feel that I was not taught behavioral or classroom management. Therefore, I have struggled this year and continue to struggle in planning and dealing with behavioral problems. I am frustrated quite frequently.
4. I wish that we would have had more experience with organizing and planning for a lesson. Several people have had this concern.
5. I didn't feel there was enough emphasis on behavior management or teaching special needs kids. There is also no effort to "match up" interns with teachers concerning learning styles and personalities.

6. I don't feel like I got enough information concerning behavior management, teaching with instructional strategies, or how to work with gifted students. The class on behavior management should not be an elective for summer but a requirement in the spring. Also I would like more instruction and practice in unit and lesson plan writing.
7. I wish spent more time discussing behavior and classroom management techniques. I'm really struggling with that. Also talk more about dealing with parents (how to handle them when they are on your back about everything.)
8. I feel that there needs to be a class on "How to Teach" with role playing and scenarios on possible classroom management problems.
9. I wish I would have had more practical information given to me while at UT. I feel there was too much theory and not enough real life situation problem solving. (Ex. behavioral management and classroom management). I would have liked to have known how to write a lesson plan to fit the needs of all kinds of learners. (Bloom's taxonomy - How embarrassing that I did not know this! How am I going to write effective lesson plans?) I feel I have learned a lot, but I think there was too much repetition. A lot of the hours I "repeated" could have been used in making my teaching practices more meaningful and effective.

Support System These comments do not relate directly to the presence of (or lack of) a support system. I have included them here because they represent the kinds of problems that interns have that might be alleviated by those persons who are in a position to give specific help, or, at least, show the kind of sympathy that is needed during an experience that can be confusing, demanding, and highly stressful.

1. My methods courses were taken at _____. I feel communication is lacking between UT, school, and interns.
2. I feel that we spent too much of our field experience in preschools.
3. I believe we need to concentrate more on the things we will actually be doing in the classroom. Several areas I believe were left out.

4. The internship should not be a year program. The program should be one semester and we should stay at the school the whole day. We should not be required to go to UT during our internship.
5. In response to the statement "Faculty members in my unit or program area clearly articulated the philosophy/principles on which my program is based" was added--in the school system, not at UT.
6. There are not enough hours in these days to do a good job on research papers during the internship.
7. I think the internship is the most important part of my masters program and other classes should be less stressful and demanding.
8. Some of the classes at UT were useful but many were not. I also had a different expectation of the internship.

Financial Problems

1. 5th year is the biggest racket in the state. I already go into debt to teach for free. I feel that UT is not trying to help me, but push me through and get as much of my money as possible. I do not have any confidence that the internship year will help me in my pursuit of a job.
2. Some of the theory classes at UT are a waste of time and money. How are interns supposed to live on no money? And be expected to perform in classes that have no merit?
3. Interns should be compensated for their education just like football players. Which is the more important, ultimately? The College of Education needs an overhaul! Never have I experienced such grief from a college that has a campus-wide reputation for not knowing what is going on. Potential teachers are kept out and yet we wonder why there aren't enough good teachers out "there."

The comments made on this section of the survey will be included in the "Discussion" section of this dissertation.

Part III: The Interviews

The central purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of intern teachers at The University of Tennessee about their motivations to become teachers and their personal efficacy, the formal education they received, and the support systems that influenced their ability to teach effectively. There was a special focus on the interns' perceptions of their readiness to deal with students who underachieve, or considered at-risk, in school.

The interviews revealed that these young teachers were a highly motivated group with many similar problems regarding their readiness to enter the profession. Their responses are presented here exactly as recorded during the actual interviews, remembering that "whenever we ask people to talk about themselves and others, we must consider the personal screens through which all responses filter" (Breault, p. 267). I grouped the interns' responses into two groups of themes. The first group all could be related to the original purposes of the study importance of personal efficacy, teacher education, and a support system in the creation of effective teachers. The second group of themes emerged from other experiences, feelings, and concerns that the interns divulged which were separate and unforeseen. Those two groupings of themes, or categories, as well as the subcategories are shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Recurrent Themes Emerging from In-Depth Interviews
With Intern Teachers at The University of Tennessee

Theme: Personal Efficacy and Motivations to Teach
Motivations to Teach
Personal Efficacy
Commitment to Underachieving Students
Motivating Underachieving Students
Feeling Unprepared for Underachieving Students

Theme: Support System and Problems of the Internship
Administration and Other Faculty
Mentoring Teachers
Parents of Students
Family Members
Other Interns, Peer Learning/Competition
Lesson Planning for Underachieving Students
Evaluating Underachieving Students
Classroom Management and Discipline
Reflections on Teaching

Theme: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program
Weaknesses of the Program
Expectations and Reality
Time Constraints
Interns' Suggestions for Improvements
Strengths of the Program

Theme: Personal Efficacy and Motivations to Teach

Motivations to teach

To the question about what motivated them to become teachers, several interns felt the "call," wanted to be of service, or have an impact on students.

Well, I guess the generic thing is to "save the world," but I've always wanted to do something where I was helping other people, somehow. You know, I knew that when I was younger. It just slowly formed into being a teacher. It always had to do with kids...I've always been kind of a people person, but I wanted to do something...that then I'd feel like I was giving something actually. {Do you think the job is going to provide you with that kind of feeling?} More than I even thought. I thought about the kids coming up to me with their problems and me helping them out and then, of course, it's more than that.

It's not the money. This is what I think is worthwhile. I think this is a worthwhile pursuit. This is what I want to dedicate myself to do.

I like the part of it [teaching] having that--being that impressionable on somebody, you know, like having that big of a role in somebody's life, and just seeing the light go on in their head. You know, I think that is really neat.

I had a younger brother who needed a lot of mothering, because he didn't get along with my mom very well so I was the mom...I'm a nurturer. {Is that one of the reasons you went into teaching?} Um-hm. Definitely. Honestly, my mom was a teacher and she taught before I was born, but then she subbed the whole time when I was in school. Just hearing her come home with horror stories, no less, but I don't know. I thought it sounded fun and since I was little I used to play school at home all the time and...{I played school too.} I'm sure a lot of people did. {I fought it for a long time, but you always knew?} I didn't always know but when it came time for me to decide where, you know, in high school I started thinking about "What do I really want to do, and you know,...I thought why not a teacher...'cause I've always liked it. I've been babysitting since I could walk, practically, it seems like and it seemed like that's what I should do...more so than what I really wanted to do...it's just kinda like a calling. {There's research that says that happens.} I've never regretted deciding that's what I want to do. I've never looked back. I've never said, "Gosh, I wish I would've done something else."

There were a variety of other reasons given as motives to go into teaching.

I was in the ____ business and it's not something I ever enjoyed. And then my oldest son was born and I'd always thought I wanted to go back and finish my college degree--more of a self satisfying kind of thing. I decided that that was what I'd do just cause I wanted them to be proud of their daddy. Somehow I got it all mixed up with how my sons perceived me. I loved [the subject]. I devoured it and became engrossed in it. Um teaching for me has been, or becoming a teacher became, not an obsession but, um, a real goal. There's a more selfish reward I guess. I love to talk about _____. I mean, I love to talk about it. I love to read it. I love to talk about the subject I teach.

Going into education as a career after having children or as a nontraditional student even for business people that decide it's too much or they want a change or they want to give back or whatever...you would quit this program if you were having second thoughts about wanting the degree. You would quit. That's how difficult it is--just to keep everything going.

Some were influenced by family members.

If I had to pick one reason, it would probably be my brother. My brother had really severe learning disabilities. I always liked school, did well, no problem and my poor mother would just spend every night pulling my brother through because he was dyslexic, flipped everything around. {Did they know he had learning disabilities?} Yeah. Luckily a teacher in about kindergarten, first grade picked up on it. I've always helped him with his homework, helped him with spelling words, you know, and probably later on, once I have more money and can get back to school, I'd really like to focus on that type of emphasis... go into more learning disabilities. {Do you get much exposure to those types of students?} Not as much as I would like, but if I did, all I saw was that, yeah, there's a lot of them out there and nothing's being done for them.

Some said that they'd wanted to be teachers for a long time.

I'm a patient person and I don't really get frustrated you know, and I like to try to think of a lot of different ways to help kids get it right. I don't know, I've wanted to do it since I was in early high school. I have never wanted to have any other career.

Teaching was something that I had in mind for a very long time.

Personal Efficacy

Another concern was how confident interns felt about their ability to teach students and get them to learn. This self-confidence relates to personal feeling of effectiveness and is based on a combination of factors such as having self-esteem, experience with children, and a feeling that the education they received prepared them.

{If there was a problem with a parent, or in planning, or whatever, do you have any problem with feeling capable, of being able to handle it?} No, I mean I feel capable. I do. I feel like I could handle it. {Is that because of your personal beliefs, your education, or because your mentoring teacher, or something else?} I think it's a lot of what I've learned, what I learned at UT. When I think about handling parents I learned a lot, and I've learned a lot from watching my teacher, and just kind of modeling after her. I think [about] how she is. Well, actually not, I don't know, I do feel capable. I was prepared school-wise and my own beliefs. I feel like I'm strong enough and capable enough.

With me, if I see what I'm doing isn't working, I'm going to try to do something that will. I'm going to be "[subject] teacher of the Universe" one day. I have a very long way to go. But if that's your goal, to be the best [subject] teacher you can be, not the most accepted [subject] teacher, or the one with the most secure job, but if your goal is a personal best type of thing, you're going to read whatever you need to read. And that's the way I approach it.

To me learning is a privilege. And for me personally, I don't understand that anybody would have to coerce anyone into doing work. Because I think reading is great and English is the best subject in the world and writing is fun and shouldn't we all do this together?

[In response to a discussion about the instability of some children's lives] {I told another intern once that she might be the only stable adult in that child's life.} Sure. We're the moms...We are. {Well it's good that you understand that. How did you arrive at that?} I just know. I take on that--I mean my friends call me "Mom" 'cause I'm a mom to my friends, anyway. I've just been "Mom" all my life.

These kids, the college prep kids are so motivated it's scary. I almost feel unlucky in a way to have a class like this cause it's easy. I think at first it scared me a little bit because I had some doubts about whether I was smart enough to teach

them...whether I was equipped to teach them, um, but as time goes on I feel better about it. I feel better about my abilities to improvise and to find things that are creative.

{How about discipline?} It's not a problem being buddy-buddy but it's a problem [that] I'm just a student teacher and, it's not like they're--I'm going to have to stand my ground and tell them I'm a teacher. That one way or another, I'm a teacher now, so it's going to be tough, but I'll figure it out somehow. I'll have to go through some rough times to get it done but...

{You still have that rapport then, with the students?} Yeah. Definitely. I still have that. Like, uh, well, my mom is a teacher, and I don't know why but she's like that. I get a lot of that from her, you know, being able to understand the kids.

In class they bring up those kinds of things [discipline] but I think it's kind of something within yourself you've got to find...I don't think there's any set [method]. You can't learn it in a class.

As for problem children, I feel like if I had a child in my classroom that I was having problems with, that kind of thing, by god, I could figure out what to do but as far as [helping them]. They gave us a lot of literature and I filed it all away, and if I was really having trouble I could dig through that and even if I couldn't find anything in there I know who I could go talk to...I know where I could find information...on how to help that child.

There was a problem between him [a black student] and another boy [a white student] and the boy called him [a name]. I told my teacher I was talking to these two boys...then dad comes in and he said, "I was wondering if I could talk about what happened yesterday," and I said, "Well, actually I know what happened yesterday, and I'd be perfectly willing to talk to you," so I'm out in the hall with this man saying, oh jeez, what have I gotten myself into, you know. But I thought, you know, I'm the one who dealt with it. So I told him exactly how I handled it...things do happen out at recess, but I think we've got this one worked out, and I hope we won't have anymore problems with it," but that was a hard situation. That was the first time I'd had to deal with anything like that. And I dealt with [it] more on guts than on anything I've learned in a class. You know, that's not something that I think can really be taught. It can...maybe how to deal with that parent, and maybe how to deal with the child, but I thought I did a pretty good job.

{Where does the confidence or ability come from that enables you to feel that you can be effective with these students?} I've always been like--okay, um, honestly, to be perfectly honest, I think it comes from being one of the middle class rebels. It taught me to be very critical and to pay attention to a lot of things because even as I was growing up, I was beginning to appreciate what my parents were giving

me that their parents were not able to give them. I was still very, very critical of a lot of the establishments that went on. For some reason or other I always understood, the things that were happening at my high school were happening for a reason, and they weren't happening at this black high school--for a reason. {You had a sense, then, of the injustice?} Yes. Right...when we studied Kozol and everyone else, my professor asked me the same question. He asked, "Where does it come from?" He said, "No one else in this class thinks like you do." And a lot of it's come, I've just been that way for years. Sadly, I think it has left me somewhat cynical. But at the same time, I don't think that I'm a pessimist. I don't look down on things. I mean I definitely have hope. But I can see that there's a way for these kids to get out and I try to show them how to get out, but at the same time, I try to let them know what's going on around them so that they can have the critical-mindedness. {I think to fight cynicism you have to realize that you aren't going to cure a lot of the problems.} No, that's part of the problem.

I had lots and lots of experience with kids before...I substituted in the schools for about a year before I came here and that, but I'm a totally different person as a teacher. I was just thinking, that's not even me and now, what I changed around...{At least you had that experience.} Right. I do learn a lot on the job and I think the actual experience is where you get the most, you know, and last semester I was prepared for things as far as knowing things that would be the best implemented...it's just made me think more, reflecting on my own teaching and things like that.

{Do you feel that you've made the right choice of profession?} Yeah, I'm not struggling with, "What am I doing here?" by any means. I know what I'm doing here and...{You also seem very confident in your ability to do the work. Let's say your teacher got sick and was going to be out the rest of the year, I sense that you could carry on in complete confidence.} I would love to. I like when she's sick. I tell her I like when she's sick. I do feel very confident in the position that I'm in right now.

Teaching is a way that I can take what I've learned--from everything, not just from books and try and help someone the way that someone did to me, because someone saw that in the cynical, long-haired 17 yr. old kid who didn't really care about anything, that there was something worthwhile in there. And I said, I'm doing the same thing.

Commitment to Underachieving Students

The interviews showed that interns were very committed to their students as people, beyond the idea of "serving society" and cared what happened to them. They were often frustrated at not knowing how to help them more.

I told my students, "Now, look, after everything I've been through this year, there's only one reason that I keep coming back...because you guys come back every day." And I said, "If you can put up with living in this community, then, by god, I can come back and face you and try and teach you something." I said, I never, even when the shooting was going on and I was there, I've never been afraid for my own life, I've never felt threatened, none of that, but I'm so emotionally attached to my students, if I lose one, I'm finished. I'll crack.

There are times when I feel like I don't want to be anywhere else because I have such a connection with my kids, and regardless of how boring I am...they know I care. And they know that if they need help, they can come to me and I'm going to give them help. I mean there's a connection and it's solid, whether they're willing to admit it or whether they understand it or not, and I really like that.

I'm with those kids every single day, and I mean, they are my students, and I go through what they go through and I think that any teacher does.

I don't think that a lot of people seem to understand that a lot of the problems [at the school] are caused by outsiders and not actual students. The shooting that occurred at the football game--the gun that was fired was actually fired by somebody who wasn't a student and had no student affiliations. He was a complete outsider. {So they feel a little maligned then? Do you think? Like they've judged unfairly.} Yeah. One of the things that I got from them today when we were discussing the [newspaper] article [about the school] was that they were really upset that they felt that they were being judged unfairly on the basis of the performance of people who are usually never there. There is a definite attendance problem but the students that do come every day do perform to the best of their ability.

{How would you describe your school?} It's rural, low SES, kind of. {Is there a lot of family support, do you think?} I think so. It reminds me of the one I went to, yeah. The kids who have just moved here, they seem a little bit outside of the mix, you know, cause they're not related to so and so, and they don't know where you

know, _____ Bridge is or something, because that's the way I was. I moved to a large rural high school from the city and it was always like I never really got into the whole thing, and I can see those kids real easily. Maybe that's because I was in that position, and I know, I can tell the ones that are a little bit on the outside of the mix, but I don't think they're any of the kids that I'm worried about right now.

And truly, even if the students just say, "Oh, I get it." or "I understand why you were forcing us to do this." That's enough. If you get one. I still feel this way. Yes, you should shoot for...you're aiming for every child in the class, but you're going to have one that maybe you have helped in a direct way. And truly that's what you have to be happy with.

I think 8 or 9 of those students are inclusive. I know at least 6 of them have IEPs and I've been on M teams with 3 of them. {So they should have stayed in a fundamentals class?} They're not struggling in my class. They're doing fine in that I do give them some alternate assignments. I do give them the option of--I do accommodate in the sense that when I give exams, I let them take the written exam with everyone else. I don't want them pulled out because I don't want them stigmatized by their teacher. {Great.} Then after the test is done, I hold them after class and I give them the option of staying after and going over the test again with me orally. There are 2 or 3 students that are generally really good about doing that. We go over it orally and we talk about what's going on in the questions and really break the questions down. {You'll raise the grade?} It raises the grade and helps them because I don't feel like I'm actually giving them the answers, but by giving that extra attention and by helping them work out the logic of the questions...

There was one other student that was in there, and this is the student that I have spent as much time as I can even stomach to spend with trying to get him on track and he just will not do it. He is brilliant. He was in the 12th grade fundamental adaptive class, had absolutely no place in there. This student is exactly the reason that I feel that gifted students should be included under 504. At first I thought it was kind of weird that gifted students be included under special education and the more I thought about it, the more it made sense, and now after I see him...I think they should be included under 504 so they have accommodations. They have extra assignments, or not necessarily extra assignments, but alternate assignments that are more challenging to them.

I just, I have a harder time with those [gifted] kids. I guess I expect them to have much more inner motivation, I guess. 'Cause I was always, I was very motivated. I always wanted to do all this stuff, and these kids seem to have no motivation whatsoever, even though they're gifted and they are supposedly the ones that have inner motivation to learn, to achieve. Well, all I see is they have the motivation to get an A, you know. They're not motivated to learn or to try new things or anything like that. {That's too bad.} And it's really frustrating, and then I've got kids in my

juniors class who are very bright and should be in the university path, you know and they're totally blowing my class off, most of them, you know. They're not doing the assignments and I feel bad because I try to make it more fun.

I have given him alternate assignments for extra credit...I have done everything that I can possible do because the one thing that my kids seem to shoot for is, I cannot get them to internalize anything. I cannot get them to do it for themselves, and for the betterment of themselves. It's always points. All they do is chase points. When I give the alternate assignments, a lot of them will not do it.

{How about any other kinds of strategies? Do you think real intervention helps to actually make a change in students?} I have one girl in that junior class who is far beyond the other students in her writing. She turned in completed papers, and she was very on top of things and said I think you should be in honors, and she was real fearful of it, [but] then she made a guidance appointment during my planning period, so we talked together about that..and she's had me correct her work before she turns it in because she wants to make sure she's doing everything right. Well, like last week, and the week before that I didn't hear from her, and I saw her in the hall today and I said, "Is everything going okay in that class," and she was like, "yeah, I'm doing really well." She was like, "I'll have to come by and show you my stuff." Well, I felt really good.

{Self esteem is very important, and just giving that child the self esteem, that yes, you can do it.} Dr. ____ really pointed out to us that you have to reinforce and be positive and praise these kids, and he said, "Just think of how much it means to you when somebody does it," and it's not easy 'cause you're so focused on the lesson and what you're going to cover that when the kids get it right you just kind of move on, and I'm real bad about doing that. It really makes a big difference.

Even the worst kids in the school, you won't want to get in an elevator with them or whatever, they still think it's going to turn out okay. They still have the wonderment of it all. Even the ones that are the most--you get so much from that.

Ability to Motivate Underachieving Students

A focus of this study was to discuss the experience interns had with students who underachieve in school, or don't do the work for various reasons, so I discussed the particular problems they had motivating these students.

{Even with good planning, motivating students can be a problem. What do you do about that?} Sometimes it's hard to get kids up about anything on Mondays. They'll work, but they don't want to get enthusiastic yet. They're not into the swing of it.

There are times that I wake up in the morning and I literally try to think of any number of excuses to call in and just have a day off because I need to collect my thoughts. It's emotionally draining. I mean it's not even difficult getting the lessons together and trying to implement the lessons. That's hard too--trying to find something that'll hold their interest and trying to connect the literature to them.

I have one student who complains about being abused. Meaning his Dad is always--it's his stepdad or something--there's a lot of weird mixed families. But I don't think he is. {Do you know stepfathers abuse their children at a higher percent than natural fathers?} (Daly and Wilson, 1994, in Wright, p.51). I don't think he's physically abused, but he calls it mental abuse or verbal. Which is true. But, I mean, he's a little bit of a negative kid anyway. I don't know if that's from his home life. You know you're so busy with this curriculum. This is one thing that is kind of upsetting. Because you don't have a chance, a lot of opportunity, to interact with kids. And that is one thing that I have been frustrated by the way high schools are set up.

The smart kids in the class are like, "This is dumb, we're not doing this." I thought, you know what I mean? I just want to shake them sometimes.

I love them [cooperative learning groups]. I like to have the kids work in groups. I'd much rather them work in [groups], and they like it better. Everyone's much happier all the way around.

They're doing oral _____ now--they started today and I'm glad that they've had a chance to work with each other because they seem--of course I've threatened them, "You need to be very respectful of one another. Everybody has to get up in front of the class." But they did. They seemed very comfortable with each other, so I was glad that I had done that from the first of the year and I think they're better after moving them around and being in different groups and kind of getting to know everybody in there.

I had one student that was bright, he was driven, he had all these dreams. And he had a goal [to sing with a band] but he had no means to get there. He'd been arrested for drugs in [another city] and they sent him here to get him out of that environment, and he had a 16 yr. old girlfriend and they have a 6 mo. old son who has a terrible heart condition, so he was out of school half the time taking the baby

to the doctor, and from what I got from the other kids, his girlfriend has given up on the kid. When it finally boiled down to it, he just would not come to my class any more. I finally grabbed him and--he wouldn't come. He knew he could do the work, but his lifestyle is one way, and then school is a different [kind of] work, and sometimes they just can't connect the two. They can't handle it. It's got to be one or the other. And I think the reason he would not talk to me was because I was giving him a conscience about what was going on.

I'm trying. I've tried to get everyone in the class to write creatively. They are so resilient to doing anything. They won't do it.

The problem is is that they will talk to you one on one. But they won't put it on paper. I don't know what it is.

{Did you talk about problem kids in your courses?} There was a touch on that. A lot of times their [the professors] answer on that would be, "You just have to reach them," and then we'd want to know the practical things to reach those kids. "What do you do?" "How do you [reach them]?" "Well, you just have to reach them." And that was his answer. "You just have to find a way--you just do." For one thing, they're dealing with teachers that are in a much, much smaller classroom, and I do think professors lose sight of the fact that I have 30-35 kids in a classroom, and getting to know them personally isn't easy. They [the professors] were both talking about making visits to these children's homes, and I was thinking, that won't work...if I have 5 classes...that's 125 kids. I can't visit [all] these kids.

It works for a week. And he does all this stuff and he's "I'm really gonna buckle down now...I promise, I'm gonna do it, you know. And he does it for a couple of days and then stops.

I have a student who's very adversarial with me. I'd made a comment about writing about drugs or drug usage and she was very confrontational about it, "Well, just because we write about drugs doesn't mean we do drugs." And I said, I'm not accusing anybody of anything, it just that I have a moral and legal responsibility, if I suspect anything's going on. I think both of us would rather not deal with it. If it's something you feel you must talk about, I'd be more than happy to talk to you about it. I don't know. I realize they're going to push various buttons to see which one gets me going the best, the easiest. Um, which one is going to be the most fun to see. I mean how far can they push me.

What I find with these students right now is they need to have some fun. They don't want to write. They don't care about writing, they don't want to write, and that's hard. Because motivating them and trying to get them to have fun is just difficult.

I think I'm having a lot of trouble because I'm always thinking, well, it's like I should be fair to everybody, and expect the same...but I don't want to expect less from the kids that in standard, but it is...extremely difficult...and I didn't realize how difficult it was going to be. My honors kids, they have so much motivation, self-motivation, they do their work, they bring their books, they do everything they're supposed to do--it's so much easier to plan for them. My ____ don't do anything, so it's a whole different thing for me.

These kids hate to read. And it breaks my heart. They do...they hate to read.

[High school] students have about a 20 minute attention span...

With any lesson I give them I'm trying to like, if it's possible to do a real world example, you know, like shoes, or something like that, you know obvious things that they can relate with, and then at other times I find like something they know well, like the skills in algebra they know well, you know that they have done before and I know that they know it, I kind of start with that, and I say ok, you do this from that--I kind of relate [it] to something they already know regardless of whether or not it's real world. I try to think about what they're thinking.

Well actually, the problem with him--I guess he's from Mexico but he's Latin American too and this school I'm at is 99 percent White, rural. It's real--there's only, I think there's actually ____ Latin Americans, there no Afro-Americans, and so he's had a lot of problems with that, you know. It's a different culture, and a lot of the kids, they don't necessarily make fun of him but...{He feels isolated?} Yeah. I think he feels like, isolated, yeah. 'Cause he's said things to me like, "Well, I don't really know anybody anyway." You know things like [that]. Because I mean they're so--those kids have trouble accepting him, I guess. They're not used to being around other people besides people who've grown up in this area, and I think he's having trouble with that.

[Later the intern said that the students weren't prejudiced.] I don't know if it--I haven't come to the conclusion yet if it's just all the ____ community 'cause a lot of the people, like a lot of the people I've talked to, are just students, and, you know, they're tolerant. You know what I mean? Even though they've grown up in this area, they don't...I was surprised that there was not a lot of prejudice [from the] students. Maybe they're not going to show me that like some teachers.

There's one kid, um, who is a real kind of outcast, and he's one of the slowest kids in the class, so he needs a lot of individual attention, and um, some of the kids make fun of him, you know, and stuff, but I don't let them do it, you know, in class but, they probably do it in the hallway, or other classes, you know he kind of gets made fun of. I think he likes me a lot cause I always make sure I go over and help him. And I'm trying to get this one guy, I don't know, it's kind of an experiment, I

don't know if it's going to work or not. This one guy...he's a real good kid, I mean I like him a lot. A lot of them look up to him, he's always the one making jokes, you know what I mean, he's kind of the...{He's a leader?} Yeah, he's a leader, definitely a leader. I mean he's got a good head on his shoulders, but I'm trying to get him... So I'm trying to get them kinda, you know, like I pair them up all the time. I say, "You know ___ will you help ___ really understand this stuff." And it's only been two days, and I think it's worked out good, cause I think...like I'm trying to help ___ teach him a little bit that since he is like he is that he can help other people that aren't. And he's like, "Yeah, you know I'll help ___ next time." You know he's always eager to do it.

{Do you have trouble with kids that just really don't care, and how do you motivate those kids?} Yeah. I have some of those. And at first I was like, well, if they don't care and they're not a problem, I'll just let them sit there. It's their choice. {Do you make that clear though?} No. See, cause I didn't know what I'd do about it at first. There's really only one right now that is kind of not wanting to do his work but he's actually getting a little bit better because he's trying to copy other people's work, so he's not necessarily saying I don't care. Uh, he doesn't want to fail.

There's this one girl that's real smart. I mean 100s on everything, you know, but she's real quiet and real shy and so I've been putting them in groups. The rule is that if they don't get it in their learning groups, if somebody doesn't understand it, they have to ask everybody else in the group before they ask me. Then I suggested they ask her. She's shy, but it's forcing her to [talk] and now she's like running with it. Now she's been helping people out. And I asked her, I said, "Are you okay with helping people, you know? If you're uncomfortable with it you don't have to," and she's like "No, no, that's fine." And she likes it now.

One thing I think is really good. The other intern at ___, it helped him and I got it from him was like once every six weeks, and I just started this six weeks, I sit outside at a desk and I had them work in groups, and I call them out one by one in alphabetical order and just talk to them about their grades--about everything. I just say, "What's going on? What do you think about the class? What are you displeased with? Do you think you're learning something?" And I did that and I'm like, [look of amazement] and I put down their goals about what they think they can get this six weeks and this semester. I was like, "This is what you're going to work for," you know. And in that way, I mean you can just see them that one [time] and that personalizes [it] a lot.

I've thought about it a lot because I have a hard time getting motivated for first period. I just don't know if I want to deal with these kids today. It's a constant struggle. You can never let your guard down and relax a little bit or let them kind of do their own thing.

Really, I've been lucky so far. Like I've had the honors kids. The only problems in that group are just [that] they're loud, they're talking, they've missed directions--those types of things, and that's not really behavior, that's just management problems. With my juniors it's more just that they're totally apathetic. They don't care, and you know, they're not doing anything wrong so I don't want to yell at them, but when a student, you know, if I give notes on a day, or something, and they just sit there and don't write anything down, or... {How do you deal with that?} I would like someone to tell me.

{What about giving extra help, perhaps after school?} In the fifteen or twenty years they've [teachers] been teaching they have done that--they've tried to work with kids and, you know, the kids don't show up, or you know, you schedule after school appointments and the kids don't come. I mean I hear all these things that happen, and it's kind of discouraging, so my obvious opinion is that you've got to do it while the kids are in your room [for] fifty minutes--somehow you've got to get them to be part of the class, so that is about the biggest problem I have.

In our methods class, a couple of people have said the same thing, the kids are just like, whatever, I don't care, I'm just here, I'm just chilling, or whatever the kids' reasoning is. Yeah, we've all just kind of laughed about it, and everybody's like...oh, you should encourage them, or you should...you know, it's always a broad thing. I don't know any specific activities, or they say, find something they're interested in and have them do that. Well, most of these kids--they're not really interested in anything, or, you know, if they are, it's like one small thing, and I don't even know how you go about finding it.

Well, for the most part, kids that are in here are low motivated...they have a bad attitude and they are disrespectful to a pretty good degree. I have to resist the temptation to get on them. I have one girl in class that will just start talking. Just turn around and talk. I try to do all the proximity thing, and all that. It just doesn't work with her. She's belligerent. So, I have to find things that motivate her. She has a son. So, a lot of times, I'll incorporate something about my kids...try to interest her a little bit. I don't feel nearly as tired after that one class dealing with those kids. I ask them to be quiet and I get that "Well, I ain't talking to you" kind of thing. I think, "well, okay...".

I just thought I'm not going to read their records, you know, there's no need for that. I mean, I'll see what they do in here, but, you know, she [mentoring teacher] had told me some of these kids are going to be problems; and some of them have been really good, you know? Some of them have put forth the effort, but they're not scholars, or anything, but they've done the work they're supposed to do and it hasn't been great work, and there again comes a grading problem. {What do you think it does to a student who has gotten failures and yet still passes? What does that really say to them?} Hmmmm...yeah. {It's okay to fail, because they're

going to pass me anyway.} True. That's true. You pass kids that are failing, and you expect so much of the kids who are going to college because they have to be able to pass in college. They're not going to do that [pass failures] in college. I think I would feel better having personalized expectations than expecting this from the honor students and this from the standard kids, you know? I hate dealing with kids that way.

I see that [problems]. I see how they view themselves. It's like a low self esteem with them.

It's an emotional thing. He's very vocal and he cuts up and you don't get away with that in some classes you know, and his mother's remarried so he might [shape up]. But we're still having trouble with him. I've spoken to him. I talked to him and he has behavior problems so...

{Have you identified students in your classroom now that aren't working up to their potential because of having problems?} Yeah. One boy that was a transferred young man, right, we talked to his mother. Counseling, everything. He got into the class but he didn't have the skills. I mean he didn't have the reading. He had verbal and reasoning skills but somebody did him a big disservice many years ago and he was about at--fifth grade is what he was tested at and he was below reading level. They try to tell him, "I don't care if you're a junior and in a sophomore class you're not--even though you think you're understanding, you're just not. I mean you can reason things out but you couldn't write down and tell me, and it doesn't mean your dumb, it means you've missed a skill or some processing." So they're helping him but...

They want to be victims. It's easier to be victims. I don't know why they have a problem with that. It's a personal problem to handle that. I'm here doing the very best I can. I'm not getting paid for this and this is very difficult for me. I'm not here to make their lives miserable. I'm here to try to teach them how to do something. So that's fine.

I had two failing at midterm which they don't...{And there's no reason for it?} No reason for it. {They have the ability?} No reason other than they didn't do the homework. And they all have the ability. I said, I know you can do this. Why won't you do it, you know, and I've talked to him about it just as a teacher/friend, an adult friend--not a friend friend but you know what I mean--a concerned adult, I guess. {Good. You have expressed concern, so do you think that it might help if you continue that?} Well, what we're doing now is I'm sending notes home. {Rather than suspension, which is very punitive.} No I wouldn't. I told him, I said, I don't want to be mean, I shouldn't have to be mean. It's making me angry [that] you're making me be mean. But I told him if I continue to have trouble and you can't take cues from me when to stay on task, get back on task, [and] try not to

disrupt. Because some of the kids in that class, they need to listen, they need--they don't need distractions.

So, even though I've been exposed to them [special needs students] I haven't really had much [training]. What do you do? How do you do something with a dyslexic child, you know, other than sending them off to get tested, I mean. That's a lot of good if the parents agree, but as a classroom teacher--it's just frustrating to me that some of these kids are just not going to get any help and they're just going to go right on down the way.

There's one behavior [problem in first grade] and she is, um, wants attention all the time. Only child, divorced parents, just spoiled, doesn't get her way, you know, just ruthless to the other children, you know, just vicious--no feelings at all. You just have to tell her to do things 10 times and she's real stubborn--always wants attention, will do anything or say anything for attention, so that's been something that I've been [working on]. {So you're teaching socialization skills?} Oh yes, that's what I feel like half of 1st grade is.

I was about to say it is really hard to connect with these kids because when I do give them the freedom to write about what they care about, it invariably turns to drugs and sex. I give them three wishes. Today I'm going to be a genie from Aladdin's lamp and give you three wishes. I want you to write about what those three wishes are. Invariably it comes back to drugs and sex. It is not appropriate in this school to discuss those things.

[Regarding the high mobility of some students] I don't know what happened. These kids, they say they do this every year. They came, and then they leave, and then they come back. I think it's really hard on the kids. {Are they migrant workers children?} No, I think they're moving around. It's one family and they have 6 children in the school all with different last names because they all have different dads, and everybody in the school knows who they are, and knows their situation and says, "Yup, they'll be back, you'll see." The kids tell me this. {What were the children like as far as teaching them?} They're difficult. This one in particular in my class. She's a sweet girl but it took me a while...it takes a while for her to grow on you, and I'm worried about her going somewhere else because finally, just now she's starting to get into the groove of things... and then she left and she has to start all over again. {Well, that's one of the problems of at-risk kids have.} I get real worried about her. I am. I don't want her to leave. I didn't want her to go anywhere because I think it's important for...If they don't have a stable home life, they need a stable school situation.

I wanted to make sure...that _____ wasn't going to be messed up for life from being called this [a "Nigger"] and I didn't want him to feel uncomfortable. I don't know...I'm apprehensive about pulling him out, you know, singling him out because

he's already so singled out and so I worry about that a little bit, but he's doing okay. I go over and I sometimes give him a little nudge on the shoulder and say, you know, you doing all right? And I do that with a lot of other kids too, but him, I try to make sure I do that often because he's very sensitive and I think that he has ample reason to be. I think he's in a hard boat. It's a rough boat to be in.

They seemed to do a lot better when I put things more in their own relationships. Then they're willing to write for me, then they're willing to do things, but I have to go a lot farther with them. It seems, you know, it's so funny that you think in your standard classes that is a problem. Most teachers are like, well, I'm not going to do as much with those kids. We're just going to do the book and not worry about it. But for me, that class has been much more of a challenge because I want them to learn, I want them to like it, and I want their grades to be good.

[In response to what students think and how they are affected by peers with regard to doing well in school]. That's exactly the problem, and I have discussed this with students, and they have never been able to answer no. It is impossible, well, it's not impossible, but it is not good to be smart at that school. The apathy at that school just boggles me.

It doesn't seem that they've seen a way out...at least not in the class that I have. And I'm afraid, and I hate to do this again, but it seems like there's a dividing line at the skill level. Where the students have been placed often determines what kind of outlook they have because the college preparatory kids, the kids that I work with on the annual staff and the journal, are there. The literary journal and the newspaper staff are all college preparatory English. And they're bright, they know they're bright, and they use it. And they all have vision. One kid said, "I'm going to UT and I'm going to be a journalism major." And there's another girl that wants to go to Morehouse, and they all have their plans. They all know where they want to go. And it just seems like the basic level kids don't. I literally have, I would say, half the girls in my 12th grade basic level class when we did journal entries on "What Do You Want To Do With Your Life?" "Where Do You See Yourself Five Years From Now?", they all want to be cosmetologists. They all want to have their own hair salons, which is fine. Far be it from me to take away their wanting to do hair. The thing is, and I've never said this to them because I don't want to knock them down in any way, shape, or form, but when you drive down _____ and you get towards _____ High School, you can't spit without hitting a beauty salon, or a place to get your hair cut, or a place to get your nails done, or just anything. There are so many of those it's just--there's so much competition. It's still not a real viable future. It would be if they would be planning to move, but so many of them just don't see--I only have two students who have admitted to me they've been outside of _____. And of those, I would doubt many of them have been any further away from their neighborhood than _____ Mall. Certainly not out of Tennessee. You know? They don't have any concept of what is outside their neighborhood. And

they don't have any concept of what they can do to get themselves away from all this and to do what they actually want. Everything that they want--all their goals are completely circulated on their neighborhood. It's all got to be right here. It's here or nowhere. It's this or nothing.

At the very beginning of the year when the story was _____ was going lose the 16 million dollars for their magnet school program to a community in the west who wanted a new school, um, I tried like hell to get my students involved. I tried to explain to them, "Look they're trying to take money out of your community that is slotted to better this school, to better the educational possibilities that you, your brothers and sisters, and friends are gonna have for the future...to build another school. Do you think that's right?" "No, it's not right." "What are you gonna do about it?" "Nothin'--we don't care. We're seniors. We're out of here." "Well, don't you have younger brothers and sisters?" "Yes." "Well, what about your children? You know--your friends, your cousins, your relatives. Do you not care enough about your relatives bettering yourselves to actually go and put up a fight to keep this money here." They did not care--absolutely did not care.

Several interns were upset by the lack of support for their students.

There is little, very, very little parental involvement. [The board of the Parent-Student-Teacher Organization had a meeting to talk about losing money for the school]. All they were trying to do was say, "Look we need to get a large community base to go to that meeting and say, 'Look, we're not going to sit here and let you take the money away from our school and our community again and again and again and send it out west. We deserve the same educational opportunities as everyone else.'" The second meeting slated to talk about that issue, no one showed up.

There doesn't seem to be any community support for education. There doesn't seem to be any community support for sports. I mean when you go to football games, or soccer games or basketball games out west, the place is packed, you can't sit down. When you go to _____ you could lay down in the stands, end to end. There just doesn't seem to be support for anything.

I have called other students' parents just to even let them know how great their students are doing, just called and told them that such and such are doing a great job and I'm really proud of them and please tell them to keep it up, and they're like "okay great. Thanks for calling," and hang up like they could care less.

I've really only had, I guess, one positive contact with a parent, and it was one of my inclusive students. He struggled. I am honestly am surprised that the student finds the classroom every day when he gets to school. The poor, poor kid is just so lost.

{Would you like to go back to class grouping?} Yes, as far as right now, maybe in a few years when I've got a little more experience and I'm better at it. I don't think I'm doing a terrible job you know. I'm doing okay, but I'm having a hard time meeting everybody's needs. Maybe I am in a way, but I don't feel real confident that I'm doing that. [This intern later changed her mind and thought that grouping was unfair.]

It seems like every place I go they have different levels or whatever so...I know at my high school they just went to no more, they're just all a ball of wax. Huge [problems from parents]. Their honors kids are gonna be mixed in with those standard kids you know, and their grades are gonna fall and they're going to terrible in college, and I was like, whatever...{That's the common complaint about mixing kids, but actually research shows the top kids still do better.} Yeah, I guess from being in education classes and learning all these things I was like, yeah, they should just mix everybody together. It'd be so much more interesting and the kids could learn from one another, but as a first year teacher trying to teach to all these different kids you know, kids that turn in 3 sentences to kids that I know could probably write a short story, you know, and having two in the same class, it's like how do I do this? It really is difficult.

They don't see that [if] you put in the effort...it [success] comes. [One student] is an incredible basketball player and he has gotten letters from colleges and he's shown them to me and...{Does he see this as a way out then? He doesn't need an education?} No, no. He doesn't see it as anything. [That] is the problem. We're in class one day and I'm talking to him, "Well, what are you going to do when you've got that big basketball scholarship and you're at school--you're at college and you've got..." "Man, I'm not going to college. I don't care about playing ball in college." {So he doesn't even as sports as a way to get out.} No, and I just jumped him and I said, "It would be terrible...it would be a crime for you to have this talent and just to piss it away and not even use it. I said, "If you use basketball to get you in college and get you somewhere else, I have absolutely no problem with that, and I would take issue with anyone that would." And his cousin sits right next to him and his cousin was just sitting there nodding her head and going, "Uh-huh, uh-huh." Because she's one in the class that's extremely bright, does all the assignments, never gives me a moment's trouble, and she kind of keeps him in line. There are so many of those students that don't see a way out, and especially don't see education as a way out.

{Do you know why they changed back, from the tracking?} I have no idea. {It's because of the low self-esteem of the lower tracked kids. You can imagine going through those four years of high school in the low track. They don't do as well, and teachers don't teach as well, or, at least, creatively. They do lower their expectations.} That's what I don't like about it. Because I feel like I go into my _____ class and I don't expect as much from them. I let them get away with a lot

more, and that bothers me but when I do raise my expectations, and I make them do all this work they do so poorly on it that I'm like now what do I do. It seems like if I put on all these limitations, you know, make them stick to the rules and all this, the kids' grades just go right down.

I have about half the kids in my _____ course that fit into that category (underachievers). And it's quite an adjustment for me, shifting gears, trying to find ways to motivate these kids. There's not a problem motivating the kids in my other class. The problem is keeping them from getting bored. I've been struggling with this class. It's a lot more challenging for me but it's also more frustrating because I hate to fail at anything.

He doesn't care, and I mean, that bothers me, you know, and it really bothered me the first couple of weeks when he didn't turn anything and I hated giving him an F. I hate to fail a kid who's been there. It just seems ridiculous, I mean. You know, I'd take it home. I was worried about him and I thought, what else can I do to make it better for him, and you know finally it's kind of like I said before, okay, I've done everything, I've talked to him, or I've talked to his parents, or--you can only do so much.

Um, I'm seeing a variety [of students]. In the beginning of the year we started out with 21, I believe, and now have 25 and a variety of levels working. You know, kids coming in the middle of the year from a school that did not prepare them for what we're doing now, and they sit in shock and watch what's going on and usually we just let them sit there and kind of watch what's going on for a day or two. We'll probably actually get them involved [soon] because it is, we move quick. We go right through it and the kids in there are used to it now and they move at that speed, but the new kids are just kind of oooooo, scared to death.

My teacher and I were just talking about a little boy that we had tested for a learning disability 'cause we were worried about that, and he turned out to be below average. Low average is what they call it, and his IQ is really low, and he's really having trouble but most of it is that he doesn't turn in the things, and that he doesn't have any support at home to help him keep up with what's going on, and I think if he had some support at home that he would be a lot better off, you know? {Did you call the parents in?} We have talked to the parents and there's an older sister there that's basically taking care of him rather than the parents, and you know, she's in high school, still hanging on to what's going on there. And it's all she can do to take care of her little brother, so I get worried about that. I get worried about him because I think that he could be moving along if he had a set of parents like some of the other kids in there. But at the same time, we try.

[What are you doing to reach those kids?] I'm still working at it. I'm still trying to figure it out. I'm trying to get to know these kids more than I have to know my other students. I have to know more about them. I have to get closer to them. I have to show them that I'm not just there to put in my hour with them and then I don't care what happens to them. I mean you have to be closer to them. I mean, that's what I think. I have absolutely no data to back that up. I have nothing but my own instincts to tell me.

I think, I definitely feel that there's almost a mentality that _____ is not a true college preparatory school. That it almost has the stigma of being just a vocational preparatory school. These kids are going to go on to be cosmetologists, plumbers, brick masons. There may be a handful that are going to go on to college, and the school's reputation and the students reputation in general suffer because of those stigmas because these students come in and there are...I have students in my basic level class who are bright enough, who are intelligent enough, and have the ingenuity to work at an advanced placement level. The difference I see is that I don't think they get the kind of positive strokes at _____ that they do at some other schools.

Sadly, the two students that I feel are the most intelligent and the most capable of going on and doing things in college are my two worst students, because they're unmotivated, they seem, they don't seem to have any internalized locus of control, they seem to think that everything is entirely out of their hands, that there's nothing they can do...they're completely unmotivated and they've just given up.

Feeling Unprepared for Underachieving Students

In spite of the fact that the interns were very committed to their students, they felt frustrated in not being prepared to help them more.

I don't think there was anything that could have been done to prepare me for what I went into. I think that if you ask any intern...they're all gonna say they are somewhat unprepared for going into the internship. Um...not in the sense that I think they have the knowledge base, um...I think it would be nice if we could get a few more content area courses, instead of theory...switch it around. If we could get more of the content area reading courses, the conceptualizing courses, more courses that give us [methods].

You know one of the problems I see with the COE is sometimes it's a more valuable experience, and I've learned this just my own life experiences...sometimes

experiences are more valuable when you're allowed to make the mistake yourself. I mean it's...there's such an emphasis on trying to make us as prepared as possible, and I think that's a very valuable thing, but there's a point where you have to say, this is it...give it a shot...

I guess it's kind of the way I thought it was going to be to start off, you know. Maybe there's a lot of stuff that's involved with it that I didn't expect, you know, but I can handle that.

It just seems like I didn't learn any of this. It's just like you're smart, bright, you're graduates of the university, you're going out to be teachers, you should be able to think of all this stuff on your [own]. {But, that grows.} Right, yeah. {I got to the point that I just couldn't look at anything without thinking, oh, that's a great idea for my classes.} And I think I'm slowly being that way, you know. This weekend I was next door, and I saw these old blocks and everything, and I had little ideas going through my head, and I think that's starting to happen--that I see things and I think that would be a nifty way to do this.

I've got some kids in my junior class who have been in honors classes previously, because my mentor teacher has said "They were in honors. They just got lazy and decided they'd just go down to standard, and to me that's just like, why would they even think that would make a difference, but it does. They could probably make it in honors but they don't want to do, probably, extra work, they just don't have any motivation. {What are you doing about that?} I don't know.

I really wished that there was some way they could implement some kind of class as a mandatory class for special education, or at least at-risk students, because I didn't feel like...I mean I felt fairly unprepared going in, I guess because it was just so overwhelming, to be starting this and not really understanding what was going on. The field experiences are nice but I don't think they prepare you at all for what you're actually going to do.

I think it might have been more effective if when we were taught those types of things, it was types of things, it was more like they gave us a subject matter, they gave us some specific thing...{A lesson to deal with?} Right. Then they'd say, "this is your topic or this is your novel, now work on something for this." Everything was so broad in those classes that it was real easy to go, "Oh, okay, I'll do something..." and you'd write out something simple. Well now I'm sitting down and.. {Trying to be real specific?} Trying to be specific because in one day it's very specific.

The methods courses before we go in and then work on the theory as the graduate study, then I think we would be more prepared, because honestly I have felt several times through the semester I've been reading through and doing things in class and going...you know, this would have been spectacular three weeks ago.

This would have worked perfectly, and I think my kids really would have enjoyed it, and at that point you can't really go back so I feel...I don't feel, I'm not really upset for myself honestly. I feel like I'm short changing my students...somehow, because I know that the students that I have being with block schedule, I'm gonna have two new classes, entirely new students next semester, and I feel like they're gonna have the benefit of the things that I've learned this semester while the students that I have this semester are not.

I really don't think that there's any way you can prepare someone for the teacher student relationship before they get there. I mean I think have to be someone that can do it and figure it out for yourself.

Theme: Support Systems and Problems of the Internship

An important component in making a good teacher is the presence of supportive people nearby with whom to discuss the problems of the internship, the students, and teaching in general. The support might come from different people, but it is necessary and crucial to interns for whom so much is a new and different experience. *Statements regarding support and problems with support groups could generally be grouped as belonging to one of several subcategories: administration, faculty, mentoring teachers, parents, family members, and other interns.*

Administration and Other Faculty

The administration demands good behavior and a code of respect they really stress so you have the whole school behind you. You don't have [that at] a few schools I've been in where I've seen the problems, stuff that I hear, taking place. You just don't have it there.

One of the things that really kept me going at _____ is one day we were in the library and I had pulled some students in there from other classes to help them out with some stuff and one was really just didn't want to do it and leave me alone...I don't care, I don't want to do this, and I kept trying to get them, and I finally kind of got them to where they were working and there time was up, and I said I'll see you guys in class tomorrow. As I was walking out I heard the librarian sitting there talking to him and going, "I don't ever want to hear you talk back to that man again." And the kid said, "Why?" And she said, "Because you will never in your life have a teacher that cares about you as much as he is [does]. That he took his own time to pull you out and bring you in here and help you work on that stuff, and that you treat him like that is absolutely wrong." That somebody, that she actually noticed that I was taking that extra time with those kids...and I obviously don't do it for recognition...I mean if I was doing it to get another teacher to notice I would have stopped after she noticed. But it was just nice that finally somebody noticed it.

No problem. Now with my mentoring teacher, no problem at all. Certainly the administration and the whole way this school is set up is that if the adult has a problem with the student, it is taken care of. I mean, you have the support. I have no problem. I feel free to call parents of my own students or if I don't want to deal with a parent, my mentoring teacher will. We trade off. No problem at all. That's the strength of this school.

They pride themselves on being a college preparatory department. You know, they deal with the, I hesitate to say lower level kids, but the kids of lesser ability, they deal with them because they have to, but there's some resentment to that. All you ever hear them talk about is their junior AP courses, or the senior AP courses, and it's a real distinction in the department whether this child is in senior _____ or senior AP...you know what I'm saying?

The kids know you're not getting paid and they know you don't have a key to the room. It's difficult. Cause I'm not a teacher. I get resentful. Like faculty meetings. I don't go to faculty meetings. I'm not a member of the faculty. Nobody makes me a member of the faculty. I don't feel like I should go to the faculty meetings.

They do back the teachers up here and that's important. And you know that is important. I've not had trouble not being backed up as a teacher in front of students, but as teacher to teacher, there's definitely a pecking order that interns don't count in it.

No, it's absolutely the wrong way to do it [evaluate teachers based on TCAPs] because they're putting in all these testing methods to show how competent their teachers are to bring good teachers in, when all it's doing is...I don't want to teach there, I've got to teach to the test, that's all it's all about really. The kids aren't

getting anything. That's one of the reasons I mean I'm not too hip on teaching in Tennessee.

Mentoring Teachers

You know, my teacher, the teachers I talk to at the high school--they really don't care.

I didn't want to do that [teach what the mentor teacher was teaching] because it sounded very boring and something I would hate...I didn't tell her that but I...tried to come up with other things.

I've noticed her lectures are more dry, more matter of fact, and I'm not sure if it's just how long she's been doing it and this is what she wants me to test over, and it's funny cause she gives me a copy of the test, and I have to use her test. [She says] make sure they know everything that's on the test.

The class that my mentoring teacher still has is quite vocal about liking me better...and she doesn't take it personally... She's not going to apologize for it and so because of our personalities it's not been a problem. I can see where it could be. Some people are a little insecure even if they are good.

The things that stand out to me are the level that I'm at and not feeling totally comfortable in that classroom, just because it's not my classroom. 'Cause when she's in there I'm thinking okay, that sounded weird or I'm not going to answer that question that child had very well, you know, she could probably answer it better, and she's probably thinking how she could answer it and I'm answering it different and I don't mean any of that as a negative thing, that's just human nature. When she's not in there I'm just bouncing up the kids, I mean just I feel like I can do my own types of things.

But I learned things just from observing her, but she's never had training at teaching a teacher. And doesn't really want it. I'm sure that isn't her focus. But she has done well. And having another desk didn't go over. I mean, it's your room. That's going to be a very big thing. I can see when I have my room it's going to be MY ROOM and I can't wait...

I think it puts us in a kind of weird situation because teachers, well, my teacher's never had an intern before. So neither one of us kind of knows [what to do]. It's hard.

I don't know if she really understands the whole program because she's new in the

system this year, and I don't know if she understands how the intern program [works]. She's had a lot of student teachers, but not necessarily an intern. And we've had a little bit of... 'cause I don't necessarily know exactly what an intern's supposed to do even though I am one, I don't know the exact things. We both have the big yellow book but we're kinda taking it as we come.

I do have a problem with drawing the line between Miss _____ is the teacher and I'm the intern. You know it's nothing, honestly, and I've figured this out more and more, the younger the kids are, it is so hard to identify with two people, as far as who's the real teacher.

I know I've got a boy in there, He seems bright and when he turns things in they're fine. He just doesn't care. But when I said something to my mentor about, "oh, _____ has finally turning something in--I'm so excited," and she's like, "God knows, he must have drunk some bad water." And one of them said, "I'd like to actually hear what did you do for him." Not that I expected praise, I mean, but it just kind of, well...don't you even care if he does it?

And you go into the school, especially as an intern, and you're so, early on...I'm not very impressionable like a child, but I drink things in to the point that I need it, you know, other people's experiences. And when they're so negative and they're so rude towards the kids...{Are they burned out, do you think?} Yeah, burned out and just you know, just not going to do any more than they have got to do to just be there, you know? They've been evaluated and they got their lives all set. All you got to is write a plan every year and they check them off, and that's the way it is, and that's not going to change, but it is hard.

My mentoring teacher is kind of, um, insistent that I keep up with her in my, in my units we do together. I didn't do what my mentoring teacher wanted to do because it sounded very boring and something I would hate. I didn't tell her that but I just thought uh, well, I don't want to do that so I tried to come up with other things that they could do.

Some of the teachers are, you know, "Are we going to have problems with this? [block scheduling] How are we going to teach to different levels and to kids who don't want to do things in class and they're there in there for an hour and a half?" I haven't seen much of anything in the teachers I've watched or what I've heard, in a complaining way, that leads me to believe--not that they don't care, but they don't put forth the effort. Now I know my mentoring teacher. I haven't seen any real difference in the way she runs an honors class to a standard class. I think they're right at average, and that's fine, if that's what she wants to do, but I've sat there the last couple of weeks and I've been kind of observing... and I thought, this would not work for me, you know.

And when I've said things about problems I've had, you know, well this kid doesn't want to do anything and you know what was he like last year, and some of the teachers were like...oooooh, he's just a pain. It's never anything like what he probably needs is some help in this area, or something...it's always, oh, he's just a pain, he won't do anything, he won't hit a lick. I mean, well, okay, that doesn't give me a lot of help, you know?

If I had a severe problem I'd call my mentoring teacher, my mentoring UT professor. {Your supervisor?} My supervisor--at home. I don't care if it was two in the morning, I'd call. That's been a real plus. That feels good. And that's reassuring to have them come out and...It's so hard because each intern, there are four of us and we are [each] in such a different situation that I don't know...

I mean yes, I think my mentoring teacher has stood up for me more to say, "Won't the interns benefit more from doing this?" She's really gone out on a limb.

{Is your mentor someone you can go to if you have problems?} Yes,...her goals...she's a little bit different than I am about some things but we have similar life views...it's great for me. I'm learning a lot from her. I think she's learning some things even from me.

{Your mentoring teacher, is she someone that you can...} That I'd go talk to? Oh I'd definitely go talk to my mentoring teacher because it's partially her class...she'd be the first person I'd go to. Well I feel like it's her class and I'm coming in and I'm learning from her, basically. I think we have very compatible personalities, and at the same time, I look up to her and she is a mentor teacher to me.

{If you had a problem with behavior, or teaching strategies, or whatever, would you talk to your mentoring teacher?} Oh yeah. {Before anybody else?} Yeah. We have like um--we have a real good relationship. We can talk about anything. Yeah, I'd definitely do that. {So you do feel that you have good support?} Oh yeah. I mean I couldn't have asked for a better mentoring teacher. We just talk about everything and like one day she was in there and I didn't do the best job. It wasn't my best lesson and we talked about it afterward, and we both went to lunch and [when] I came back and she wasn't in there the second half, and then I did real good. And I was like, I said, "You missed me. You didn't even see." You know, I was like a little kid talking to his mother, "You gotta watch, you gotta watch." And she said the best thing is that she's not in there so I can teach. When she's not in there now, I love it. I mean I love being up there. I can be myself and do my own thing.

My teacher is just you know, "Do you feel comfortable? Do you want to do more, do you want to do less?" She's always really asking me, and you know, if I feel comfortable.

I was very discouraged and my mentoring teacher came in and it must have been the look on my face, you know, cause I felt sick almost, as badly as it had gone this morning. And she said, "Are you okay?" I said, I'm fine, I just had a rough one today. And she's like, "What happened," and we talked about it and I felt a little better, but I think in retrospect, it was a very valuable experience for me, and it was a good thing I didn't come prepared that day and it was a bad thing I didn't come prepared--as prepared as I should have been because I was very prepared as to what I was going to do. I just wasn't prepared for the fact that it wasn't going to work. You know. And I didn't have a contingency plan, which is one of the things they stress to you here, as well, but I was just so confident in this--I was like, oh man, they're going to love this stuff. {But even experienced teachers have those kinds of days.} Yeah. [My mentoring teacher] says the same thing. She says, "It's panic time when that happens." She says, "I still do that."

As for support I also want to mention that I feel very comfortable, I feel very lucky that I'm with the teacher I'm with, and I think that can make all the difference in the world. She's really, I feel very comfortable talking to her about any problem, any thing that I have a question about I don't hesitate to ask, and she's made me feel that comfortable and I think that's really taken a lot of pressure off, a lot of frustrations [get] out because I have somebody to share that with, and she's in there every day where I am you know? We're both in the, not in the same boat, but we see the same things and we talk about it often.

Parents of Students

I'm not [concerned]. I anticipate that [getting complaints from parents]. I know that there's a lot of people out there and not everybody's going to get along, and not everybody's going to have the same opinions as you do, and I'm prepared for that. Not that all the parents are going to come in and start yelling at me but if one did come in and not agree with how I did something, I anticipate that happening...it's bound to happen. There's no way it wouldn't.

I've got a little boy in there who can make As and Bs in honors, and he just decided he didn't want to do it anymore, so he's in my juniors standards class and he's just making a C in there, and he doesn't care, and I don't know what to do, you know. I've talked to the guidance counselor and she said yeah, when he quit I told his mom that was not a good idea and his mom said that whatever he wants to do, was totally fine, and I was like, there's not a lot I can do about that.

You hear funny things--I have to work, I have a baby, and dadadada, and I mean, I know where they are. And there's just no way to, I can't solve it. {I know. Well, some problems you're not going to solve, and that's part of the job of being a

teacher.} *It's that kind of thing that frustrates me...that's why I'm working on that.*

Some of the students I was really worried about have left, and it's those...the kind that come and then pick up and move, pick up and move, and I was really worried about a couple of them, and they're already gone so they left before I even got to touch base with mom and dad before you know...{You can see that that's a real problem, then?} That's a real need, that's exactly right. If they keep on moving them around, they're not going to learn anything, they're not going to feel stable, so um, I'm kind of concentrating on not only...now those students are gone, but I still have parents that are not as involved as I'd like them to be. At the same time it's not necessarily my class. They're my kids and I consider them my class too, but I don't want to push it, you know?

One little girl, her mom works all day and then is off at night, and comes home and her kids are already in bed so she doesn't even see her kids, and I can't solve that problem, you know. I can't do anything about that except to say [they should] have a place for folders or notes or have a place where they all can communicate. I mean she had sisters. This little girl in third grade is taking care of her kindergarten sister and that's not right at all. And the one in fifth grade supposed to be taking care of both of them and she can't. It makes me want to go over there and babysit every day, but you can't do that.

Family Members

{Most interns have had a supportive environment going through school. Their parents were interested in their education.} Well, my mom was very interested. She was the room mother. You know, she did everything.

{You're getting advice from your mentoring teacher? Peers?} Mentoring teacher, other interns I talk to, and then, my mom's a teacher. And so I ask her some things. {It's kind of neat to have someone in your family that understands.} Yeah, and she's not--she's never pushed me into being a teacher at all, you know, she was by far... Whatever you kids want to do. I mean I decided to do it. And she never tries to push anything on me but if I have a question, she'll answer it. Well, here's what I do, you don't have to do this, and some things I do she says, "Well, I don't know if I'd do that."

{Were you encouraged by your family, your parents, to go into teaching?} No, actually, I wasn't. Well, my mom was always real just whatever makes you happy. She could see me being just a really great teacher and everything. My dad was more, no, go to law school or med school, and whatever. He's kind of--wants me to be...I'll be happy doing what I want to do...not how much money I'll make--but

as I've gotten into it more, he sees how much it means to me and how into it I am, you know, and that makes him happy.

I mean every single intern that I know is at least one day got to the point where it's not worth it and they just don't want to go on. And that's just honestly just...some days you just feel that about 1/4 inch high and you have done more harm than done [good] and you have had really bad days. And you are fighting within yourself and certainly with a family or a husband. My family has been great. They have been very supportive. And my husband has really stepped in on some things that I never really thought he would. That's good.

Other Interns, Peer Learning/Competition

I feel there's like an underlying competition, not so much competition, I'm not a competitive person by any means, but I feel it. And, we can sit there and chat all day long, but there's things that, you know, we're all here for the same job. You know, we're all here to do the same things, so I always sense that and I feel like a lot of people hold back. I went down here and I asked them how their evaluations went you know, just kinda--I had just gotten evaluated and they said, "Well, how did it go?" and I kinda told them how it went and dadadadada, and I asked them how their's went and everybody says just enough to get it off your back but not too much, you know. There's never--we open up to each other about our personal lives, but as for what's going on in our classrooms, it's almost...

And I felt very, you know, like I'm not on steady ground, sometimes, and I'm kind of like, you know, how much does my opinion really count for...I mean, I think I'm a pretty smart person, and obviously I'm there with the kids every day but still.

But [we have] a lot of concerns, and we've kind of talked about this is, if you see one that's doing a lot more than you, you feel like am I not doing as much as I'm supposed to do I, am I looking bad, you know. Like I know _____'s teacher's been out for like two weeks sick so _____'s just gotten the opportunity to take over. They have a substitute but _____'s there every day. She can pick up where her teacher left off, and I think that's great but in the back of my mind I'm thinking, does this, I mean, does this look bad, I mean that I don't do this...but then I think, I could do the same thing if this happened with my teacher, and that sort of thing...like I said I analyze a lot of things but I don't want any one intern to just stand out, you know, for all these things.

A good thing about it is, the interns, and even the teachers, you know, we use everybody's ideas, you know, and that's good because you don't want to just keep it all to yourself and be [selfish]. If I find a great activity, you know, I'll make a copy

for all other interns, and they all do that for us. We all, if we have a new idea, we write it down and we give it to them, because that's what we're here for.

[In class the interns] just talk about instances that maybe could compare. What I'm supposed to be [doing], or are you kind of doing the same things I am, as far as... Well, we talk a lot about what we're actually doing in the classroom. Some of us, you know, take over a lot of the lessons, whereas some, the teacher prefers to keep doing what they do. {What's your experience?} I've started out pretty much jumping in there you know, and I'm just doing whatever is asked of me, and as time goes on I've gradually taken more and more until it's just like a team thing. We kind of just feed off each other. Whatever comes natural, you know. she does it or I'm working on something else, or just whatever needs to be done, we just take time about but... we're both in agreement, you know, that as time goes on, that I'll take on more and more.

It's really hard. Certainly as an intern. And it probably more like you don't have the same status, the same recognition, although the students have been good, you don't have the same...{Respect?} Respect. Oh yeah, respect. Certainly here. Although I've not had personal [problems]. I am friendly with everyone, [but] we're left out, like for a purpose there. We don't have a key to the room. It's okay to mess with these kids heads, but we don't have a key to the room. I mean. What am I going to steal? And we have one mailbox for seven people and it's this big. And they put one of everything in it. You have to share one little...it's just dumb stuff. Let's save money and just give them only one copy of something. And then you are required to sit through faculty meetings that have nothing to do with what you're [doing], you know. It's been the pits. A lot of it is just stuff that you have to do to get through.

Between all the interns, we're all good friends, and there's no competition or anything, you know. We all don't feel like resentful of another one if one's recognized for something you weren't, or that sort of thing. We don't feel like that.

At least now I can get together with all these other interns who are all going, "I didn't know it was going to be like this." {You do use the other students then as a support group?} Oh yeah. I think we all, in talking together, you know, especially the kind of few close friends that I've made the past years. Most classes, it's the same people every day, and there's another intern at my school, [and] that really helps. You don't feel like you're the new teacher and you're just out there in the woods, and it is good. The classes kind of put a lot on you but it's a good pressure in a way...I mean I don't really like it but it is good for me, probably...trying to keep me all on track, keeping me organized, but, oh, it's very much a blessing to have the other interns to talk to about everything.

Lesson Planning for Underachieving Students

I asked whether or not interns felt capable in the planning of their lessons, particularly with regard to underachieving students. Several mentioned "bad days" when they hadn't planned well or enough.

I'm the kind of person that I have to learn something from experience, like you could tell me that you have to be prepared, but if someone tells me, it doesn't matter. I have to go through it the hard way. And so one time I looked in my book and I was like, "Oh I know how to do that, you know. I can do that. I thought I was prepared. See, usually I work through the problems and anticipate questions, but this time, it was like, "Okay, I can just wing it while I'm in there, I mean I know how to do this stuff, I don't have to go through it." And so I got in there and I was unprepared, basically, and it just went haywire. It wasn't very good and so that's what upset me. Now I know, and I'll never come unprepared again, just because I have learned that, you know.

I had a bad experience this morning with my class, and it was partly my fault because I had my focus--I had planned what I wanted to do, and it fell flat. It was just, I couldn't get motivated, I couldn't get them [motivated]. Nothing interested them so all of a sudden, I was without a plan here, and I was getting frustrated 'cause nothing I wanted to do worked. My responsibility comes in. I didn't have a back up. I didn't have something I could fall back on.

I think I can teach better when I have planned...maybe not the TIMs model, but close...but it's hard to do for a two hour class...maybe a 40 minute class, but two hours because these people...the students have about a 20 minute attention span.

Well, today [the problem] was time, and it was also poor planning on my part. The kids went through everything a lot quicker than I had anticipated they would do and that tends to be a problem. I either seem to plan too much and I rush them, and they don't get it done, or I don't plan enough and then I'm left hanging on with 20 minutes at the end of class going "Okay, now what?"

I felt that by being on top of the content, then that relaxed me to do some of the other things that I was good at. If I didn't have to sit there and worry about content so much, then I could just sort of try things. I think that's a definite. I mean you have to be on top of your content. And especially for that day. You know, I mean that's not saying you have to be a _____ genius every day. I mean whatever you're

teaching that day, you have to know it left and right.

Some felt they were not getting the opportunity they needed to do lesson planning; others did it as a team effort with mentors and other teachers.

{The planning? Are you involved in that?} No, [my mentoring teacher] does do most of the planning just because you know, she shows me the curriculum and objectives, but it's like, um, we write them together. But she writes [them]. She takes the material, what she wants she wants to take out of the curriculum and the instructional objectives and then I give her ideas on those certain objectives. {So if you have activities or things that you would like to do that relate to something, that's no problem?} Oh right, definitely right. See I've taken over the social studies and science right now, so I do all of the planning for that.

I always say my problem is like planning and things. I'm one of these people that's not creative, or whatever, you know. I mean I probably could be, but I'm always, just--I'm not creative. I've got to go buy a book that'll give me ideas, you know, so that's another one of my problems, probably.

{Do think you've been able to really reflect on those types of things?...Do you do that with your lesson plans?} Um, I do. Usually the problem is--right now, it's a third period class and I get out of third period and I come back and I'm in class [at UT] and I don't usually reflect on things, until, probably tonight. Like right now I know today went really bad my third period. I didn't have enough planned, you know. I know what my mistakes were, but what I've got to do tonight is I've got to sit down and go, "Okay, what did I do today? What did I do wrong?" you know, and try to plan more.

{Do you feel you have the ability to keep going?} That's kind of how I feel, yeah. I guess I project myself as [being] prepared to the class and inside I am, "Okay, well, this didn't work out, let's just move on. I mean, it went okay. I'm sure it's not as bad as I think it probably was 'cause the kids had no clue, you know, they're off in another world, but still, I don't like to feel that way.

Well, I think actually a lot of lower level kids--they don't get it the first time and that discourages them so they don't want to do ___ at all. They know they have trouble with it so they get side tracked and want to do other things.

{Applying lessons to the real world...Do you do that?} That's my focus in everything I teach. My focus is to try to find a way to connect it to the students' lives.

I try to show how things are always going on around them. I try to make it, you know, semi-relevant. {Where did you get the idea to do that? When you have things work well, do you think it's because of things you've learned in class, or because of your own instincts, or personal experience, or whatever?} Well, I think some of it has to come from what I've gotten here [UT] you know, in a lot of my different classes, certain things, certain classes. I took an interdisciplinary course focusing on bringing all these different subject matters into literature, so I'm trying to do that, you know, trying. My [honors] freshmen are high achievers. I don't have to do very much and they get it right, and that's all they care about, as long as they just get it right, they don't care. They don't want to give it any extra effort and it's so hard to push them to do more and with my juniors, it's so hard to push them to do anything.

{Do you have children who don't care?} We haven't gotten that in third grade, they still care. If you say, I have a check in the grade book and I have a check minus for you, I mean that's a big deal for them.

I was real intimidated by the children at first just because I'm not used to being around children--more this summer, this summer really got me used to where they stand and everything. I felt pretty prepared and everything. I felt real comfortable coming into the internship, um, as far as being in the classroom.

Evaluating Underachieving Students

Interns were aware of the learning that took place on the part of their students, and also were very aware when it didn't.

I definitely learned my lesson [about not being prepared], yeah. Another lesson I learned about that um, I was teaching...kind of the majority of the class said that, "Oh yeah that was easy." And then I'd kind of take that as, okay, they know it. So maybe I'd cut the lesson a little short and go ahead and start them on their class-work for homework, you know what I mean, 'cause I thought they were getting it and then, come to find out, when they'd turn in their homework and turn their quizzes in that they didn't have it. And I did that and I had one quiz that they did real bad on so it was like, "You know you gotta be thorough, you know what I'm saying, do everything." I mean, they're like, "Oh, I can do that." And you give them something to do and they're like, "How did you do that?" They don't remember it.

I mean, it's almost pathetic trying to get them to read. I was trying to find something interesting in the romantic poetry to spark their interest, and I'm just like,

oh that's going to be fun. You know, but I'm starting writing after this and I'm like...[makes a face].

He is the only student who has said "thank you," and he is sometimes one of my most belligerent students, and I know, I know that he is only mad because he is trying so hard to get this...I think he sees it clicking for other people that can answer back and they understand it and his wheels are spinning and you can smell the smoke but things aren't just clicking right yet and it takes a little longer and that makes him mad.

The most effective thing that has worked for me has been group work and the kids love it and they do well on the work when I put them in groups and so, since that worked so well and they all want to do that, I try to with anything I do now I try to think, now how can I turn this into a group activity. Since that's worked so well for me. The kids really do like it. {And they really do work?} They work. They really do. At first they didn't know how to work in groups, and I'm like, "Yeah, the professors were right."

I guess maybe difficult is first of all, the patience you have to have, you know, just the constant repetitious things, but the fun things...it's hard work, that's obvious, but it's just um, it's rewarding. I mean there's times when the kids will just come up and hug you, you know, and you can see them learning.

When I came in the hardest thing for me in first grade was teaching these children how to read and write...it blew me away. People have this misconception that the lower grades are so easy...and I've been told that if you can teach first grade, you can teach any grade, and now I believe it.

I want to say like, if you look at the school, it's like the perfect little elementary school. I mean we live in the perfect little community. Everybody knows everybody. They go to the football games on Friday. Everybody goes to dinner on Saturday. Everybody knows where MacDonalds is. It's like...half of them can walk to school. I think that's just really neat and it looks, from the outside, it looks like the cute, perfect school that everybody wants to go to. And even inside, there are a lot of things that are like that. I mean they have a good P.E. program, art's fun, music's fun, school's fun, in general. I mean a lot of the kids seem like they enjoy school, but I went on kindergarten home visits, and going out into the community and going into these homes was a complete shock. It was a complete shock. I'm so glad I went because the first day was really kind of scary. I was scared for this teacher. She's really tiny and she's a little kindergarten teacher. She's wearing her prim and proper dress. I guess she's used to this kind of thing, but you know, there was nothing in the house except for fly paper, and the mom still has her pajamas on and she just doesn't...her babies don't have shoes on and I mean it's just...Out of the 8 people we went to were...it was like this. Weird man comes out

of the bedroom without his shirt on. I'm thinking what is going on...this poor little child is coming...this is where this child lives, and I just feel for these kids. We went to all those home visits, and I thought is this what _____'s like? You know, I thought it doesn't seem like...and then the next day to the other side of town--completely different. Both parents had taken off work to come talk to us. They sat down at the dining room table, had all the papers out that they needed, you know, very organized, very nice homes, nice people...couldn't wait to talk about their child. These other people wanted to tell you about everything else but their child kind of thing. And it was really the big eye opener for what kind of group I'm teaching, you know?

With their writing, I mean I can tell a major difference in one class between the kids, and I can just, in my opinion--this isn't because I'm any great intellect--it seems like I can tell a difference between kids who really don't seem to be able to do it and kids who just aren't trying, you know. I mean it seems like I can pick up on kids that are just being lazy.

My mentoring teacher, she would do a selection on some topic and then she'd say, "You can get in a group and write on the chapter," and they'd get into groups and one person would do the answers and everybody else would just copy it. It was so obvious that everyone would write exactly the same thing that that wasn't going to work, you know.

When they did their first paper, it was really weak and just the front page and but he came up to my desk and he asked for help and he actually did a revision, and well, it wasn't as good as this other person's paper, but to me that was still an A paper. He put forth the effort, he did what was required. And that's what I graded him on and he worried, especially on the first one. They graded you on grammar and he got terrible grades and wouldn't write again. I told him all I want to see is him put time and effort into it.

That was a waste of my time when I did that [give a test on facts]. I mean when we did _____, there so much in that story and I just kind of followed the book, you know, and that was the first thing I did with my juniors. There was a quiz--what happened then, and what happened next, and why did this happen, and it was so boring. I can't stand to be bored in the class. I hated that when I was in school. I felt like it was waste of my time.

Well, it gets really hard to know what to [teach]. What is the important part of it? Is it important to know the facts of the story, or is it more important to look at the symbolism and the parts, or is it important to relate literature to your life? I mean it all has a place, I think.

We've put some of the kids like the little boy I was talking about that was having

trouble...we put him with a student that's doing very well, and very studious, almost to the point where she's over-studious, and she really likes to help other students, so I think that's helping him a lot, to put him next to her. They work together well. He learns better from [her].

My mentor teacher--she's very big on...She's not gonna send him [a student] on if he cannot read. She's already said that to me. And I said, "That's a good idea. I think we ought to get him to start reading." He's a bright kid. He's a perfect example of someone who could that could slip through [the cracks] so easy because he's a bright kid. But we've failed him, 'cause we caught him cheating.

I don't want to be that teacher that he thinks, oh, I remember that teacher in third grade that caught me for cheating, you know, but I might just have to be. {Well you might be the teacher that taught him to read.} I would love to be that one.

Classroom Management and Discipline

A major concern for both interns and experienced teachers is classroom management and discipline so I asked how they were dealing with that.

Classroom management at the school is the single most difficult part of anything because they do not listen. I try to keep things just rolling and every once in awhile it'll click and they'll do stuff and once in awhile they'll just get bored and they'll be quiet because they're so bored but today, I really got them going.

My classroom management is poor. It is improving. It is my expectation. I don't like conflict. I know that when I began, I did not have a clear idea of what I was supposed to do. I did not have a clear idea that it was my ultimate responsibility to have the students learn what they needed to learn and during that brief time that I have them in that classroom, no matter what, even if that means that they hate me and complain or whatever, I did not understand that. I do understand that now.

It's hard for me right now [November] because I'm not teaching that class [yet] but I'm in there helping them, and so, it's her class, my mentoring teacher's, so I don't really know what I can or can't do as far as discipline. I'm just kinda [their friend]. They call me Mr. _____, and they respect me and everything, but as far as being up there teaching, you know. I going to have to...

You can be a friend, but you can't be a buddy, you know what I mean? That's one thing I've learned.

[Responding to comment about teaching having some aspects to it that he/she hadn't expected] *It's more like, I guess more of the classroom management thing, I think. You can't really go in there thinking these kids are going to love me, they're going to do whatever I say, I'm going to change their lives and everything. You know, you've got to, um, I don't know, I guess put your foot down kinda, at the beginning, and I knew that but I really didn't know that you know? I always thought, well, they're going to like me. That's not a problem, but it's something you have to deal with.*

If they think they can get away with something, they're going to do it.

{Now that you're teaching the course you said that kids were required to take, are you finding more of those [behavior] problems?} Yeah. Actually that's--it's weird. That took a real turn. At first, the one I was dreading taking over. Now that I'm taking it over, that's been my favorite class. I was teaching them how to write their equations step by step, you know, organize it real well. I was like you're gonna need, you're going to write _____ for a long time, and you've gotta be able to organize it, and they were like, "Why do we need to know this?" and I could've said, "Just don't worry about it, just do it," and I think they appreciate it when I say "Okay, I want you to trust me. I wouldn't be teaching this if I didn't think it was good for you." I think if you just treat them like they are something...{With respect.} Yeah, with respect. And actually I enjoy that class more because, um, I don't know, it's more fun because if they do anything they are so excited, you know. I have three classes and sometimes I feel like I'm teaching for no reason, cause they're gonna learn it no matter what--anybody could be teaching it and they're gonna learn it, because most of them are pretty smart, you know, and then in the _____, though, it's like they'll come up to me and "Hey, look what I did. I got a 90," you know, and, "Look at my report card," and "I think I understand this pretty well." They appreciate little things like that, and they're more, maybe it's more of a challenge, but you get more out of it too, I guess.

A lot of times, I mean...just talking to them one on one, you know, looking them in the eye and kind of relating with them. {It makes a big difference.} And then once you get that, a lot of times that's going to reduce a lot of your discipline problems. I mean once they know that you [care.] It brings in the kid that is too shy or would like to talk to you but it's not--he's too macho to come and do it, or something, [but] if you require everybody to do it, you'll reach those kids that won't do it.

We even tried to explain to him that GED Plus 2--you do the GED work but you get a real diploma; it's not an equivalency. It's a real diploma and you get to walk [graduate]. And I kept trying to hammer that into his head. Look, you'll be able to get a job. You'll be able to go college if you still want your vocal scholarship. You know, no one's gonna know that you went through an equivalency program.

That's between you and me and the state. No one else is gonna know that and he just wouldn't listen, wouldn't listen.

And it just appalled me that the last resort the guidance department had was turning him for truancy. They didn't care.

I feel like I've learned more in the classroom about classroom management than I learned in my courses.

{What are some of the things you talk about [with other interns], not necessarily problems, but things that maybe you feel need to talk over?} Right, um, a lot of times we talk about just classroom management and discipline and things like that and here's a new thing my teacher does. I tried it, you know. Anything--any quick tip that you can get to help you.

Reflections on Teaching

The intern teachers were generally very open and candid about their enthusiasm for the profession. Many of their comments seemed to reveal considerable reflection about their preparation, their approach, their sense of belonging, and an emerging maturity of opinion regarding teaching in general. Both positive and negative comments were recorded.

Some of the stuff we do in the graduate classes I can see what they doing--they're trying to make us, you know, think about things. But I've already been thinking about that because...I'm 23 yrs. old and I'm in the classroom and those things have already come up...like I reflect on my lessons every day, and in one of our classes we have to turn in a lesson reflection--you know, written out every day, but I do that anyway...I mean I think about it all the time...whenever I'm teaching--good, bad, everything, so it's almost like...it just takes too much time to me.

It [the lesson] was touch and go for awhile...then I flew by the seat of my pants for awhile...and it just didn't work out very well, so I was down, and then I kicked myself a little bit and then I said, okay, you know it fell flat...that's probably a good thing, you know. We can learn from this, so evaluate what went wrong. You know, so I sat around and decided what I'd done wrong, and it was not structured enough...I gave them too much freedom to decide. I was so excited about it and it just fell flat and I was just taken aback, and it was like oh-oh. What'll I do now?"

I've had a little trouble with that [respect from students] to be honest with you. I keep on having trouble because I think that they think Mrs. _____ their teacher and she is. No problem. They come to me because I'm their buddy. I started out wrong, and I should not have done that, and it makes me angry that I do that. At the same time they talk on a different level and I get to observe and see things that she doesn't. And so on a more personal level, I can see what's going on in their life--see how they react to things. [I] just listen to them talk a lot to each other, listen to what they talk about and I think that that makes them think that I'm just being their chum-buddy, but at the same time, I feel like I'm learning a lot through that and I don't want to stop doing that. Honestly I don't think that my teacher really--she doesn't disapprove of it, but she doesn't want to do it herself. So part of me kind of likes where I am because I'm in the best of both worlds. I'm in their social [world], kind of, [and] see what's going on. They have no problem with me sitting...you know I can just sit down at a table and just have a social conversation with all of them and they're all like--can't wait to get out whatever they want to say, but at the same time I can stand up there and still have an effect on them teaching.

One thing I've learned here about the internship, I mean, just in general, I think that I've learned that teachers have such different styles. You know, watching every teacher. Even in first grade. Even though they're a team. They meet about what they're teaching. Kids don't bother me, but my teacher doesn't...if there's any noise, she is strict about it. She puts a stop to it, whereas I tend to let them get louder, so we've had that kind of contrast, you know, where she explained to me maybe we had different levels, you know, and I thought maybe she's giving me the hint that I need to let them be quiet, and that's kind of a, I don't want to say tension between us but just um...But other interns don't feel that way. [They say] "Sorry, she's not letting you do your full thing, if you're not doing that," so I don't know, it's just kind of different.

Oh yeah, it's boring above anything else. You know, I... was trying to do all this stuff, and I thought oh, this is going to be so good, and they did terrible on everything I did, and I was like, fine, forget it, you know. Like I'm too tired and I'm too busy to fool with this. We're just going to do the book, we're going to answer the questions, and it was so boring, I mean, who wants to come home and read stuff with twenty papers saying the same thing. The right answers. I thought, oh I can't do this, this is not work. That is when I kind of moved to writing a page each day, you know. I'd rather take home a stack each day and read a page of their own ideas and opinions than read answers to questions or anything like that. Or they can do collages on the stories or stuff and that makes it so much fun to grade for me.

It's just, right now, maybe it's bad, but right now I feel like I'm so consumed trying to keep up that I don't feel like I'm giving enough of myself to the teaching.

{But it is a criticism, especially of high schools, that instruction is too textbook driven.} Oof. It's awful. Dr. _____ spoke to us in _____ class and I think I got more out of that because he made a lot of points about...especially about writing papers and just what do these kids really need to know. {He taught high school so he understands how kids work and he also is a very up kind of person.} Yeah, he is, and most of the teachers that I've met or worked with have not been up people, and that's really sad to me. I mean, I don't want to be like this, you know, in ten or fifteen years, 'cause I think I'm an up person. I'm pretty happy. I thought this would be--it's not an easy profession, but I thought it would be a challenge, and that I would enjoy it.

{How about the reflections on your teaching?} We've had to keep a journal, and part of that has been reflections on our teaching, teaching in our schools, and I'm glad I've done that. It's been helpful to me. And I've always been a journal writer, I've always been the type to write everything down. I've gotten behind and everything, but yeah, I think it's been useful. If something happens in class, you know, when I had a kid who cheated on the test...{How you handled it then, you write that down?} I wrote down what I did about the situation, how did I feel about it, what should I do, what did other people tell me to do, kind of...things like that, or you know, when the kids complain so much. My mentor teacher would give them just pages and pages of written notes and they were just like, "Why do we have to take all these notes?" That was just something I jotted down. They hate this. Remember this, in case you forget how much they hate it.

Every child in there cares about how I feel about them. How Mrs. _____ feels about them. We're big authorities. They really care how we feel about them and I think that's...{Well, you made the comment before, we're the moms, sometimes.} Yup. That's exactly right. We are. {And you still have that image, that of being a role model?} Well, for a lot of those kids, they don't have one. So we're it. Sometimes I forget that. I need to [remember].

{Some children come from some really sad situations, and you can't always make an impact, all you can do is the best that you can when you've got them.} That's right. The same little girl came up to me and she said to me, "Oh Miss _____, you're so nice to me." And I know why she said that. It's because she turned in a project, finally, for the first time in her life turned in a project and was excited to share that with the class, and I said, "Well, you'll be the first one to share it with the class." And I said that to her two or three times and she was ecstatic by the end of the day. And that makes me think that if something that little makes a difference, I need to really watch what I say around those kids, and watch to make sure that they're getting the attention they need, you know?

{I read an article about a male teacher convicted of child molestation... but the teachers supported him? The teachers said, "We won't touch kids...we won't hug

kids, because it will be misinterpreted, and this could happen to us."} I don't think that's right. {No. I didn't think you would.} I'm a big believer in hugs, and I think they can make all the difference in the world. But if somebody told me that I couldn't do that it would be very difficult. It'd be very difficult. And I feel sorry for men in the teaching positions just for that reason. I don't feel sorry for that man in particular, but I have a friend who's going into teaching and he teaches young kids and I worry about him, you know. Because that's a weird...men aren't normally in that position, and...I like this guy and I think he's terrific with kids and I would recommend him in any elementary school 'cause I think he cares about kids more than anybody I know, but at the same time there's always going to be an eyeball on him. Somebody's always going to be watching, you know, if he hugs that child a little too much, and that's a hard position to be in. How do you...you can't please everybody. You've got to just do what you do.

We had a class with _____ and he gave us paragraphs that we had to read and deal with our students in our classroom. Pick a child who is really having a problem and analyze that child and it asked all these questions but it wouldn't give you enough information for you to like write a little report, you know, prim and proper and turn it in. It really made you think and try to figure out why this child is this way, what you can do to help, really, to the point where I sat up at night and tried to think of what I was supposed to do for this assignment and I thought it was kind of a burden the whole time. I look back now, and I realize that that was very helpful. I was complaining about it because I like for it [the assignment] to ask me questions and me to be able to find the answers somewhere and write the answer and that wasn't the sheet. That wasn't what this was at all, and it frustrates me when I see something I can't find an answer anywhere. I have to find it up here [points to head] and then I'll break loose, you know. I didn't like it at the time but looking back on it I think it was very beneficial, and I would probably go back to those in a new setting in my own classroom and do the same thing because I think that helped me get to know these students a little better.

This is just, of course, me, my personal experience. I feel like for the most part, I was pretty prepared for everything as far as an opening...I mean I don't feel like I got all the answers but see, I don't think I could be taught all the answers...I feel

like I was exposed to enough and taught as much as they could teach me, and I got as much out of it as I wanted to get out of it, you know what I mean?

Theme: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program

From the discussions I had with the interns came their analysis of the whole internship experience and the major problems they had with it. What follows is their view of the problems.

Weaknesses of the Program

Some of these insecurities like when people start saying something...we've had this start happening in our intern class...people will say something and somebody takes offense...she let him know how it offended and she didn't need to hear that from him, but it was--everybody is so frustrated and so tired they could...

It took me awhile to get used to...what's the most difficult problem? [Having] three kids is a difficult problem. It's an immense amount of work...just to come to UT three days a week I spend 9 hours in the car. So that's a whole day...and then I have the...it's hard right now to have the UT assignments that I'm supposed to be doing in school--to keep them together.

I stay at the school when I don't have to be here so I'm...I was at school last night until, it was a quarter 'til five. And um, I know I'm not supposed to do that but when you go to a faculty meeting you have to ...and maybe I shouldn't go to a faculty meeting but then how am I going to be the best that I can be at the school? So you're really torn between what you want to do for the school and...[UT].

The teachers just got fed that [having interns]. They didn't have the input into that.

I think a lot of it really is an instinct when you're in the classroom, you know. I mean, you have to be prepared, like I had to know how to do that, but some of it is like, um, well, A ___ can't work with M ___ because they're both talkers, and that kind of thing you just have to kind of roll with the punches the first couple of months that you're in the classroom. It has been for me. You know, some of the things I've tried, I think the planning...I don't feel that my classes helped me as far as planning and I am paying for it now. We learned how to write objectives and we learned how to write goals, and that's great but it would have been more helpful if they hadn't been so specific about things and we had done a lot more. Does that make sense?

It's been really hard for me to sit down and write a daily lesson plan. I mean I'm doing grammar exercises, and yet I get told by my UT supervisor, "I need that daily lesson plan because I'll probably check those occasionally." You definitely have to have them to hand in, you know. I know how to do it, I just haven't done enough of them.

We talked in round about ways...we had different, I guess, classes where for a week we'd talk about classroom management, and for a week, ummm, more than that depending on what the topic was we'd talk about behavior management. I didn't understand it and I think it would be helpful in certain situations but I feel like I don't know enough about it to be making decisions myself.

I know, I wish [this school] had more ethnicity, kind of, you know. There's like probably a handful of African-American children in this school and I just have always--I just would like to be in a school with a lot of just ethnicity, and just variety, you know, and this school--I mean I went to a school that was just like this, you know, and I just feel like I was so blind to a lot of things, and ignorant of a lot of things until I got to college.

I am tired [at the end of the day]. Yes, very much, just because you're always on the go, and you have a lot of things to take care of in the day, you know, lesson plans, after school you're grading papers, making things for the kids to get ready for the next day, and plus our work with UT-- what we have here along with out work at the university makes...{Are you able to juggle all that?} Yeah, you are. I am. You just have to keep up with it. If you get behind one day, it builds up and it gets worse and worse, so if you can stay right on what you're supposed to do, it's okay. I mean, it's not unbearable, but like I said,

I love the fact that the money to pay us has been legislated but they can't allocate it. You know, I love that.

It's a hard thing because, yes...they're doing me a favor of allowing me this year, experience that I need to be fully certified. But on the other hand, they are quite blatantly screening applicant jobs. So they are getting a whole year of trying out [an intern], taking somebody out for a test drive this year without any cost, any expense whatsoever, no expense, I mean NONE. It's not [fair]. I'm paying the state to work for the state right now.

It's easier this time. {Because of less running back and forth from UT?} That has helped and I think I have progressed. I have a better grip on curriculum and on what I need to be doing. It is much easier this time. I know that UT was too much.

One of the things that we're having big problems with, first of all the financial. I

mean at least I'm, in a sense, where I have a possibility of getting a fee waiver being on financial aid, so I might be able to get the fees waived. But, the big thing now is you have to take your CORE battery--there's two other sections of the test that we have to take now, we have to pay for them, so all they're doing is collecting data with them so we're paying them to be guinea pigs. That is completely unethical. {How do you feel about your teaching for no pay?} That's equally...I don't think it's unethical. I think it's moronic.

You need a support [group]...it's very, it's taxing. I mean, I'm not doing [very well]. I'm a good student. I'm a conscientious student. I'm a 4.0 student you know, and I know there are times here [UT] when I cannot do my best work. I can just do what I can do, and that's frustrating but I don't...{You have to deal with it.} I'll have to do it. I mean it's not like ruining my life. I have some highly frustrating days but...

Expectations and Reality

I think part of it is a lot of the teachers I work with are really burned out--if the kids aren't going to try, the kids aren't going to try and big deal, you know, it's just another number to them, where I'm coming in and I'm like, oh, each little one is important to me, you know...{Why do teachers lose that feeling of commitment?} I think they're over-tired...you know they have too many other things to do than to worry...I mean I know myself...{Things for the school?} Yeah, too many, you know, they've got classes to prepare for...they're advisors for this club or that club. There are so many other things to do...maybe, instead of taking time after school to try to do something.

I have computer skills. I have used them in my own class, but the school has not bothered at all to capitalize on that. I have a lot of publication skills and technical writing skills that they could have capitalized on using, and instead, it didn't count. And it's really annoying. To me, it's been the worst feeling. I know there are other things that I could do and could have been doing, but no one has cared to even...{Did you make that known?} Oh yeah. When I interviewed to come here. But, it's been just like...nobody coordinated us really.

Now the first day...my teacher had had a lot of these kids before and when she was going over the roles...classes I was going to take over and she was like, "Ooh Lord, you don't want him or he's going to be a problem, he won't hit a lick." I tried to make sure that I didn't come across that way at all, you know. I've talked to the kids, or sat down...not try to be their friend. {Did you have to kind of ignore that information then?} Yeah, I felt like I did. It kind of, it bothered me. I mean, I knew

that was going to happen. They'd said in our classes that you go out and the teachers have prejudged all the students.

{Do you have any kind of a grading system with a little flexibility so you can add for effort?} Yes. A little bit, but not too much. One essay was a character analysis and it [the student's paper] didn't quite follow the form that they had to. It wasn't really well written as far as topic sentences go but it was creatively written and it was really good work for the student. I couldn't give it the [usual] grade. The teachers said, "That's not that [correct] grade." But I said, "I like [it]. It's the best paper I read. I like the creativity," and I gave it bonus points. {Can you give two scores...one on punctuation and grammar and then another on creativity?} I have, but we're not...{You're not doing it now?} No. {But you could use that when you have your own class?} Yes, that's possible. I see that as important for [a] reward for creativity and effort, certainly for improvement.

It was very hard when you were worried about how to present yourself in class and whether you were covering the right material, uncovering the right material, teaching the right material and whether your classroom management was okay. It was very hard to apply different reading strategies and write about them. That was one of the classes of actually more than reflection--where you'd set up something that you used in your lesson and some questionnaire that you used with your students and then you administered that and you wrote up, assessed, or saw how it worked. {You felt that you had to do that then for that particular strategy or whatever?} You were required to do that for the classes and I don't think that fit in well at all with trying to teach because there was so much of trying to forge your way into the space of teaching.

The whole idea of becoming a teacher is to no longer [be a student]. Yes, you are always a student of life. {I know what you mean.} But there is such a difference between teaching and taking on that roll and that's what we are learning to assume, and being a graduate student at U.T. And the courses were so directly related to what you were supposed to be doing in your own one or two classes that you were teaching, it was just to me, was unbelievably confusing.

I complained about this [lack of methods training] last semester, about, "When are we going to be learning about how to teach science, how to teach math?" And they're like, "If we could tell you how to teach science, we'd just give you the book and you wouldn't ever have to come to class, you know?" So that's [it]. I was thinking more of--I want an idea, I want an actual activity for you to give me to be able to walk in to my class and do it, and there's none of that. You come up with your own, you know?

So that was a very hard thing and you felt very pulled over. This was what my school system and mentoring teacher want me to be doing. This is what my U.T.

course work requires me to do. Which comes first? They do not blend at all. Oh well, they blended, but it was a forced fit. I did not do well. That could no longer be as important as doing better in this school, doing well as a teacher.

I've noticed like some interns will have done a lot of planning and will take over the whole class for pretty much the, for the most part of the week, but we kind of share more. I'd say, what about this and she'd say, well that's good but we could even do this, and it's not bad like she won't let me do anything. It's like she'd done it before and she has so many good ideas--she's an incredible person, I don't mean she's selfish or anything. She makes me just as equal.

I did my high school field experience at _____ and what I was very critical of there was they didn't seem like they even wanted the field experience people there. I was not allowed to do anything. It was flat observation for 24 hours, I sat in the back of a class, and was bored to death. I didn't say anything, I didn't experience anything, and honestly, it was all I could do just to see my way fit to go back there, because it was such a terrible experience. {Was that one particular teacher or was that because of their philosophy in general?} I have gotten that from other people who had done field experiences at _____. They said that they just didn't feel like the teachers wanted them there, they weren't really, you know, allowed to do anything...[and the teacher] may have felt overwhelmed [with two], and that may have been part of the reason why but people outside of the two of us have told me that they didn't feel welcome at _____ either, and in situations like that, no matter what you experience, it's gonna go sour.

Time Constraints

Having enough time to accomplish all the tasks of teaching for the first time as well as completing the requirements of graduate classes proved to be difficult for most all the interns. They felt their priorities were with their students, but as students themselves, it was hard to "sacrifice" doing their best in their own coursework. They were good students and used to getting good grades, so they did not like being unprepared for various assignments and projects but felt their first obligation was to the internship.

Well, we tried to have a party with all the interns from our cohort which is 25 women. Do you know how many girls showed up? Four. {Oh no.} And I wasn't one of them. I couldn't make it, and I had told them a long time ago that I couldn't go, but it's so sad. I mean we don't even have time to get together for a social gathering. We all wanted to go. We just couldn't.

{Some interns have expressed a need to talk with other interns.} We try to get together but even, our group, in this school, I'll see these women in the hall, talk to them for about two seconds. But we don't have enough time during the day, and we don't make enough time to sit down and really talk to each other. I mean there's one woman, the one woman in third grade I talk to every day because we have planning periods at the same time, but these women down here, I don't even know what they're experiencing. I do. I could call them up if I really wanted to know, but I'd like to get together and have a time when we're supposed to meet, but you know, one's married, one...they have a lot going on in their life besides this right here.

When I'm sitting there at night and I'm trying to think of something to do for the classroom, I don't have much time to think about it because I have to worry about a lot of busy work for the graduate classes.

I'd rather not come for [classes at UT]. [I'd rather have] a day almost, [at] UT. Then you could have lunch together. {Some socializing?} Socializing or not. But at least not make it one more... I mean we don't all live right here. [We're] tired, had a bad day, or frustrated, or you need to be doing other things.

I mean one of the things my supervisor told me, don't let yourself get burned out because sometimes the interns are so excited and ready to do all this stuff and you're going to grade all these papers and after the first two months you're like yuk, I don't want to do this anymore. And that really happened to me. I let it get so much on me.

{You mentioned the work load. How do you like juggling the internship plus the graduate courses and the work that's required in those graduate courses?} I don't like it too much. I think they could use some restructuring, and I don't know...we've had our methods class right now, which supposedly is to teach us--methods to me is ways to teach your subject and it's supposed to be...it's a great class but by the time we get to some things in that class I've already done them, and I'm like ah, I did it wrong, or I wish I'd done that. It seems like that class should've been before [the internship]. I don't know why they decided, well, this one is worth graduate credit and this one isn't, when I don't think I've done any more in this class than I've probably done in one of the classes you have to take for your minor. Some of those, history of education, philosophy, or special learning, I think those classes should be now, because you could apply them but

it wouldn't be like you're doing the same thing all the time. I get real burned out because I'm--my classes here are the same thing I'm doing at school, and I'm just like engulfed in _____, and I'm whew...I'm just sick of it.

Um, it's good for us interns [to talk together], but just us, you know, 'cause we don't have much time to talk during the school [day] 'cause we're segregated in our classes so when we come to class, we just talk about things that go on and that helps more than any assignment, I think.

It is too long and just too demanding. It's here, it's nuts. I'm going to have to start paying back this huge loan. I'm thinking to myself, exactly why did I do this again. One thing... when you talk about the year and the length of time, it seems to me that part of the stress is because there have been other unrelated kinds of things.

Interns' Suggestions for Improvements

An important part of our discussions involved their suggestions for improving the program.

{What do you think you would be the most helpful now as far as getting that kind of feedback? Would it be good to talk to the other teachers at your school? Would it be good if you had a format here [UT] where you could talk--just had a rap session kind of thing?} Well, actually, that's one thing that we even talked to our teachers about last night was the best thing. I mean the time that I learn the most is when I'm talking to other interns...really, just socializing. We get to go out to eat, sometimes just get together. And that was like the most...I mean a lot of times that might sound like a waste of time to tell a teacher that, but just throw everybody in maybe, four or five of us in groups, in a room and just have you talk for an hour and a half about everything because then you...it's not like a, it's not a set up thing you know...what do all you think about this...here's what I'm doing...just by yourselves. That's what we like. Cause I was finding...I want to find out what other students I got to know in graduate classes, I want to talk to other interns that I never see...to find out how they're doing, you know.

One of my main criticisms of the program since I've been in it, and many of the interns feel this way. When we got [in]--it seems like the application process, and the interview process took so long that by the time we were actually accepted, it was almost too late to register for classes. Even after we had registered for classes, all our schedules were purged from the system and we were forced to reschedule all our classes during registration.

I feel confident [laughs], but at the same time I'm scared to move on. I'm not scared to move on, but as I say, I'm scared to move on and I'm not. I'm apprehensive about going to another grade level, dealing with a whole new set of kids, a whole new mentor teacher, a whole new situation and finally I know I'm going to settle down in there and feel comfortable, and then I'll have to leave, and that frustrates me. That's what really irks me.

[In response to the money issue] Well, we had a grant. That's made a big difference, I can tell you. Since we found out we were getting that, I've been ecstatic to be here. {What do you mean a grant? For the school?} We got a grant from, a scholarship. They turned it into a scholarship now where we get money. {For all the interns?} For all the interns in our cohort. The 25 women in our cohort. And since that's come through it's taken a lot of pressure off working after the [teaching day], you know, 'cause I was babysitting every night, after I came home from this I go babysitting...and that was awful. Awful. And not that I didn't like the kids, it's just--that's a lot of pressure, you know. You can't go home and do your homework. You had to go home and deal with more kids. It's like having a family.

It's so scary when everybody...I'm not on block scheduling. I'm still on the good old fashioned 6 period day and then I hear everybody else, and I'm like, god, I can't imagine 'cause I feel like I'm just now, with some of these kids, really getting through to them and they're doing a good job. And it's not that I'm for or against block scheduling, it's just that I'm like, how much time will I have to be as nice as I am.

I wish I'd had to--that should be a requirement, to keep a journal because...{A lot of people don't want to take the time.} I know but, and I don't like to take the time either but if it was required, I would do it, and I love to look back at it, so I wish it was required, and since it's not I don't do it. I don't have enough discipline to make myself do it. So I feel like somebody make this required. I don't care if you read it, just make [us do it].

I would really like to see that [end of the year with same children] myself, but at the same time I want to get some experience in a couple of different other grades. I love this so far and I didn't think I would like it so I'm willing to try something else.

Strengths of the Program

I've really been working on that fine line, where you can't be too much of a buddy, but, of course, I don't want to be a dictator. Cause you're the only person that knows where you can draw the line with the kids, you know what I mean. I think

it's kinda something you learn. {You do learn it as an intern?} Yeah, especially when you're an intern. {So you're learning that as on the job training?} Yeah, but I think that's the only way to learn it.

Then I took this core class last spring and I thought this is the best thing...I mean I think they're really doing a terrific job. [I thought] this is what I went to college for...that last semester. It took that long for me to get to what I really wanted to be doing, and it made me... {That was your senior year?} That was my senior year. Everything kind of clicked. It was like okay, this is where I ...this is what I've been wanting to do since I've been in school. I wish I would taken a lot more of this kind of...I feel a semester wasn't enough of this kind of thing.

I was lucky enough in my middle school field experience to be at _____ and work with a teacher who was more than happy to let me do whatever I wanted and five of the six days that I was there I taught all classes all day, so I did full classroom instruction then. I was in charge of the classroom management per se. I mean, she was still in there, she was a presence. {What was lacking--did you just not get a chance to know the kids that well, in such a short period of time?} That's part of it because you're there six weeks and you can set it up any way you like. You have to have 24 hours so you can go 4 hours a day, one day a week for 6 weeks, [or] you can do it all in one week, but I think even if you do it all in one week, in 24 hours you're not going to get to know the kids, you're not going to get to know the problems that they have, and no matter how much the teachers can tell you about what's going on at the school, unless you experience it for yourself, you're not going to be prepared in any way, shape, or form.

I think they were trying to teach us through a whole language approach, you know. That's what they were teaching, and they were showing it us at the same time cause that's what we were having. And they were teaching us to implement whole language, when we have our classrooms so. But they taught us the way they want us to teach, you know what I'm saying? [We got] ideas yeah. But not as far as one activity. I mean, all different ideas and theories and whatever works for you. {Okay. I wasn't aware of that exactly. Because I did have one intern complain about not getting enough lesson planning, specific lesson planning. It was more in general terms.} Right. You get that here, at the school. {Then as far as the education [methods] courses, you would have liked that earlier?} Right. I don't know if I would have liked it better. I just thought last semester was for those methods and activities and courses, but it wasn't, so...

I feel like that [being spoiled] being here sometimes, being here at this school, I mean, they just have so much. {It's a model school.} I've seen more but they have a lot. A lot of money and resources, and teacher assistants, and things that I'm not gonna have, you know, so that's another thing that I worry about. I'm not going to be in this school system, you know. It'd be great if I was but...

I feel prepared to go into a classroom right now, but at the same time, I feel very lucky that I'm getting the time to go see different areas, to experience different faculty, to see how this teacher teaches, you know, go explore what 4th grade, just even what they teach. I don't even know what they teach down there. Or in kindergarten. It's completely different than in third grade. So I feel it's very beneficial that I'm going to get to do that. I feel like I'm going to be ready to teach and so when I go into that fourth grade classroom, as soon as I get my bearings, I feel like I'll just be able to go in there and do it, which is gonna be kinda like being a first year teacher basically, you know, going in there and, I just don't get paid.

I think the classes I've gotten the most out of are classes that are smaller where we've really talked about ideas. Here [UT], some of the larger classes, it's...there's too many people...and general ideas get thrown out but you can't ever really explore it, you know, so you don't really get anything out of something like that. Now a lot of the things I've learned about small group activities and how to monitor small groups and make them work, that's been really useful, because, I guess, just my own experience as a student, I would never have thought about things like that, you know.

And I think, I mean, that's the beauty of an internship like this, you know, where sometimes I feel like I didn't do very good on that, and I think that's kind of what this year is for. I'm not, I don't think I'm doing anything that I'm harming these children's minds in any way or that, you know, they're going to fail _____, and I'm doing the basics. I just think that I'm able to look back already on things that didn't go [well] and I, "Oh, I shoulda done this or I shoulda done that or..." you know, it's just a good experience to learn. I knew it was going to be hard and I knew it was going to be time consuming, but I didn't know it was going to be this hard and I didn't know it was going to this time consuming. You know, I felt really prepared going into it, but it's just really wiping me out. It takes so much out of you emotionally, and especially this first semester, and coming to UT and playing such a dual role so I'm hoping that next semester, I'll even be better, you know, more into the teacher mode.

But this whole program I mean, it's wonderful. It's a great program. And I do feel. I learned a tremendous amount last semester. A tremendous amount. And just like, again, the things like we did, I didn't realize all, maybe I'm really behind the others, but I was just like, they taught us all these things but that's what they were doing all along, you know.

One of the things that is good about the _____ dept. I feel is that they give you a lot of practical things. I mean I've got a _____ made us keep an idea book. I've got a notebook full of stuff I can do with my kids. As a matter of fact, half of the things I've tried, not even half, 75 percent of the things I'm trying in this creative

writing come right out of that stuff. So...stuff. That's what you need. You need lots of stuff that you can try. And some will work with some kids, and some won't.

I think that's part of being an intern too. You know, I mean, I've really been able to like look at different teachers and see where their values are...I'm very glad that I did this. I'm glad that I didn't get in one of these schools that you only go a couple of months, cause I still think I have a lot to learn, and I would hate to think that I might have been hired and then be the only new teacher, and gone home every night, "I didn't know it was going to be like this," you know?

I don't mind the fact that I don't get paid. That doesn't bother me a bit because I realize how worthwhile and how valuable that experience is.

I feel like I will be ready to hit the trail running. When I'm done, I know I'll be prepared. I know I'll be ready to go. I'll be ready to teach...I'll be a much better teacher. It's not going to take me a year to catch up. It's not going to take me a year and a half to learn these things I'm learning. I think it's an extremely valuable experience.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROGRAM

Theoretical Context

This research project was organized to better understand intern perceptions regarding three essential factors of central importance in determining the effectiveness of new teacher performance: (1) their personal efficacy, or individual belief that they have the potential ability to influence learning and motivation, (2) their formal teacher education and how it affects perceptions of teaching efficacy, and (3) the development of effective professional and personal support systems through which new intern teachers can help overcome feelings of isolation and discouragement that may threaten self-confidence and undermine performance.

It is important to note that while these intern teachers represented a group with many commonalities, their responses were highly individualized and represented the summation of diverse backgrounds and experiences. Each person perceived the world differently based on his or her education and previous experiences. Each intern teacher also applied or used knowledge and skills differently based on his or her understanding and the particular talents and abilities they possessed. They applied information differently dependent on their needs and its usefulness in meeting those needs. Thus, each person's experience was

uniquely their own. What they brought to and received from an experience such as the internship was also uniquely their own. The validity of this "individualized" view of reality has been highlighted by others.

If our learning theory assumes that we construct meaning for objects and events by interpreting our perceptions of them in terms of our past experiences, beliefs, and biases, then each of us mentally represents our own personal reality. Each reality is somewhat different, because each person's experiences and resulting apperceptions are different. These differences in interpretation are proof of the individual, constructed nature of reality. (Jonassen, 1991, p. 7)

Still, it is appropriate, even necessary, that experiences be shared in order to learn from one another and to give support to one another. The internship is designed for education students to have an experience in the classroom, which is, in actuality, a learning environment. While they work with mentoring teachers and other professional staff and faculty, it is their task to assume the duties associated with the job of "teacher." Practicing new strategies and methods, planning lessons and grading papers, and learning the routine of the school and its operation, are part and parcel of the internship experience. Getting to know the students and how to motivate them to learn is a more subtle, difficult task, but vitally important, especially with regard to those students who underachieve in school. As the year progresses, interns move through stages of development and experiential learning, uniquely their own. Carter and Doyle (1995) described teaching as "deeply personal, connected to one's identity, and thus, to one's life story" (p.186). Believing that we can learn from the life stories of others, I investigated how individual intern teachers perceived the experience of becoming teachers.

It has been previously described that intern teachers routinely move through three stages of concern in the education process: (1) concern with self, (2) concern with the teaching task, and finally, (3) concern about their impact on students (Williams, 1992). A recent study by Carter and Doyle (1995) also revealed similar intern preconceptions. My study would support that those are also important concerns for the intern teachers at the University of Tennessee, but would not support that their main focus centered on "self." Indeed, the UT interns in my study were very focused on their students from the beginning. They were concerned with "self" in terms of being observed, but, more importantly, they were also concerned with how they could best relate their training to reaching their students' needs. This was an encouraging outcome of my study and suggested that the UT interns who participated in this study were a highly motivated and committed group who understood intuitively that "students" are the central concern in teaching.

The men and women that I interviewed were, indeed, dedicated people, who took the time to be interviewed with a sincere desire to describe their experiences and, therefore, have an impact on the program. Most of them expressed the opinion that the internship experience was valuable, and there were many references to their feeling that they had gotten a good education at The University of Tennessee, but they also saw areas that needed improvement. They each had a strong "image" of a teacher and a teacher's role, and they constructed and developed a sense of themselves in that "role" as the year went on.

The concept that teachers are somehow "called" to the teaching profession is not new. For example, Serow (1994) has recently discussed the idea that interns may have a sense of being "called" in much the same way as a missionary feels called to the work of God or the church. When this idea is extended to the culturally diverse classroom, Breault (1995) found that the feeling had changed somewhat to the idea of teachers having a strong desire to "serve" society. My findings supported the conclusions in these previous studies. That sense of commitment to society, and especially to children, had important implications for the UT interns.

Thus, in accord with the findings of Breault (1995) and Serow (1994), all of the interns in this study expressed a strong desire to work with children or young people. Most of them had a sense of making improvements in children's lives, as opposed to just providing them with content knowledge. They believed that there were more opportunities in life with an education, even though they felt that making a lot of money was not necessarily important to them as a life-long goal. Most of them mentioned the importance of other rewards such as having students express to them that they had inspired the students, that they had taught in an interesting way, or that they were the student's favorite teacher.

While it was generally felt that intrinsic rewards were more important than money, an extrinsic reward, it was still a factor that impacted on the internship experience. Some of the interns disliked the idea of doing work for which they were not paid, partly because it led to feelings of a lack of self-worth and partly

because they felt it affected the lack of respect from the faculty and students where they did their internship. The extrinsic value of being paid affected the intrinsic value of being appreciated and trying to do their "personal best" in the role of teacher. Those interns who were paid from a grant definitely felt better about doing the work than those who received no financial support. In some cases, money created problems for students who were the sole or main support of their families, and there was some bitterness about the amount of debt they had collected. One intern, in particular, was upset by information, founded or unfounded, that funds had been allocated for paying interns but could not, as yet, be dispersed.

Glasser (1993) and his Control Theory addressed teachers and the theme of power and control when one considers that money, or what one can do with it, makes one feel powerful. Working without some remuneration leads to feeling powerless and, often, to lower self-esteem. It was interesting that the interns did not think they should be paid by the school districts, necessarily, but that there should be an allowance from the University of Tennessee such as a reduction in graduate fees or a stipend for books. Another intern suggested that an allowance be granted for extraneous expenses such as copying materials for other students, often a professor's requirement in a graduate class. It was explained that copying services or privileges were not granted at some schools, so interns had to cover these expenses themselves. Several interns mentioned that they had taken out large loans to get through this year, and said it would be a strain to pay back the

loan considering that they were entering a field where salaries weren't very high. Several mentioned that they still had additional graduate courses to take, another semester of paying high fees. They felt that being paid "something" would help interns have more respect at their schools and well as feeling "valued" by the university.

Self esteem was also a factor in the interns' need to be appreciated for their personal and unique talents and skills that they could bring to the classroom, which, in some cases, they were not allowed to do. Some skills, such as computer expertise, for example, were often devalued or ignored. In addition, it was demeaning to not be given keys or access to the xerox machines and other supplies. While there was lip service to being treated as "colleagues," interns felt strongly that they were not listened to, or that their opinions were not respected. Most acknowledged that these were "trivial matters," but sometimes led to the "shattered image" of what they expected from the internship and the reality of the experience. Interns wanted to feel that they belonged to the school community and make a contribution to it, but the reality was that they felt teachers resented their knowledge and expertise, and kept them at a distance by excluding them from decision-making situations.

Interns perceived that they were regarded as "novices" and had a sense of being closely monitored, sometimes even restrained in what they could do. There may be a number of reasons for this. First, it may be widely believed that interns are "self-centered" rather than "student-centered" (Williams 1992; Carter and Doyle

1995), although my own study would suggest that is not the case. Secondly, interns are often perceived to be more concerned with student behavior than they are with learning (Latz, 1992). The UT interns in my study, however, seemed to recognize that teaching from a student-centered perspective affected classroom management and discipline problems. They were aware of when their students were engaged and enjoyed learning and that when that occurred, there were fewer behavior problems. Their commitment to the students was clearly what kept them doing their job and doing it well. This is in keeping with the more "student-based" orientation of an experienced teacher rather than the "self-based" orientation of typical interns (Carter and Doyle, 1995; Feyton and Kaywell, 1994; Guyton, 1994), and suggests that the UT interns may be a highly motivated and committed group with a good basic understanding of what being a teacher means.

The major concern that interns had regarding their educational training was in the area of classroom management and discipline skills, particularly with students who were underachieving, disruptive, unmotivated, and otherwise difficult to teach. They did not feel that they had the strategies needed to get to know their students' needs; that the importance of this was not stressed enough. I found that interns had a clear awareness of their students as people and felt frustrated not knowing how to help them better. They wanted to get to know them, but didn't know how to do so. This is contrary to the research which says that interns are mainly preoccupied with how others perceive them and how they fit the "image" of teacher (Tuckman, 1995; Carter and Doyle, 1995; Williams, 1992).

In contrast to the results of these published studies, the interns in my research expressed concern that they didn't really understand or appreciate the reality of students' home environments, the lack of parental support, the inability of these students to link effort with success, and the "empowerment" that education can provide. Although the UT interns felt inadequate at always knowing how to "engage" their students in the learning process, that was certainly a central motivating factor in their teaching. It has been suggested that intern teachers suffer from a general lack of experience with children and often operate from a simplistic and naive point of view regarding children and their abilities (Mahlios and Maxson, 1995). My study would not support that conclusion.

The intern teachers felt that more should have been done in graduate classes such as role playing, or examining case histories of problem students in order to understand management problems better. Many assignments were seen as redundant, or a duplication of work they were doing in their classrooms, or not having a practical application to their particular situations. Several expressed the desire to have methods classes completed before the internship so that the ideas could be used during it. There was the feeling that students were short-changed by the interns' lack of training. Several said, "That was a great idea--I wish I'd had that a couple of weeks ago." While they realized that those lessons could be used in years to come, this was their first experience with what they considered "their" class and "their" students, so they felt strongly that they wanted to be the best teacher possible by having the latest ideas and methods. They worked hard to

come up with ideas on their own, and to provide materials (often at their own expense) about which they felt good. However, the fact that they learned new ideas after a time when they could have used them, made them feel somewhat cheated.

Not having enough time to devote to their teaching experience was a major problem. The requirements of graduate classes as well as the expectations of the internship left the interns feeling overwhelmed and "stressed-out," physically and mentally. Since they had generally been good students in school, "sacrificing" a grade in a graduate course was difficult to do, but in terms of their priorities, that was what they felt they must do.

The need for a useful support system for intern teachers is clearly demonstrated by the reality of teacher frustration and discouragement. While intern teachers usually report positive experiences from their own elementary and secondary student days, and describe former teachers as nurturing, caring people (Mahlios and Maxson, 1995), as interns they often experience frustration and discouragement because of their lack of experience and inability to effect change (Tomlinson et al. 1994). Many become stressed out to the point of feeling ill. Approximately 30 percent of new teachers do not teach beyond two years, and, of the most talented, nearly 40 percent leave after five years. (Heyns, 1988; Scholechty and Vance, 1981; 1983 in Klausmeier, 1994). The fact that many leave the profession so quickly due to "burn-out" demonstrates that this is a serious problem throughout the country, and reinforces the need for establishing a

functional support system for teachers.

The interns in this study realized that they needed the support of each other to combat the feeling that certain events were only happening to them, the "Why me?" feeling, or that they were isolated in the schools from other teachers and other faculty. They expressed a need for someone else to talk with who knew what they were going through and could understand how they felt. They definitely expressed a need to talk to peers, and were frustrated when they were not given time in graduate classes to do so. Many said that it was through those discussion that they learned the most in terms of "practical" information on how to solve problems and deal with difficult situations. In addition to learning from their peers, they felt a need for someone to listen to them, one who shared similar concerns. Other interns were regarded as equals whereas everyone else was ahead of them in the "pecking order." In those situations where there were few opportunities for interaction and support, interns felt frustrated which sometimes led to discouragement and, sometimes, despair.

Regarding mentoring teachers, in every instance, interns had very positive feelings toward their mentoring teachers. One intern described the relationship almost like that of parent and child. The survey showed that interns felt comfortable going to their mentoring teachers for help, above everyone else, and every intern expressed respect and admiration for their mentoring teachers during the interviews. However, in some situations the relationship seemed to degenerate during the second semester because, while the mentor was still seen as a person

to whom they could go to for help, a subtle competition seemed to come about between the two. It appeared there was competition for interaction with the students, who now perceived the intern as more of a "teacher" and not a helper, and competition for "space" in the classroom. At the beginning of the internship, the mentor perceived the intern as another student who was there to learn just as the students were there to learn. As the year progressed, it was difficult to give up the responsibility for teaching, especially before special testing such as TCAPs or the SATs. That the final responsibility for learning (usually measured by the students' test scores) lay with the mentor teacher was made clear. This made the interns feel less than qualified and capable as teachers at a time when they felt they were doing a good job of teaching. In reality, they realized that the students were not yet "their kids."

Differences in intern perceptions between the two interviews need to be mentioned. At the time the second interview took place, interns had developed a more mature appreciation of their students as complex and unique individuals, some of whom had serious problems with which to contend and some of whom were bored and difficult to motivate. This was partly due to the interns having more exposure to students in low ability classes as opposed to students in the honors or college preparatory classes with which they were involved at the beginning of the year. It was at this time that they expressed frustration at not having better skills to motivate students and get them involved in their learning. Some interns expressed feelings that they had to "come up with" ideas for lessons

and classroom management themselves or that they felt "lost" and didn't know what to do. One responded to a question about what they did to motivate their students, "I wish I knew."

The interns also seemed to be under more stress during the second interview, partly due to the work required in graduate courses and the time needed to do the Action Research Project. Tensions seemed to be greater between interns and their mentors as they year progressed, at least for those interns who stayed with the same teacher throughout. Those interns who had changed to different classes did not experience those feelings. Money problems were discussed more often the second time around, and many interns seemed to be more resentful of doing work for no pay. Finally, there seemed to be more need for support. Several interns expressed the feeling that they wished they had more time to talk to each other and compare experiences. Several expressed their appreciation at being able to discuss their feelings with me. Overall, the interns seemed to regard their education and the internship as valuable, but felt that the internship itself was too long.

These concerns were often somewhat less evident among interns working at the elementary level. This may have been partially influenced by the fact that elementary interns changed grade levels and had new mentoring teachers. At each new setting, they had to observe and get to know the routine again, but they still felt they were learning new information and gaining new experience. Most were happy to have that experience, and the change probably alleviated some

problems.

Sadly, there was only one mention of a mentoring teacher learning something from an intern. There was also only one example of a faculty member defending what an intern was trying to accomplish in terms of helping students, and this was to the students, not other faculty members. In some cases, interns felt they had to "steel themselves" against negative comments from other teachers towards certain students. It is not surprising that they seemed to enjoy positive feedback from the students, perhaps because they started out the internship as more of a helper, almost a "buddy," and perhaps because the students identified with the intern whom they perceived as a student like themselves, especially when the interns were being observed. It was in these instances that the interns seemed to enjoy the "fun" or "joy" of teaching (Glasser, 1993), or what Ornstein and Berlin (1995) described as the "playful aspects of teaching" (p. 168). There were many references to making learning "fun" for their students, a basic component in Glasser's Control Theory.

In a recent paper, Boyer and Semrau (1995) discussed the idea that in new constructivist approaches to education students develop knowledge through team collaboration and discussion of various interpretations of a problem; that they negotiate and synthesize ideas drawing from various disciplines. My study would indicate that the UT interns were very aware of how left out of the school "team" they really were. Most of them understood why the situation existed, nevertheless, it had a negative affect.

The intern teachers in this study were a highly motivated group with strong professional identity and overall good teaching skills. They expressed satisfaction with their teacher education classes in general, but often expressed concern regarding their perception of how well prepared they were for difficult classroom management and behavior situations, or classroom predicaments involving students perceived to have problems that might cause them to be "at risk" or underachievers. The intern teachers generally felt that they had a sufficient personal and professional support system available to help them cope with the difficulties of a beginning teacher. While the experiences of students (including intern teachers) will naturally differ because of varying previous experiences, beliefs, and understandings, the commonality of experiences shared can provide valuable and necessary support in dealing with the complexity of problems that teaching entails. By sharing those learning experiences, people can avert feelings of isolation, for example, which lessens self-esteem and self-confidence in their ability to teach effectively. They learn from each other new interpretations and strategies which facilitate the application of new solutions to similar problems. Thus, each individual can create new realities based on someone else's experience. "We make sense of our world by synthesizing new experiences into what we have previously come to understand, through reflection upon our interactions with objects and ideas" (Brooks and Brooks; p.4).

Relationship to Cognitive Theory and Constructivism

Constructivism holds that knowing is a process of actively interpreting and constructing individual knowledge representations (Jonassen, 1991, p. 5) which is influenced by what a person already knows and believes.

They create new understandings, or constructs, based on previous knowledge and experiences. Studies of cognition suggest that there exist many different ways of acquiring and representing knowledge; these differences need to be taken into account in our pedagogy... Some...can show mastery and understanding when these have been elicited in a different, more meaningful way. (Gardner, 1991, p. 14)

Thus, from a constructivist perspective, intern teachers have brought to their courses various models of teaching to which they were exposed as learners (Carter, Carre, and Bennett, 1993). As they go through their internship experience, they construct new "images" of teacher, adding to their previous experience and formal schooling.

Each of us makes sense of our world by synthesizing new experiences into what we have previously come to understand. Often we encounter an object, an idea, a relationship, or a phenomenon that doesn't quite make sense to us...so we either interpret what we see to conform to our present set of rules for explaining and ordering our world, or we generate a new set of rules that better accounts for what we perceive to be occurring. (Brooks and Brooks, p. 4)

A leader in this tradition invoked an "open systems model of the learner, a more organismic view of the learner as one who interacts with the environment and acquires knowledge, skills, and competence from it...In 1989 he is still promoting

the use of cognitive instructional strategies...and a more holistic approach to conceiving learner interactions to a field that still focuses on learning behaviors" (Winn, 1975, in Jonassen, p. 6). The past assumption, according to Brooks and Brooks, was that there was one body of knowledge, a "fixed world" to learn, and one way to learn it. "Knowledge comes neither from the subject nor the object, but from a unity of the two" (Brooks and Brooks, p. 5). The internship experience, therefore, will not be the same for every intern. "Each new construction will depend upon their cognitive abilities to accommodate discrepant data and perceptions and their fund of experiences at the time" (p. 5).

Winn wrote that there are many ways to structure meaning and that meaning is rooted in individual experience so each individual will have his or her unique concept of events and experiences. Therefore, the accumulation of information from individuals is important to research geared toward education improvement and reform. The individual's story is important. Carter and Doyle (1995) suggested that, first of all, it will create better teachers. By putting personal narrative and life history at the center of teacher practice and the teacher education process, it will help interns in their "exploration of self understanding as teachers." It will help them "achieve an identity as teacher in the complex realities of the classrooms and schools and provide a foundation for acting as a teacher" (p. 194). It will lead to personal efficacy, or the belief that one can do the job.

As Jonassen (1991) stated, "Rather than attempting to map the structure of an external reality onto learners, constructivists recommend that we help them

(learners) to construct meaningful and conceptually functional representations of the external world" (p. 14). Intern teachers, as students, learn to construct new realities "on the job."

Relationship to Control Theory

Glasser's Control Theory also clarifies the intern experience by defining behavior (actions and interactions) as being caused by "within ourselves--what is going on inside our heads" (pp. 128-129) rather than an outside situation. An important assumption is that each individual chooses to do what is most satisfying at the time in order to fulfill five basic needs: (1) to survive and reproduce, (2) to belong and love, (3) to gain power, (4) to be free, and (5) to have fun (Glasser, p. 23). His Control Theory states that actions and interactions are initiated by "satisfying pictures of that activity that we store in our heads as a pleasant memory" (p. 34).

Starting immediately after birth, instructed by our feelings, we begin to learn what is satisfying and what is not. We learn almost all that we know through parental teaching...when we learn anything that satisfies one or more of our needs, we use all of our developing senses like a multisensory camera and take a picture of this need-satisfying situation...we keep only those pictures that are in some way need-satisfying to us. (p. 35)

This theory supports the idea of events that have been stored in memory along with an interpretation of events as positive or negative. Negative events are forgotten and replaced by positive mental images. These self-pictures can change as student self-concept evolves, which help us understand the paradoxes of

positive teacher images and perceptions and the often negative realities of the "real world" of the classroom and the teaching profession.

In the review of the literature, it was reported that teachers enter the profession of teaching with very strong beliefs and values that basically go unchanged during teacher preparation. Educators are partly responsible for the problem and that needs to be better addressed in education classes because "student teaching still emphasizes learning to do well as judged by external observers rather than trying to solve problems for which one is personally responsible" (Haberman, 1995, p. 37). The focus is still on a traditional, conservative image of a teacher because educators, teachers, and parents have all had a long "apprenticeship of observation," and our beliefs are just as difficult to change. Until we allow for more flexibility in teaching styles to accommodate different learning styles, more flexibility in assessing students, and more flexibility in the "expectations" of what a "teacher" is, we won't see a change from the traditional teacher or "one who simply teaches" to a "teacher" (Carter and Doyle, 1995). To create good, effective, long-lasting contributors to the profession, Breault wrote that we need to "strike while the iron is hot, when education students have shifted toward a more liberal, student-centeredness. It is during college years that we should foster deep commitments to multiculturalism," for example (p. 271). More exposure to underachievers, perhaps in field experiences, may help. Bacon (1992) found that his education students conceived of more creative approaches to convey information to difficult to teach children after a field experience in an "at-risk" school.

Conclusions

For this study, I examined the perceptions of intern teachers regarding their motivations to become teachers, their feelings of personal efficacy, and the educational and professional resources they used for support. A special focus was at-risk and underachieving students. The interns expressed ideas about their internship through a survey instrument, written comments, and in-depth interviews.

There are several central conclusions that can be drawn from the study. While the interns I surveyed and interviewed were highly motivated, capable, and caring intern teachers, they didn't feel as effective in the classroom as they should have. Those feelings stemmed, in part, at least, from a lack of knowing their students, problems they had with classroom management, and the lack of practical, effective strategies to deal with certain students and meet those students' needs. The interns seemed confident in their ability to deliver content and to be creative in terms of having interesting, "fun" things to do, but they did not know how to motivate students who didn't work nor how to deal with the many problems their students had. The realities of the modern classroom were not communicated sufficiently in their pre-internship training. Most interns felt that their education courses did not fully equip them to handle a variety of problems, particularly with respect to underachieving students. Major concerns were (a) classroom management and discipline, (b) understanding the real problems that students might have such as poverty, neglect, child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse by

students and/or parents; verbal, physical, or sexual abuse, and others, (c) not knowing how to engage communities and families in helping students learn, and (d) an inherent disbelief in the reality of these problems and the effects of students' environment on learning. They didn't understand how to help their students make connections between effort and success, to look beyond their immediate environment to create a better future for themselves. The interns had difficulty involving the parents of their students to provide support for the students and education in general. Because most of them came from supportive families where education was valued, this was hard to understand.

Finally, the interns felt frustrated and exhausted by the requirements placed on them by graduate courses taken at the same time they were teaching, which prevented the experience from being as positive as it should have been. They felt pulled in two directions, but their priority was clearly with their students in the classroom. It is the obligation and responsibility of the educational community to assure the internship be as positive and fulfilling an experience as possible.

Recommendations for Improving the Program at UTK

The intern teachers in this study were a highly dedicated group with strong motivations to teach and serve society through the profession of teaching. They expressed satisfaction with their teacher preparation and the internship experience in general, but had concerns regarding their ability to be effective in difficult management situations, or with motivating at-risk or underachieving students. The interns generally felt a need for more personal and professional support to help them cope with the difficulties of a beginning teacher. These concerns led me to make the following suggestions for improving the training program and specifically the internship experience.

More in-depth study should be made of the kinds of students that interns will find in the schools, especially those who underachieve in school. This information will affect interns' efficacy, since it has been found that decision-making is based on their belief in the ability to effect change in at-risk or underachieving students (Soodak and Podell, 1994). This study should be a part of each course throughout the training program. According to the research, instructors need to guide learners to "construct meaningful and conceptually functional representations of the external world" (Jonassen, 1991, p. 14). Simulated experiences can be done through role-playing, for example, to understand the behavioral and management problems they may encounter. We should provide practical strategies and materials to help students learn, therefore, every methods course should present

information and experiences on motivating and teaching underachievers. These students need creative teachers yet teaching creatively is not encouraged in schools (Guyton, 1995). Parents and the community should be involved in helping their children, and teachers must learn ways to bring that involvement about.

Multicultural diversity needs to be better addressed and the differences that exist in inner-city and rural schools. Interns need to understand that even in "normal" classrooms, there will be bright and gifted students as well as average students who don't work up to their potential. Instruction should address the fact that such students may have serious problems in their lives outside of school that may impact on learning. There is an abundance of literature that could be helpful in such instruction, including numerous articles and books which present research based, practical ideas. Up From Underachievement (Heacox, 1991) may be one such text. It offers many practical suggestions for middle and secondary teachers, such as a guide for interviewing students one-on-one and worksheets for goal setting and organizing time. Another source is Cognet, the educational model developed at The University of Tennessee (Greenberg, Coleman, and Rankin, 1993). This is a program designed for underachievers in the lower elementary grades but is applicable to all grades. The model has been empirically tested to benefit at-risk and underachieving students and features "building blocks" and "tools" for learning. Teachers are trained to be mediators in helping students learn how to learn. It is based on Feuerstein's theory of "mediated learning experience," which explains how children learn how to learn (p. 91).

I recommend during the first semester the interns observe for two or three weeks to see how an experienced teacher (not necessarily a mentoring teacher) turns his or her class into a "community of learners." They could help in small ways or conduct mini-lessons. This could be part of the graduate course 574, Analysis of Teaching. The rest of the semester should include instruction on classroom management, shown by Latz (1992) to be a major concern of interns and teachers; lesson planning, and in-depth studies of different student types and learning styles--after they have had some experience in a classroom. The actual internship would take place during the second semester only, since many persons involved felt a year was too long.

All required methods classes should be completed before the internship takes place. This would eliminate the problem of interns being exposed to materials after they had taught the subject, sometimes the "wrong way."

There should be a variety of field experiences during the preparatory years, particularly in schools for "at-risk" or special needs students. Field experiences should include helping students with work and conducting mini-lessons, not simply be used for observation.

Our curricula should prepare teachers to mentor intern teachers, to communicate information about students, parents, classroom management, planning and other concerns, and to give support. Mentors could help solve some interns' problems in the schools such as having one mailbox for six or seven people, not being "allowed" to use a photocopying machine, being expected to

attend meetings in which they had no say, or being overlooked for meetings where they wanted to be included for the experience. Interns often felt isolated and alone, which hurt their confidence. Mentors could help alleviate those feelings. As a supervisor, I realized that mentoring teachers, some of whom received little advance warning that they were going to have interns, wanted this training as well.

We should allot more time in graduate classes for interactive discussion for interns to learn from each other and to help alleviate some of the frustrations that can be overwhelming. Support from those going through the same experience is extremely important and valuable. Professors and supervisors need to be supportive as well because doing an internship while taking graduate courses does make this a stressful time.

We should place a priority on having an equitable experience for all interns regarding monies. Some interns were required to provide materials for graduate classes. Some interns received money from a grant. Some interns were paid for substitute teaching while others were not. Reduced tuition or fee waivers, grant money or other financial support would help improve feelings of self-worth.

It was clear that the College of Education has chosen good people for the internship program. Our intern teachers are highly committed to their students and support the idea of serving society and children. Breault (1995) wrote, "They do want all children to succeed" (p. 273). By listening carefully to the revealing, true-life experiences of these highly motivated and committed young teachers, we can improve the training they need to effectively teach our nation's children.

Recommendations for Future Study

We need research on how educational programs can more effectively address the training of teachers for at-risk and other students who have problems that cause them to be underachievers in school.

Intern teachers face a number of difficult situations and need a strong support system composed of professors, administrators, peers, and other teachers. Research on providing the time and trained personnel to give that kind of support is needed.

Research is also needed on choosing teachers who will serve as mentors for intern teachers. Requirements for the selection of mentoring teachers and the training of mentoring teachers must be more consistent and standardized to give interns a more equitable "on-the-job" experience.

Additional studies, both quantitative and qualitative, should be carried out at different locations and settings to determine the problems in the training of teachers, particularly for multiculturally diverse classrooms and at-risk or underachieving students. Information must be shared to improve the educational training of teachers.

We need more research in the area of providing interns with practical techniques or "tools" to facilitate classroom management and discipline in the classroom, a leading concern of interns and teachers alike.

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APPENDIX

A Survey To Discern The Experience of Intern Teachers

Teaching Unsuccessful Learners

Please respond to the following statements by circling the number of the category that applies: 1 = Agree Strongly, 2 = Agree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree, N = Not Applicable.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I really like the idea of influencing children every day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 2. | Teaching is a fairly secure, low-risk occupation with many attractive benefits. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 3. | The instruction I had in school was not very good, and I think I can do better. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 4. | My parents would really be pleased if I were a teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 5. | I love children, especially some of those everyone else ignores. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 6. | It would be good to have a strong influence on impressionable, young minds. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 7. | As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to teach. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 8. | Education is important to our future, and I want to be part of it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 9. | I am happiest when I'm explaining something and helping people grow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 10. | I don't like the cold and calculating business world, and teaching seems like a more humanistic option. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 11. | Teaching is a way to improve things in our society. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 12. | I am excited about a particular subject and would enjoy teaching it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| 13. | I want to develop in young people basic skills and a love for learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 14. | As a teacher I can have an impact on others. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |

Regarding the courses you have taken:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | My methods class(es) contributed to my responsibilities as an intern. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 2. | The content of my methods class(es) was practical in that I am now applying them as an intern. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 3. | Materials I developed in my methods class(es) are helpful during my actual teaching. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 4. | I feel too much time was spent on theory in my methods class(es). | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 5. | I feel enough time was spent on practice or application ideas in my methods class(es). | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 6. | My methods class(es) prepared me for dealing with classroom management and discipline. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 7. | When I have a problem with classroom management or discipline I go to others such as the principal, my mentoring teacher, the parents, the UT supervisor or a former professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |

Please designate: _____

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| 8. | During my education I learned a variety of teaching styles. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 9. | During my education I learned about teaching students with diverse needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |
| 10. | During my education I learned about teaching students from varied backgrounds. | 1 2 3 4 5 N |

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | I have a clear understanding of the school's expectations of me during the internship. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 12. | I feel adequately prepared to work with culturally diverse populations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 13. | I feel adequately prepared to work with at-risk and unsuccessful learners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 14. | I feel adequately prepared to work with gifted children in the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 15. | I feel adequately prepared to work with mainstreamed special needs children in the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 16. | I think my evaluations offer sufficient opportunity to express my concerns and feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |
| 17. | Faculty members in my unit or program area clearly articulated the philosophy/principles on which my program is based. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N |

Please make any additional comments you wish to make.

Note: Section one was adapted from a published survey instrument:

Serow, R.C. (1994, November). Called to teach: a study of highly motivated preservice teachers. The Journal of Research and Development in Education, 27(2), pp. 65-72.

Section two was based on the Teacher Education Professional Year Evaluation Survey developed by Dr. Judith Boser at UT.

Follow-up Interview Questions: Based on a similar qualitative study on intern teachers:

Tomlinson, C.A., Tomchin, E.M., Callahan, C.M., *et al.* (1994, Summer). Practices of preservice teachers related to gifted and other academically diverse learners. Gifted Child Quarterly, 38(3). 106-114.

Interview I

(Took place during Fall Semester 1995 at the convenience of those who were interviewed)

1. What motivated you to become a teacher?
2. Describe the problems that you are finding.
3. Regarding the students that have problems, what techniques from your courses have been the most useful to you in dealing with underachievers or children who have other problems in your classroom? (They may include at-risk, mainstreamed, gifted, and underachieving students)
4. In what ways have your methods courses served (or failed to serve) your needs in dealing with these children?
5. Describe how your mentoring teacher shares ideas with you, helps you plan lessons, helps you with the routine of the school, or other things like that.

Interview II

(Took place during Spring Semester 1996 at the convenience of those who were interviewed)

1. How has your internship experience to date influenced how you teach underachievers. How do you motivate them?
2. How has your mentoring teacher helped your teaching performance, classroom management skills, or handling children with special needs? Give specific examples of experiences you've had.
3. Which of the ideas presented in your methods class(es) have been the most applicable in your internship setting?
4. How have previous experience(s) in your life helped prepare you as a teacher?
5. When problems arise, do you use techniques taught in your methods courses, do you rely on your previous experience, or do you seek help from others?
6. Have you had enough time to reflect on your experiences as an intern? How has that helped you?
7. Who has been the most helpful and/or supportive during your internship?
8. How could your internship be more of a learning/training experience for you? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the program?

VITA

Anne Slauson was born and raised in Madison, Wisconsin where she attended elementary and jr. high schools and graduated from West Senior High School in 1961. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from The University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1965. She attended The State University of New York at Cortland, where she received her teaching certification in 1977. While teaching middle school social studies and American History in Ithaca, New York, she received her Master of Science in Education degree from the State University of New York at Cortland in 1990. After moving to the Knoxville, Tennessee area and teaching for a short period of time, she began doctoral studies in 1992. During her doctoral training, she was also a Graduate Assistant supervising intern teachers in Knoxville, Alcoa, and Athens, Tennessee, and was an instructor for several undergraduate and graduate courses. She received her degree, Doctor of Philosophy in Education, in 1996. She is the wife of a Distinguished Professor of Comparative Medicine and the mother of two sons.