A phenomenological study: Mid-career changer transitions through levels of expertise

Merrie Lynne Schroeder
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: MID-CAREER CHANGER TRANSITIONS THROUGH LEVELS OF EXPERTISE

by

Merrie Lynne Schroeder

Bachelor of Arts
University of Northern Iowa
1969

Master of Arts
University of Iowa
1983

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Teacher Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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The Dissertation prepared by

Merrie Lynne Schroeder

Entitled

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Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative
ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study: Mid-Career Changer Transitions Through Levels of Expertise

by

Merrie L. Schroeder

Dr. Martha Young, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how two midlife adult men experienced different levels of expertise as they transitioned between non-teaching and teaching professions. Of further interest were the unique qualities that these mid-career changers brought to secondary education and their recommendations for improving preparation, induction, and retention of midlife career changers in teaching.

The study examined the transition experiences through three dimensions: 1) the levels of creativity in the context of environments; 2) the physical, social, and emotional development of the individuals; and 3) the theoretical framework of expertise. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and analyses were made by horizontalization, categorization, and textual and structural description. Interpretation of the data was made through the phenomenological themes of spatiality, temporality, and relationality.

The two participants in this study performed at advanced levels of problem solving and creativity and brought rich lived experiences to their new professional environments.
Their abilities to filter problems through their own lived experiences allowed them to create learning environments that motivated students to succeed.

The results of the study indicated that both participants were discouraged because their school environments did not: 1) encourage the type of creative problem solving and teamwork that they had experienced in their former professions, 2) account for ineffective teaching behaviors, and 3) promote sufficient professionalism.

The emotional lows that accompanied the lack of requisite knowledge to perform specific tasks or to be received as a professional instead of a novice were critical to the experience of transitioning between expert and novice levels of performance. Both participants quickly adapted to their new professions by viewing the entire school community as their professional domain.

Implications from this study include a need to: 1) create preparation and induction programs that are tailored to meet and compliment the unique strengths of midlife adults who change professions, 2) provide opportunities for mid-career changers to continue using their creative problem solving talents, and 3) give voice to mid-career changers and mid-career teachers to create synergism and symbiosis.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The more you try to be interested in other people, the more you find out about
yourself. (Thea Astley, 2000. The Quotable Woman, p. 90.)

This study has truly been about others, and I have learned a great deal about myself as
a result. It has been through the nurturing and encouragement of many people that this
study has been accomplished and given light to who I am still becoming. Gratitude goes
to Dr. Young, who made every writing conference an event to anticipate with
professional zeal; and to Drs. Quinn, Olafson, and Putney, who each brought a very
special gift of knowledge and experience to this study and who made me know that I was
"already there" before I really knew it.

The entire experience of learning more about myself also belongs to Joy. and to
Sarah, Miriam, Nandy, Kathy, John, Karen, Jim, and my sisters. All of these very special
people helped me realize the truth in the words of May Lamberton Becker, who said,
"We grow neither better nor worse as we get old, but more like ourselves." Thank you all
for being yourselves as you helped me become mine.
CHAPTER 1

BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH THE PHENOMENON

Phenomenon: any occurrence or fact that is directly perceptible by the senses.

That which appears real to the senses, regardless of whether its underlying existence is proved or its nature understood. (Morris, 1971, p. 983)

Arriving in the Mojave Desert in the middle of August, with a car full of school clothes and school supplies, two cats, and a month’s supply of antihistamines, was only a baby step toward the shocking transition from being a tenured university faculty member to becoming a graduate student. As a member of our university’s laboratory school, I was granted tenure with a master’s degree, having demonstrated the requirements of teaching excellence, service to the university, and scholarship to the field. However, I wanted to earn the terminal degree as well.

The dream of achieving a doctorate in education and the realities of manifesting that dream were immeasurable emotions apart. Fifty-two years of living in the Midwest had culminated in productive and confident work in a university laboratory school, where I had been a successful secondary mathematics teacher, a middle grades program coordinator, and a professional development coordinator for the K-12 school. Prior to my university experiences, I had contributed 25 years to the mathematics community at the local, state, and national levels. I had served as a curriculum coordinator for a metropolitan district and had also been a K-12 mathematics consultant to area schools in
the state, where I co-authored an advanced degree program, developed and taught action research courses grounded in theory, and conducted action research with area K-12 teachers.

In essence, I had lived a happy life among family and long-term friends. Then I decided to pack it all in, sell the house, and eliminate over half my lifetime accumulation of worldly goods. I bade a fond, "See you later!" to my support network, and headed down the highway while listening to hours and hours of tapes of old western radio shows—a mental preparation for my cats and me to become "westernized."

I relocated to a completely foreign setting and began essentially three new jobs: supervising student teachers from my Midwest university in the local school district, becoming a full-time graduate student, and becoming a graduate assistant. Additionally, I had to re-learn the culture of university student life. Parking on campus was a nightmare, and my student status meant I had to park wherever there was a space—not one in the faculty section, which I was used to. I stood in long lines to buy books and a parking sticker and to get my photo student I.D. and library card. I no longer could use the technology resources and services I was accustomed to as a faculty member, but was told repeatedly by student service technologists that my student status, even though I paid computer fees at registration, granted me no help with my home computer. Further, some identity issues cropped up when I, a gray-haired lady, stood in student lines and asked questions that anyone under the age of 23 already took for granted. "Culture shock" became a living entity, not just a concept.

At a time when one begins to notice natural, albeit unwanted, changes in physique and stamina, my body chose to manifest the emotional stresses of moving to such a
degree that I had to add "allergist" to my list of new physicians. These life-altering events in the first few months of transition made me take stock of who I had been physically, socially/emotionally, and psychologically and to think about who I was trying to become. My identity was definitely shifting.

I had made a drastic change in the middle of my life. Of course, the environment was new. I was a novice to my neighborhood, my school, and my town as well as all that goes along with becoming a voting citizen. My social structure that had been in place for decades was now connected only through technology instead of face-to-face encounters. But my most crucial concern was for my mental acuity. I had left a field in which I had been regarded as an expert. My evidence for my expertise lay in the quality of the evaluations from my students, both K-12 and teachers, as well as in their ability to successfully perform the learning events I taught them. I was an expert in navigating through university cultures, as evidenced by achieving tenure. Still, without a doctorate, I was ineligible to teach upper division courses at the university, even though I had successfully, as a perceived expert, taught this age cohort for years before arriving at the university.

While the culture of universities and their missions was not new to me as a faculty member, the culture of doctoral studies certainly was new to me as a student. The language, the program design process, the research papers in every course, the monthly colloquia, the program committees, and the multiple levels of sign-offs for each step in the program were learning experiences. The comprehensive examination formats, the dissertation protocols, and the paperwork necessary to taking the final steps across the stage certainly put me into the position of a novice. What I had learned from my life-time
of experiences as an educator seemed less important to some of my professors than how well I could cite what some other professor had published about the topic. Years of experience seemed to stand for nothing, leaving me with a feeling of professional emptiness.

This singular change in my professional status directly affected and was affected by my physical, social, emotional, and psychological changes. The dynamics of these changes consequently affected my identity. Not only had everything changed around me and within me, but also my very core of self-perception had changed. I had been an expert; now I was a novice. My mission was to regain my expert way of functioning in a new realm. These changes during my own midlife made me aware of how incredibly difficult our modern life is on so many people who not only move to new jobs, but who change jobs completely.

During my studies in Teacher Education, I became increasingly involved with the problem of attrition from teaching and with the need to properly prepare and retain quality teachers in the field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projected that fewer than 700,000 new teachers will be prepared by 2010, yet the projected need will be 3,000,000 (BLS, 2002b). Attrition from teaching has been monitored nationally by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) for the past 15 years. Attrition from teaching throughout this period has stabilized at approximately 50% after five years. I examined attrition data from other professions, only to discover that teaching had the most stable rate of all. Teacher attrition stabilizes at approximately 50% after five years of teaching, while attrition rates in other professions can continue to climb to as high as 70% by the end of seven years (Henke & Zahn, 2001). Midlife adults (ages 40 to 65) are
changing careers and becoming teachers at increasing rates (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000). In 1987, mid-career changers made up 30.4% of the new hires; in 1994, the percentage had grown to 36.2. I was not able to find national data on attrition rates for midlife career changers. Localized data are available and vary considerably, depending on the agency reporting the data.

From my own experience of making a transition in midlife, I began to wonder about the reasons others leave professions at such high rates. I wanted to know if the reasons were more connected to inadequate preparation and/or work conditions or if the reasons had more to do with human development—the changes one goes through as a growing adult. NCES has compiled information on why people leave teaching. Studies may exist but could not be found on how people develop personally during these transitions. Therefore, little information connects recruitment, preparation, and retention to the developmental changes in adults, and, in particular, midlife adults.

From my own experience, the shift of status in my chosen profession placed me in the role of a novice in a new environment. My goal was to regain the level of expertise at which I had been accustomed to functioning. To make this shift required not only building new thinking structures about the world I was trying to enter, but it also required learning in an environment that promoted that growth. I began to see my professional studies of attrition, recruitment, preparation, and retention in relation to my own transition experiences in particular and to the midlife career changers in general.

Current data and current practices assume that novice professionals are principally young adults. Little has been mentioned in the attrition and program development studies about the developmental characteristics of young adults who try to enter new work
cultures. Compounding the problem is that even less is mentioned about the developmental characteristics of midlife adults. A study of the differences in developmental characteristics of young adults and midlife adults can provide important information that can guide recruitment, preparation, and retention programs for professions in general, and for teaching in particular.

A critical component of recruiting, preparing, and retaining midlife adult career changers is understanding how their levels of expertise change with their change in professions. Such information may be beneficial to those who must design or reform preparation programs and induction programs for professionals. This information may also be helpful in retaining quality professionals and to help them reach success more quickly.

**Purpose of the Study**

The perceptions of two midlife career changers who became teachers are examined in this study. The phenomenon of changing professions and changing identity in midlife is examined through the lens of transitioning among levels of expertise. Thus, the framework for this study is an examination of the theories of expertise. Because the study examines the preparation and induction of midlife adults as compared to young adults, I provide an overview of current literature on adult development. The context for the phenomenon is the preparation and retention of novice professionals as a result of attrition from professions. Therefore, I provide a brief discussion of attrition from professions and some resulting practices used by professions to recruit, prepare, and retain professionals.
Piaget (1950) was instrumental in researching human growth and development at the beginning of the 20th century. He espoused the belief that people changed cognitively in an upward, progressive fashion, based on age, and plateaued at the end of their late teens. Gould's (1978) theory of social/emotional development was similar to Piaget's cognitive developmental theory in that Gould believed that development progressed in incremental, chartable, predictable phases in a continuous upward fashion. One of Gould's major contributions to understanding midlife was the theory that people in their mid-40s often become concerned about regenerativity, and thus fashion their lives to give something back to their families and communities. The Seasons of a Man's Life (D. J. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, M. H. Levinson, & McKee, 1978) was a groundbreaking book that contributed to the layperson's understanding of phase theory. It was from this book that the concept of "midlife crisis" became popular.

During the past 30 years, different understandings of human growth and development have come to light. Psychologists, biologists, and cognitivists now recognize the interconnectedness of the body, the environment, and the social network of how humans grow and develop. Of particular interest to me was the recognition of the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who was also writing at the turn of the 20th century. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that development was not a smooth forward progression, but that it required periods of reflection upon moments that might even be called a "black period" for those of us who see crises and setbacks as dark. Vygotsky saw these moments as the building blocks for the next rush of learning and growth. When one couples the
work of Vygotsky with the interconnectedness of the physical, social/emotional, and psychological development, or what Whitbourne (2001) calls biopsychosocial development, new understandings are uncovered about development in the later years.

Unlike Piaget’s theory, recent researchers claim that the adult years are, in fact, filled with many changes and developments that hold great excitement for people in their midlives. It is important to examine how midlife career changers, in the context of their biopsychosocial development, interact with their culture of preparation and induction to regain their expert status in new professions. This is my impetus to investigate further how people are recruited to professions, how they are prepared, and how they are retained for a lifetime of service.

Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention

Easing the teacher shortage problem has been a concern for many decades (Education Commission of the States, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Brougham & Rollefson, 2000). The solution to this problem in the 1970s was to create programs that would hasten the teacher certification process and offer financial incentives to make teaching in the areas of mathematics, science, and modern languages more attractive.

Today, as in the 1970s, teacher recruitment of midlife adults continues to offer incentives such as money and shorter preparation programs, and makes emotional appeals to potential teachers to fulfill their dreams to teach (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2001, May). The traditional preparation of teachers has improved by changing content and quality of programs (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2002b, January; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Retention of new teachers has improved by developing induction and mentoring programs (Odell & Ferraro, 1992). A variety of forms of data
have been collected to determine the preparation and retention factors that are most successful.

Despite these changes, attrition in education continues to reach 50% by the end of five years (NCES, 1996). However, this data did not delineate attrition rates of young adults from midlife career changers, so it becomes difficult to know which practices are more effective than others and for which populations.

Recent studies (Johnson, Kardos, & Liu, 2001, August 27) have delved more deeply into recruitment and hiring practices. These studies did not report the results by elementary and secondary levels, by gender, or by young adult novice and midlife adult novice teachers. Nevertheless, they provide insight about how current recruitment, preparation, and retention efforts help educators change practices, design programs, and alter processes for retaining teachers in general. One recommendation to policymakers and school leaders (Liu & Kardos, 2002) was to consider the “needs of new teachers” when designing faculty meetings and induction programs. This leads to the importance of learning more about the needs of midlife career changers and how they perceive their transition from one profession to another. This understanding will allow decision makers to tailor preparation programs and retention practices to better ensure a stable and dynamic teaching force during this next decade of unprecedented teacher shortages (BLS, 2001a). To gain an understanding of these needs and how midlife career changers make the transition between professions can be examined through the framework of the theories of expertise.
Overview of Theories Surrounding the Phenomenon

Defining the Expert and the Novice

Learning about the expert-novice transition process requires an understanding of the theory of what constitutes expertise, how it is gained, and how it is used. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Morris, 1971), expert and novice are defined as follows:

Expert: A person with a high degree of skill in or knowledge of a certain subject. Having or demonstrating impressive skill, dexterity, or knowledge. (p. 462)

Novice: A person new to any field or activity; beginner. (p. 898)

These definitions provide a common usage of the terms “expert” and “novice” and may be instrumental in perpetuating the hegemony that is prevalent in discussions about expert and novice teacher behaviors. However, research into the concepts of expertise indicates that there are more indicators of expertise than simply holding a “high degree of skill or knowledge.” These indicators have led to distinctions that are evident in two forms of expertise that have implications for understanding how novices gain expertise in teaching.

One form of expertise is crystallized (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) or routinized (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986), which is the use of well-learned procedures or knowledge, applied in new, yet familiar, situations. In the professional setting, this form of expertise is evident in people who know the routines of the organization, quickly solve problems they have faced many times before, and demonstrate a command of the knowledge in their fields.
The second form of expertise is fluid (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) or adaptive (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). These two forms are similar, yet have important distinctions. Fluid expertise “consist[s] of abilities that are brought into play on novel or challenging tasks or tasks that the expert has elected to treat in a challenging way” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 36). Thus, fluid expertise is based on the individual’s ability to create mental networks of similarly structured concepts and apply them in novel situations.

The concept of adaptive expertise (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986) is dependent upon how much the system permits or encourages people to experiment with concepts. This theory has significance for this study in that it will be important to listen for factors that promote or inhibit midlife career changers’ use of adaptive expertise in their new profession as teachers.

_Differences in Expert and Novice Performance_

In addition to the two basic forms of expertise are three domains of expertise that distinguish how experts and novices perform various tasks or solve problems that are unique (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). The first domain is knowledge-building. Bransford, et al. (1999) summarized these characteristics as follows:

1) experts notice features and meaningful patterns of information that are not noticed by novices; 2) experts have acquired a great deal of content knowledge that is organized in ways that reflect a deep understanding of their subject matter; and 3) experts’ knowledge cannot be reduced to sets of isolated facts or propositions but, instead, reflects contexts of applicability: that is, the knowledge is ‘conditionalized’ on a set of circumstances. (p. 2)
The table below summarizes differences between knowledge-building schemas for non-experts and experts (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993):

<table>
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<th>Non-Experts</th>
<th>Experts</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Jump to conclusions; no thought to the body of knowledge</td>
<td>• Believes there is probably more to be learned than is visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subjective judgments</td>
<td>• Assumes all is important at first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assume traditional meanings of words</td>
<td>• Knows word meanings can be multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simplistic interpretations which do not stand up in debates</td>
<td>• Knows simple understandings have deeper complicating factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to look deeply into “dull” issues; excitable by “tangential” issues</td>
<td>• Knows “dull” fields have excitement within them</td>
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This distinction in knowledge-building schema between experts and non-experts may be informative to this study in understanding the level of expertise held in the midlife career changers’ previous profession. A key element to the transformation process will be to learn how midlife career changers build teaching knowledge onto their previous professional knowledge schemas as they face new problems in teaching.

The second domain of expert performance (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995) is called efficiency in which, “Experts are able to flexibly retrieve important aspects of their
knowledge with little attentional effort" (Bransford, et al. 1999, p. 2). At the same time, "In the young expert-on-the-rise we may see much of the effortful, fluid part of expertise, whereas crystallized expertise is more evident in the mature person" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 36-37). This distinction may be informative about the transformation process of midlife career changers in that the degree of efficiency with which they solve unique problems may indicate their level of expertise.

The third domain of performance is insight (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). Insight consists of the ability to: 1) distinguish relevant from irrelevant information in problem solving; 2) identify two or more seemingly unrelated pieces of information and combining them to form a unique and useful solution to the problem; and 3) bring prior knowledge from a previous context to a new situation, generating a creative solution to the problem. The degree to which midlife career changers engage insight may provide useful information about the connections between life experiences and cognitive development in midlife adults in the transition process.

A significant characteristic of expert teachers is evident in the distinction between content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Bransford, et al., 1999). Novice teachers may have sufficient content knowledge to be able to impart the district prescribed curriculum. They may also have learned strategies in pedagogy to maintain effective classrooms. However, pedagogical content knowledge is the ability to understand the concepts of the content and how learners learn so that the delivery of the concepts best fits the learners. Pedagogical content knowledge is specific to each particular content area and cannot be
generalized across disciplines (Sternberg & Horvath; Bransford, et al., 1999). In essence, (Bransford, et al., 1999):

Expert teachers know the kinds of difficulties that students are likely to face: they know how to tap into students’ existing knowledge in order to make new information meaningful; and they know how to assess their students’ progress.

Expert teachers have acquired pedagogical content knowledge as well as content knowledge. (p. 13)

The use of pedagogical content knowledge may be an important characteristic of midlife career changers’ teaching strategies, which will distinguish them from traditional novice teachers. The presence of this characteristic of expertise may be informative to understanding the transition cycle.

These definitions of expertise and the distinctions between novice and expert performance provide the framework for understanding the phenomenon of the transition within levels of expertise. This framework is necessary to identify that which is expected as well as that which is not expected in the stories of midlife career changers.

Need for Exploring the Phenomenon

Obviously, we believe that it matters how teaching expertise is conceptualized—particularly within the community of educational researchers. It matters because the expert teacher is a focal element in the movement toward excellence in education. (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995, p. 16)

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (S. 940/H.R. 1990). By this act, an effective teacher in every
classroom is required because “we now have concrete evidence that smart teachers with solid content knowledge have the greatest effect on student achievement” (Paige, 2002). At the same time, a serious nation-wide shortage of teachers is projected for the next decade (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000) as the supply of prepared teachers is reduced by approximately half after five years of service (Henke & Zahn, 2001). Further, “the share of uncertified teachers is higher in high-poverty schools and in certain fields like math, science, and special education” (Paige, 2002, p. 3).

To meet the challenges of the NCLB Act, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige called on states to raise academic standards of prospective teachers and to lower barriers to teaching. The NCLB is designed to increase achievement scores on standardized tests for all children, and to do so by recruiting, preparing, and retaining quality teachers. “[Alternative] programs recruit successful recent college graduates or mid-career professionals who are interested in teaching and who also possess strong backgrounds in their subject areas” (Paige, 2002, p. 2). To further this point, Sternberg and Horvath stated, “Recruitment, training, selection, and assessment of teachers, as well as … the evaluation of systems directed toward [them] are predicated either explicitly or implicitly on a model of the effective or expert teacher” (1995, p. 16).

The need for this study is timely with respect to its relationship to the NCLB legislation and teacher attrition. Gold (1996) stated that, in developing teacher preparation “programs that are hoped for and needed,” that “the entire life space of the teacher must be considered. In essence, the focus is on what the individual experiences in the physical, pedagogical, sociological, and psychological domains” (p. 589). This study is an attempt to gain a better understanding of how midlife career changers who become
teachers make the transition through various levels of expertise as professionals and how their unique experiences, at their current level of development, can best be enhanced to keep them in the profession.

Mrozik (1993) concluded her dissertation on job satisfaction of second-career teachers by observing that, “non-traditionally-prepared teachers bring a wealth of knowledge and significant experience with them to the classroom. If we seek dedicated professionals to educate our youth and prepare them for their adult lives, we cannot overlook this relatively untapped source of teachers—the second-career changer” (p. 162). This untapped source of teachers is examined in this study by listening to their stories about their transition to teaching in a framework of expertise. From these stories, strategies to refine teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife career changers may be illuminated.

How the Phenomenon is Studied

Understanding “all possible appearances in human experience” (Morris, 1971, p. 983) about how midlife professionals make the transition among levels of expertise would require a quantitative study. The results of such a study would then give me ideas to apply to the majority of midlife career changers and in common situations. However, I want to understand what is unique for mid-career changers. I want to understand what “is real to their senses” about making this transition. Therefore, I need to conduct a study that will allow me to listen, without bias, to the lived experiences of midlife career changers.
Nearly a century ago, German mathematician Edmund Husserl developed the study of phenomenology, which is a study that "describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon (or topic or concept) for several individuals. In this type of study, the researcher reduces the experiences to a central meaning" (Creswell, 1998, p. 236). The meanings are what Husserl (1913/1987) called the essences of the experience. The essence, according to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Morris, 1971), is "the quality or qualities of a thing that give it its identity; the crucial element" (p. 448). During the past quarter century, procedures for studying a phenomenon have been developed to study individuals, learn of their perceptions of the experiences, and generate meanings that culminate in understanding the essence of the phenomenon. That is precisely what I want to know. Therefore, a phenomenological study is what is most appropriate to seeking new understanding about what others experience in this transition.

To this study this phenomenon, I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview (Merriam, 1998) with two secondary male teachers from a large urban school district in the southwest. The interviews were audiotape recorded, and notes were taken for future validation of responses (Ochs, 1979). Specific techniques for filtering information, clustering themes, and interpreting the stories of the midlife career changers were used to ultimately identify the essence of how these two midlife career changers perceived their transition through levels of expertise in the teaching profession (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Merriam, 1998; LeCompte & Priessle, 1993; Van Manen, 1990; Tesch, 1990; Spiegelberg, 1965).
Scope of Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand how midlife career changers make the transition from one profession to another in the framework of expertise. The overarching questions examined in this study are:

1. How do midlife adults experience the transition through levels of expertise as they move from a previous profession to the profession of teaching?
2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?
3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

Assumptions of the Study

The design of this study assumes that:

1. Midlife changers are capable of reflecting on their learning processes, their previous professions, and on their change process from novice in the current profession.
2. Participants will respond candidly and without bias.
3. The study is designed to discover that which is unique compared to that which is common and expected from the literature.

Limitations

It should be recognized that:

1. Replication of this study may lead to dissimilar results.
2. The major field of study (teaching content area) of each participant can influence different perspectives of induction and adaptation to teaching.
3. The quality of each participant's teacher preparation program may influence perspectives about induction to the profession.

4. Characteristics of each individual can highly influence the results of the study and should not be generalized.

5. The length of teaching experience may affect the participant's reflections on induction practices.

Contributions of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge of a growing population of teachers—midlife career changers. The results of this study suggest that national agencies begin collecting data about attrition of mid-career changers. Investigations of the types of preparation programs completed are also recommended. Such information could be informative to the design of teacher preparation programs needed to meet the demand for teachers.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education “Project on the Next Generation of Teachers” (Johnson, Kardos, & Liu, 2002, August 27) used the phrase “needs of new teachers” in several recommendations for schools and principals and for policymakers. This study contributes to defining those needs through the stories of the lived experiences of mid-career changers. These definitions also contribute to how preparation and induction programs are designed for midlife career changers and are useful contributions to placing qualified teachers in every classroom (NCLB, S. 940/H.R. 1990).

On an individual basis, this study contributes to midlife career changers' personal understandings of the transition process and how it is both common and unique. The
findings guide midlife career changers in recognizing their own unique potential for becoming and remaining successful teachers.

It was necessary to understand this phenomenon in relation to that which is common so that the unique experiences of the participants could be discerned. Therefore, the first task in this study was to examine the literature and determine what aspects of environment, development, and expertise could be expected to occur in the transitional experiences of midlife career changers.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to learn how midlife adults experience the phenomenon of changing professions. This study will examine three overarching questions:

1. How do midlife adults experience the transition through levels of expertise as they move from a previous profession to the profession of teaching?
2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?
3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

This chapter will review studies that situate the phenomenon for midlife adults as professionals and specifically for those who enter the field of teaching. The first set of studies addresses the context of change, beginning with attrition data for professions in general and for teaching in particular. I describe some of the programs, practices, and processes that have been designed to reduce attrition as applicable to the midlife adult career changer. These pertain to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers.

The next set of studies compare some of the major concepts of young adult and midlife adult development. Models of social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development are discussed and then applied to both young adults and to midlife adults, demonstrating differences between the two adult age groups.
Third, selected recent research studies that compare novice and expert behaviors with respect to problem solving and learning will be discussed. I will describe typical young adult novice teachers and typical midlife career teachers within the context of the theories of novice and expert behavior.

The Context of the Phenomenon

Professional Attrition

The Data

Recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers are in an apparent crisis. The changing demographics of the American population, the impending retirement of Baby Boomer teachers, and the decrease in numbers of women entering the field of teaching at the turn of the 21st century all add to the problem of teacher shortages across the country (Education Commission of the States, 2000). To compound the problem, those who enter the field of teaching appear to leave it at the rate of 50% by the end of five years. The U.S. Government Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2001b) and The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (Hussar, 2001) projected that fewer than 700,000 teachers will be prepared by 2010 to fill over three million vacancies. It is important to know if this attrition is an education-specific problem or if it affects all professions equally. Such information could lead program designers to different solutions to the shortage problem than if it is relevant only to teaching.

Henke & Zahn (2001) examined attrition rates of 13 major job categories, most requiring at least a BA for entry to the field. Their study was based on The 1993...

The analysis indicated that after controlling for age, gender, college entrance examination scores, cumulative undergraduate GPA's, perceived professional status of occupation, and perceived relationship between April 1994 occupation and undergraduate major, teaching remained among the most stable occupations. In fact, no occupational category was more stable than teaching (p. 7).

Attrition data for the professions of accounting, criminal justice, law, and teaching provide insight to the statistical trends over time, shared by all four fields. The attrition rate after one year of service in public accounting was 21.3%, with an additional 33.2% departure by the beginning of the third year, for a total attrition rate of 54.5% within three years (Bernardi & Hooks, 1999).

In law enforcement, for the decade of the 1990s, 14% of state and county officers and 20% of local police officers left their positions within 18 months of their hiring date, according to the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC, 2000). The attrition rate for Correctional facilities employees, for the same time period, was reported as 19% for county sheriffs, 24% for sheriff offices, and 51% for private facilities.

The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) Foundation conducted independent research on association retention patterns of young lawyers (Macdonald, 1998). Beginning associates left their law firms within one year at a rate of 9.2%; 43% had departed within three years. After eight years, 77.2% of new employees had left the firms to seek employment outside of law.
Attrition rates in education are somewhat hard to corroborate. Reports vary from 30% attrition rate among traditionally trained teachers in the first three years of teaching (Linda Darling-Hammond, 2000) to 43% after three years (Southwest Texas State University, 2001). “Various estimates suggest that about 30% of beginning teachers do not teach beyond two years and that almost forty percent and especially the most academically talented, leave the profession within their first five years of teaching” (Odell & Ferraro, 1992, p. 200).

Another factor in the study of attrition in education includes the lengths of teacher preparation programs. Darling-Hammond (2000) reported an attrition rate for teachers who were trained in short-term programs at about 60% as compared to about 30% of traditionally trained teachers and only about 10 to 15% of teachers prepared in extended five-year teacher education programs.

*Reasons for Attrition*

Few studies of professions outside of teaching provided information regarding the causes of attrition. Most studies reported demographics, but not reasons given by employees for leaving their profession. The National Association for Law Placement (MacDonald, 1998) did conduct focus groups, wherein associates who had been employed between three and five years spoke about what they were seeking in their jobs. Many young lawyers were seeking professional growth, a sense of family or community, and a lifestyle that did not revolve around work. Their dissatisfactions included a lack of feedback from the firm, lack of mentoring, and unspoken firm policies on the balance of law practice and life. Not “fitting in” was cited as a major contributor to attrition.
Reasons for leaving education are documented at a national level by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 1996). The main reasons for leaving public school teaching in 1994-95 fell into twelve categories (Whitener, Gruber, Lynch, Tingoes, Perona, & Fondelier, 1997). The top eight are listed here to not only show that "dissatisfaction with teaching" is not the main reason teachers leave the profession, but also to show that these same reasons might apply to attrition in other professions. The top eight reasons for leaving teaching were: 1) retirement (27.%), 2) pregnancy/child rearing (14.%), 3) to pursue another career (12.1%), 4) family or personal move (10.1%). 5) other personal or family reasons (6.5%), 6) better salary or benefits (6.5%), 7) to take courses to improve career opportunities in the field of education (6.1%), and 8) dissatisfaction with teaching as a career (5.3%). One might conjecture that pursuing another career resulted from being dissatisfied with teaching as a career. Since this is not necessarily the case, no attempt should be made to sum these two categories.

Those who left the profession in the 94-95 school year and named "dissatisfaction with teaching" as one of three major reasons for leaving, identified their main area of dissatisfaction (Whitener, et al., 1997). The following four areas were named most often: 1) student discipline problems (17.9%), 2) poor student motivation to learn (17.6%), 3) inadequate support from administration (15.3%), and 4) lack of recognition and support from administration (13.8%). It is worthy of recognition that 6.6% of the respondents who left the profession named "lack of influence over school policies and practices," and 3.5% cited "poor opportunity for professional advancement" as reasons for leaving teaching. "Lack of control over own classrooms" and "intrusion on teaching time" were named by 4.9% and 4.5%, respectively.
The teachers who are more likely to leave teaching are: 1) under 30 years of age, 2) females, 3) achieved high scores on the teacher exam, 4) have mid to upper socio economic status, 5) have little prior experience working with children, 6) have a low level of commitment to teaching, and 7) have ineffective coping strategies. Environments that lead to attrition are: 1) teaching at the secondary level, 2) teaching special education or speech, and 3) having high class sizes or case loads, unsupportive administration, excessive paperwork, ambiguous or conflicting role demands, few job rewards, and lack of decision making opportunities (Gonzalez, 1995).

In summary, 10 to 20% of non-teaching professionals leave their fields in the first year, and from 40% to over 50% leave within three years. Attrition for these professions continues on into seven and eight years. Comparatively, approximately 10% of teachers leave within the first year, and 30 – 40% leave within the first three years. Education attrition tapers off by the fifth year, stabilizing at approximately 50% (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000; Henke & Zahn, 2001). Influences on attrition vary according to stages of human development, ranging from childbearing to retirement. The common theme that seems to explain why young adults leave their professions appears to be lack of fulfillment of intrinsic needs such as a) the need for belonging, b) a sense of achievement, c) satisfaction with the balance between work and personal life, and d) the need to be supported by supervisors.

**Solutions to the Problem of Attrition**

The attrition data for professions clarifies the need for recruiting quality people into all fields, including teaching. Attempting to hire the "brightest and the best" is a common goal that requires not just clever marketing, but also changes in how professional leaders
shape preparation and practice. Thus, recruitment, preparation, induction, and retention are all interconnected endeavors. As each phase is described individually in this chapter, it is hoped that the connections will become apparent.

Recruitment of Professionals

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2001a) projected that by the year 2010, the need for qualified professionals in nearly every field will be higher than the available personnel to fill them. While the Internet aids recruitment, traditional media approaches, such as advertisements on television, radio, magazines, and newspapers, as well as college recruitment on high school campuses, continue to be popular means for reaching potential markets. Some agencies include job shadowing and presentations at conferences. The methods for advertising are only part of the solution to the shortages.

Major steps have been taken to make the preparation for some professions more attractive. For example, convenient course completion through the web, on-the-job licensing (Hollister & Heintz, 2000, June 11), and the appeal to retired professionals to join companies to fill "plumb" positions (Japan Institute of Labor, 1995) are designed to attract people to professional fields. Some professions have conducted extensive reviews of their traditional missions and have redesigned them to be more in line with the current societal demands, thus hoping that the field will be more attractive (Lampman, 2001).

Recruiting new teachers has become more difficult in the past decade with the increased number of professional choices available to high school graduates today. Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (SECQT, 2002a, January) reported that, "A recent study shows that the appeal to become a teacher among college freshmen has declined from 10 percent in the early 1990s to 8 percent in 1999." SECQT identified four
major areas of recruitment: a) early outreach efforts, b) "grow your own" paraprofessional programs, c) college scholarships and forgivable loans, and d) alternative certification programs. This study is concerned with the recruitment of midlife professionals who become teachers. Therefore, of these four recruitment strategies, only the fourth strategy will be examined here.

Alternative certification programs are designed to attract an older population of career changers (delayed entrants) to teaching. According to the NCES (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000), delayed entrants to teaching made up 30.4% of the new hires in 1987. By 1994, the percentage had grown to 36.2. At the same time, the percentage of teachers re-entering teaching dropped from 32.8% in 1987 to 22.9% in 1994.

Alternative Certification Programs, according to the National Center for Education Information (Feistritzer, 2002), are now operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia. Universities sponsor some of the programs, while others are conducted by state agencies or local school districts or are private programs such as "Teach for America." More than 175,000 teachers have been certified through alternative routes (Feistritzer). The contents of these programs vary significantly (Gold, 1996). Early programs varied considerably in content of certification, but in the past five years, the newly designed programs "look amazingly similar" (Feistritzer, 2002, p.3). All 34 of the new alternative certification programs have the following components: a) designed for people already holding a bachelor's degree, b) pass rigorous screening processes and exams, c) complete field-based training, d) pass coursework in professional education studies before and during teaching, e) work closely with mentors during training, and f) meet high performance standards.
Recruitment of delayed entrants to teaching is enhanced through efforts such as (SECTQ, 2002a, January): a) legislation that allows retirees to return to teaching without losing pension benefits; b) incentives such as housing, relocation expenses, scholarships, and "free graduate education to those who will teach in hard-to-staff schools," (p. 2); and c) stipends for the first four consecutive years of teaching in mathematics, secondary science courses, or special education. "However, there is little systematic and easily reported information on who has been recruited, whether they stay, and whether they are effective" (p. 2).

Regardless of how prospective professionals are attracted to the fields, the preparation programs must be designed to continue to be enticing as well as beneficial to the students. The profession of teacher education has responded by: 1) designing programs to ease entry into teaching, 2) strengthening teacher preparation programs by adding an additional year of training, and 3) creating entry-level assistance to new teachers.

Preparing Teaching Professionals in an Era of Shortage

Traditional teacher preparation programs, as discussed here, usually occur in multipurpose universities, are designed to be completed in four years, and culminate in a baccalaureate degree in education. Elementary programs focus mainly on pedagogical preparation, while secondary programs focus on subject matter mastery. General education courses typically are completed during the first two years of the program, and the education course concentration occurs during the last two years, which includes some field experience and student teaching. This simplified description of teacher preparation has been the model in American education for at least the last half of the 20th century. It
is this model that educators are attempting to modify to help reduce the teacher shortage problem.

**Easy entry into teaching.** Reducing the requirements for job qualification can solve a shortage of employees in any field. In education, this is accomplished through fast-track or alternative licensure programs. The variety of licensure programs available to those intending to teach is vast (Feistritzer, 1998). However, the focus of this study is on programs that provide teacher preparation to those who already hold a baccalaureate degree in another profession and who gain teacher licensure by earning an advanced degree from a university teacher preparation program.

The course content and field experiences of advanced degree programs for mid-career changers vary considerably (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001; Stoddart & Floden, 1996). Some programs simply require a student to exhibit knowledge of completed course content through paper and pencil tests such as Praxis I or on the state examination required of all teachers, and require no field experience (Evans, 2001). Some institutions waive student teaching on the basis of successful observations of the student in practice and his ability to pass Praxis II (Patten, n. d.). Some programs require full compliments of education courses, field experiences, and a passing score on the state examination. Project Promise (Furger, 2001) is an example of a program designed so that all course work is completed in cohorts. Students are engaged in a field experience every semester of enrollment, culminating in a 15-week student teaching experience and regular seminars conducted by the cohort faculty and field experience cooperating teachers. Some programs are offered on-line, with varying amounts of field experience.
Strengthened teacher preparation programs. The second response to addressing the teacher shortage problem was to strengthen existing traditional teacher preparation programs by adding a fifth year of study (Stoddart & Floden, 1996). Fifth-year programs vary in how they are structured (Cobb, 1999). Some programs are designed so that the final degree is a baccalaureate degree, as in a traditional four-year program. Some programs result in a postgraduate diploma in education, while others result in advanced degrees (Koppich, 2000). In some programs, students who complete five years of training receive two baccalaureate degrees: one in their subject field and one in education (Koppich).

According to Darling-Hammond, National Council for Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 1996), “because the fifth year allows students to devote their energies exclusively to teacher preparation for at least a year, these programs allow for extended practice teaching in schools tightly tied to relevant coursework. Such internships permit integration of theoretical and practical learning, providing a much more compelling context for developing skilled and thoughtful practice” (p.78).

Retention of Professionals

Retention strategies occur at the job site and are designed to reduce the factors that lead to attrition (Odell, 1990). Mentor programs, both formal and informal, have been used in corporations to ease new employees into the work environment and to accelerate the novice’s sense of belonging and productivity. Some retention strategies, however, require a re-examination of the profession itself. High attrition from the clergy, for example, has required a new understanding of the changing attitudes about religion in America and the role of the church (Lampman, 2001). The Florida Hospital Association
(2001) has implemented “programs, policies, and practices that are seen as nurse satisfiers” (p. 2), including bringing together executive nurses to share strategies for retaining nurses and instituting retreats for mid-career nurses (Donner & Wheeler, 2001). The North Carolina Department of Commerce (2001) restructured job classifications to allow more flexibility in assignments, pay categories, promotion of teamwork, and increasing career growth.

As with other professions, teaching has begun to recognize the need for assisting novice teachers with the beginning years. Retention strategies include both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators often focus on fiscal rewards, such as signing bonuses or additional stipends which attract new teachers to hard-to-staff areas or supply teachers in disciplines in high need of quality teachers (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2002b, January; Feistritzer, Hill, & Willett, 1998). With the bonus or stipend comes the promise to serve for a specific number of years. The length of service to these agreements varies.

Certification by The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivator to retain teachers in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Teachers who receive this certification are rewarded both financially and emotionally for their “proof of professionalism.” The monetary awards vary by state in terms of size and duration of the award. Teachers whose rewards are granted for a period of years may be more prone to stay in the profession longer. Most importantly, it is a hope that these teachers experience their professionalism to such a degree that there would be no thought to leaving the profession. Teachers may reapply for the certification
after the certification period expires, thus keeping the cycle alive. Induction and mentor programs are other forms of intrinsic motivators.

**Induction programs.** Induction programs vary in goals and implementation practices. They are often designed to link preparation with practice (Gold, 1996). The definitions of the terms “induction” and “mentoring” vary. Some studies imply that induction is a set of activities and procedures that novices complete to learn the system, while mentoring assumes shepherding relationships between novices and mentors. Other studies describe the mentor as the support person in the induction program. Finally, some studies use the terms interchangeably.

Induction programs lack common elements, such as who should participate, whether or not the program is mandatory, the degree of formal support to novices, how to identify support people, whether or not the support team evaluates the novice, and what the novice’s responsibilities are during the induction years (Gold, 1996; Sweeny, 2001). An example of a highly defined induction program is in the Pacific Rim schools (Moskowitz, 1997). Here, novice teachers are given partial teaching loads, are partnered with a full-time teacher in an adjacent room, are assigned the better achieving students, participate in professional development on a regular basis, and are evaluated through informal and ongoing assessments which are designed to affirm and support as opposed to measure and eliminate.

According to Gold, “Few of the induction programs have systematically collected or reported data regarding retention” (1996, p. 549). Without this data, it is difficult to understand which programs are providing novice teachers, both young adult and midlife career changers, with effective practice.
Mentor programs. Mentor programs can be seen as an intrinsic retention strategy. Mentor programs can be formal and informal (Hansman, 2001). In the early years of implementing mentor programs, the design and implementation was the responsibility of individuals, schools, or districts. Lately, states have begun to set aside funds for districts to develop programs in an effort to retain their valuable teaching resources (Sweeny, 2002).

Informal programs rely on instinct and good will between the novice and the mentor (Odell, 1990; Hansman, 2001). The goal is to provide the novice with a comfortable and safe beginning, showing the novice "the ropes" as she gains solid footing in learning how to navigate the first year of teaching. The emphasis is on social, emotional, and contextual security. Mentors can be appointed to serve a novice or there can be mutual selection. Mentor relationships can result in life-long friendships (Gold, 1996).

Formal mentor programs are often designed around specific goals of the school or district (Odell, Huling, & Sweeny, 2000). Well-defined formal mentor programs are structured to address: 1) how mentors are selected and matched with mentees, 2) the training of mentors, 3) what incentives, support, and recognition are given to mentors, and 4) what leadership is provided to the program (Sweeny, 2001). Further, the practice of mentoring is defined in terms of: 1) mentoring with and without instructional observation and coaching, 2) the type and extent of instructional observation and coaching, 3) the amount of time and frequency of formal and informal mentor/mentee contact and support, 4) whether mentors and the program encourage on-going informal mentoring by other staff in addition to formal mentoring, 5) the extent of discussions between mentor and mentee regarding analysis of their own learning experiences within
the mentoring process for ways to benefit students, and 6) translation of mentoring strategies into the teaching context.

Finally, well-defined programs determine strategies for evaluating novice teachers. In some programs, the mentor is the evaluator. In other programs, other mentors or administrators evaluate the new teacher (Sweeny, 2001; Gold, 1996).

Adult Development

Throughout the last century, average human life spans have increased by 25 years (Parks, 2000). This dramatic increase not only changes the markers for adult life stages, but also creates a need to re-examine what little has been known about adult development. The majority of in-depth studies have occurred in people under the age of 18 and over the age of 65 because their development is most observable. Major studies of young adults and midlife adults, conducted within the past two decades, are now beginning to show the variances between these two stages of adulthood in social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development (Lachman, 2002).

Social/Emotional Development

Models

Current research on adult development can be grouped into three models: 1) sequential, 2) life events and transition, and 3) relational development (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The sequential model has often been referred to as stage or phase theory and purports that there are identifiable common characteristic and concerns of adults as they move through particular points in the life cycle. “Phase theories of development focus on the major life tasks or conflicts that stimulate growth. These tasks
or conflicts emerge at relatively specific times in the life cycle. The way we accomplish or resolve them continues to influence us for the rest of our lives” (Levine, 1995, p. 61). Erikson (1982) described development as a series of crises or turning points evolving in a predictable sequence and at similar times. Erikson theorized that development occurs from both internal and environmental factors, and that development can go both forward and backward throughout the life cycle. D. J. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, M. H. Levinson, and McKee (1978) identified four phases, or seasons, of development in men, each occurring at a specific age and lasting approximately 25 years. Gould (1978) identified four adult phases of preoccupation, based on childhood assumptions, and occurring at specific ages.

“Stage theorists describe development as an organic process of alternating periods of balance, transition, and reintegration, modeled upon Piaget’s work in cognitive growth. According to this view, development proceeds through a series of sequentially ordered stages whose progression, in contrast to phase progressions, is not dependent upon age” (Levine, 1995, p. 91). Examples of major stage theories include: 1) the phases of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984), 2) the development of the ego in relation to the environment (Loevinger, 1976), and 3) how individuals make meaning in the process of experiencing alternating periods of stability, instability, and rebalance (Kegan, 1982).

A second model of development, Life Events and Transitions, is based on the impact that events have on affecting a person’s life. Some events are cultural, such as wars, the Great Depression, and the terrorist attack on the United States. Transitions are the person’s dispositions about what they have learned or how their actions have changed as
a result of the life event. Transitions can result in either growth or decline (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

The third model, known as the Relational Model, is a result primarily of women’s studies and purports that relationships are central to one’s development. Rather than viewing life as sequential steps or as a result of expected and unexpected life events, relationships with others generate the growth of an individual. The metaphor could be a dynamic web, connecting many individuals to each other, with empathic understanding as a central tenet of growth (Jordan, 1997).

Two other themes permeate all three models of development: identity and intimacy (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). These have also been called work and love in earlier literature on adult development. While these two themes are relevant to adult development throughout, they are issues that affect young adults most often (Erikson, 1982).

These three popular models of adult development may provide insight to refining recruitment, preparation, and retention programs for novice professionals, regardless of their ages, and to understanding the personal development of midlife adults in transition. The models set the stage for examining what has recently been identified as social/emotional issues unique to the young adult and to the midlife adult.

Young Adults (ages 22 to 30)

Parks (2000) conducted extensive research on the development of young adults. One of her sophomore college students wrote:

I have been thinking lately a lot about thresholds. When does one become an adult? It seems at times that it is easier to meet new adults who recognize me as I
am now, than to be with adults who see me as I used to be. It seems to me that one becomes an adult when you know that you have a life. Do you know what I mean? (p. 6)

Parks (2000) states, “Becoming an adult is increasingly recognized as a complex process that includes changes in biological, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and moral dimensions” (p. 8). The context within which young adults mature is as critical to development as the internal changes themselves (Gold, 1996). Parks (2000) synthesized the work of Kegan, Gilligan, and Chodorow by identifying the two major goals of development in young adults: 1) differentiation, autonomy, and agency, and 2) relation, belonging, and communion. These two themes also are evident in the Relational Model and in the Sequential development model of Gould (1978), Erikson (1982), and J. D. Levinson, et al. (1978).

Erikson (1982) described this period, ages 22 to 27, with the key words “intimacy vs isolation” and “love.” Gould (1978) described this period as a time when young adults are preoccupied with: 1) their occupational choice; 2) their new roles as spouses and parents or their inability to get into these roles; and 3) the important events of work, marriage, and family. Levinson, et al. (1978) theorized that young men in this age period focus on testing the choices that they have made, as well as forming a dream and an occupation, building relationships, and beginning a family.

Midlife Adults (ages 40 to 65)

What years constitute the midlife age range and how this range should be named lack common agreement. Some researchers simply divide the age range into “early” and “late,” (Sterns & Huyck, 2001); while others provide a specific age range such as 40 to
50 as “early midlife” and 51 to 60 as “late midlife” (Staudinger & Bluck, 2001). Vander Zanden (2000) identified midlife as essentially the remainder of one’s professional career, beginning with age 45. For this study, midlife is identified as ages 40 to 65.

Just as there are differing theories of adult development in general, there are also differing theories of midlife adult development. Jung (1971/1976) observed that as people enter middle age, they tend to develop a balance of characteristics within gender so as to become more androgynous. Jung believed that during that time, midlife adults turn more inward to explore their own values and ideals.

Gilligan (1982), on the other hand, saw gender as a major shaping force in midlife development with respect to marriage, parenting, and friendships. These relationships, also a part of the Relational Model discussed earlier, are significant in affecting how people develop into their later years. Havighurst (1972) posited a model of midlife that extends Merriam & Caffarella’s (1999) overarching themes of identity and intimacy. His theory was that midlife development is a product of career and relationships, societal responsibilities, and biological concerns.

Levinson, et al. (1978) believed that biological development influenced phases of development in childhood. He believed that social and cultural events were just as likely to structure the life course in predictable ways in midlife. Thus, Levinson’s research led to the male midlife crisis, a phenomenon not accepted cross culturally (Vander Zanden, 2001). Erikson (1982), also a phase theorist, believed that midlife was an accumulation of life experiences, affected by social influences. He believed that midlife was the period in which people develop broader and deeper understandings of themselves and could
perpetuate personal emotional well-being. Erikson’s theory of regenerativity, which is the concern for the next generation, has greatly influenced the description of midlife adults.

Staudinger & Bluck (2001) summarize the midlife theories by saying that “While stage theories that describe how people normatively progress through adulthood have merit, the individual life circumstances of each adult also influence development, resulting in individual trajectories through midlife” (p. 15). Thus, the array of theories about midlife development must all be taken into consideration when examining how adults bridge their lives from childhood to old age, including timing of life events, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class (Lachman, 2002). In reference to the models proposed for understanding midlife, “we must look for themes and patterns across samples. And we must remember that none of the data sets included representative samples of racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, or persons with a homosexual orientation” (Storns & Huyck, 2001, p. 458).

**Physical Development**

*Models*

The physical health of adults gradually changes over time in fairly unrecognizable stages of development. Patterns of aging apply to people in general, but the timing of changes varies among individuals (Katchadourian, 1987). Whitbourne (2001) identifies two major theories of aging: a) biological theories, wherein biological changes are programmed or genetically pre-determined or random error or the results of degenerativity due to aging, and b) interactionist models, which provide a holistic approach to development and aging. These models show genetics and environment interacting over time, creating changes that are predictable for the norm, yet
unpredictable for individuals. Whitbourne (2001) summarized the interactionist model by saying that, “the individual’s activities are seen as affecting and being affected by genetically or biologically controlled changes in the body. The result is large individual differences in the nature and timing of age-related changes in physical and cognitive functioning” (p. 114). The following section provides a brief discussion of the differences in physical development of young and midlife adults. Knowledge of these differences may have an effect on how preparation, induction, and retention programs are designed for midlife career changers.

_Young Adults (ages 22 to 30)_

Young adults are in their peak years for speed, agility, and strength. While these conditions begin to weaken after age 30, being healthy does not. Being able to function in daily life and adapt to life’s changes is dependent upon choosing healthy life styles through proper diet and exercise. “Like other Americans, young adults enjoy good to excellent health” (Vander Zanden, p. 403). “Young professionals enter their new jobs with a strong background in nutrition and health education” (p. 404). Nevertheless, “Employers can expect to lose more work days due to sickness among young adults than among older adults” (p. 403). The young adult’s ability to carry out a healthy life style is dependent upon the social and environmental factors encountered on the job.

Research on attrition of young professionals, discussed earlier in this chapter, has shown a relationship to the need for young adults to develop identity through finding the right social, emotional, and professional fit for their futures (Gold, 1996). The interactionist model of physical development supports this phenomenon. Identity emerges from good mental health, good physical health, and the right social environment. All
three factors influence the young adult's ability to function fully in her chosen profession (Gold).

**Midlife Adults (ages 40 to 65)**

Due to the extensive research that focuses on gerontology, “[f]indings specific to the middle years (40 to 65) are not necessarily available” (Whitbourne, 2001, p. 111). Most often, aging in the middle years is described biologically, using the physical characteristics of graying or thinning hair, more fatigue, a few more wrinkles, a reshaping of the body, and the need to take a little more time to rebound from illnesses (Whitbourne, 2001; Katchadourian, 1987; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). However, recent studies have begun to explore the relationship among the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging. When the changes reach a point where they can no longer be assimilated, the person must change his identity to accommodate the new self which requires a new understanding of that self (Whitbourne, 2001).

These changes in psychological perspectives have a direct relationship to how the individual reacts socially. “An overarching influence on the behavior of individuals, however, is the social context, which directly or indirectly leads adults to take actions that accelerate or retard the aging of their bodies” (Whitbourne, 2001, p. 142). “Optimal physical aging occurs when individuals achieve a balance by maintaining their positive view of the self over time while adapting their behaviors to compensate for or prevent age-related losses” (p. 110). According to Whitbourne, it appears easier for older adults than midlife adults to compensate for the significant biological changes without being overwhelmed or demoralized than for midlife adults. Impediments to easy accommodations to the new self-image include negative attitudes of Western society on
aging, level of education, economic status, and interpretations of aging according to gender expectations (Whitbourne).

The biological influences of aging do not affect learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 2001). Nevertheless, brain cell loss is a concern for midlife adults. “Recent research suggests that people can slow the process of brain cell loss by staying intellectually active, continuing to problem-solve, and using challenging thought processes” (Vander Zanden, 2000, p. 473). Like young adults, midlife adults attend to diet and exercise more than in any other generation and are able to sustain good health despite nature’s involvement. In addition, midlife adults attend to healthy life styles, unlike many young adults, and add in a “healthy dose of humor about how life marches on” (Vander Zanden, 2000, p. 458). According to Vander Zanden’s (2000) research on midlife adult physical development, most adults perceive their health to be as good as in their early thirties.

Cognitive Development Models

“Cognitive development refers to the change in thinking patterns as one grows older” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 166). Many people associate thinking patterns with intelligence, “a concept whose meaning is assumed intuitively, although no one can define it in a generally acceptable manner” (Katchadourian, 1987, p. 85). For years, the measure of intelligence was assumed to be measured fairly accurately, and it was believed to be static. Recent findings show that intelligence is directly related to level of education, and that as one’s education increases, so does one’s ability to perform on measures of intelligence up through midlife. The problem with identifying changes in intelligences occurs because of failure to be able to find static, reliable test subjects for
longitudinal studies (Vander Zanden, 2000). Further, intelligence is now viewed as a
collection of cognitive abilities, including the capacity to learn, to remember, to reason.
to solve problems and to identify new ideas (Katchadourian, 1987). Researchers have
differentiated "fluid" intelligence as those aptitudes needed to process information
required for problem solving and learning in general. "Crystallized" intelligence is the
accumulation of life skill knowledge, imbedded in cultural contexts. Fluid and
crystallized intelligences change inversely over time (Katchadourian).

Studies of fluid intelligence show a steady decline in all age ranges, beginning with
puberty. However, crystallized intelligence gains dramatically from that same period,
with the biggest increases occurring after age 28 (Katchadourian, 1987). Many studies
show that as people age, they learn to compensate for any abilities they begin to lose and
make good use of those that remain intact (Katchadourian, 1987; Dixon, 1992; Horn &
Hofer, 1992). "If older adults are at a disadvantage with respect to [mental activity], they
have a tremendous advantage over the young with respect to [selectivity]. Having learned
how to think critically, you can better sort sense from nonsense, while the young must
test and try until they know their own minds" (Katchadourian, 1987, p. 89).

The work of Piaget (1950), grounded in stage theory, had been the basis of research
on cognitive development until the last quarter of the 20th century. His work identified
formal operational thinking as the highest attainable level of cognition, which was
achieved by late adolescence. According to this theory, cognitive development plateaued
until one began the mental deterioration that accompanies old age.

Recent theorists, however, have identified the post-formal operational level of
cognition in which adults develop the ability to think dialectically. Further, theorists have
begun to suggest that contextual factors play critical roles in the on-going development of adult thinking. These assertions are supportive of the work of Vygotsky (1978), who believed that schooled development was interconnected with social development. His theory of the Zone of Proximal Development states that teaching must occur before the learner is developmentally ready for the learning, thus creating a pathway for development to occur. The pathway consists of social and cultural experiences. thus the connection between social and cognitive learning is inseparable.

Cognitive processes are, in part, necessary in “becoming mature, responsible, and wise adults,” (Parks, 2000, p. 54), because these processes help adults develop belief systems that guide life choices. Cognitive processes leading toward the development of beliefs have been studied in terms of stages by such theorists as Gould (1978) and Erikson (1982) and by holistic theorists such as Parks (2000), Kegan (1994), and Labouvie-Vief (1984). The development of cognitive processes, resulting in changes in mental processes and belief systems, have significant implications for inducting both young adult and midlife career novices into professions.

Young Adults (ages 22 to 30)

Young, college-trained adults are often seen as mentally astute and able to attend to challenges that come their way. Parks (2000) discovered from extensive work with young adults that their cognitive development seemed not to be a smooth progression from tacit to explicit knowing. Her studies showed that college graduates did not enter their work places as the confident, knowledgeable students she had seen in her classes and in the research. Instead, they returned often for
counsel and guidance, seemingly tentative in their place in their world of work.

Further study led Parks to identify two new levels of development in young adults.

The first level of cognitive development Parks (2000) called Probing Commitment. During this time, young adults who are entering the work force from college are engaged in exploration of the many possible forms of truth in their work roles, relationships, and life styles. During this time, they test the world they are experiencing against their own former experiences to determine how well they think their beliefs will fit into their new employment, relationships, and life styles. They also see potential conflicts between the self they have identified up to this point and the social environment into which they are trying to fit. "We might say that living with the questions ['where, why, and with whom will I dwell, love, and work?'] has become a task unto itself and is often a primary characteristic of the young adult era" (p. 65).

This observation was also made explicit by Gould (1978) when he theorized that young adults in the age ranges of 22 to 28 are preoccupied with: 1) their occupational choices; 2) their new roles as spouses and parents or their inability to be either; and 3) with work, marriage, and family. Gould also described this age range as a period in which young adults desire to create their own identity by stepping out on their own. yet they also know that if they make mistakes, they can fall back on their parents for guidance. This finding supports Parks' (2000) discovery that confident students returned to her for further support and guidance after securing worthy jobs. Young adults in this phase have a sense of the ideal and want to be a part of creating it but do not feel they have the power to do so. This period of wariness, exploration, and tentativeness is the "warp and woof—the hallmark" (Parks, 2000, p. 66) of this phase.

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Through her research on young adult teachers' beginning experiences, Gold (1996) contends that psychological support is the critical factor in assisting new teachers to remain in the profession:

When teachers are personally insecure, lack confidence, or have a sense of not being in control of themselves or their environment, it is not likely that they can be successful at teaching regardless of how strong the instructional program has been. (p. 562)

The second phase that Parks (2000) added to the cognitive development of beliefs is called Tested Commitment. This phase begins for many people in their late twenties and ceases when there is no longer the need to explore. The testing is over when the young adult accepts his place in his chosen social order. Parks describes this phase as being centered, at peace, at home. Commitment to jobs, people, and relationships begins. Because of this continued growth in cognitive development for young adults, "meeting the psychological needs of teachers is an important and vital dimension of any professional preparation program" (Gold, 1996, p. 563).

*Midlife Adults (ages 40 to 65)*

Midlife adults experience a final phase of cognitive development called Convictional Commitment (Parks, 2000). During this phase, midlife adults develop a "deep conviction of truth, a quality of knowing that we recognize as wisdom" (p. 60). Parks describes wisdom as the engagement with complexity and mystery rather than an escape from it. She further states that one need not necessarily agree with it, but it does "arrest our attention and compel our respect":

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Such knowing does not put us off the way Authority-bound and dualistic knowing may. Rather, we seek it out, or sense that we are sought by it. Without abandoning the centered authority of the self and a disciplined fidelity to truth, this way of thinking represents a deepened capacity to hear the truth of another, or even many others. This form of knowing can embrace paradox. This convictional knowing is a still more mature way of holding and being held in the ongoing motion of meaning-making and faith. (p. 60)

"The concept of wisdom is often regarded as the hallmark of mature adult thinking" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 167). Kegan (1994) believes that this level of thinking does not occur in many adults until their forties or even fifties. While there are many different perspectives about what constitutes wisdom, it seems to be agreed that it: 1) requires the ability to engage in dialectical thinking; 2) is based on accrued experiences; and 3) requires that a person be able to reflect on perceived truths, to move away from absolute truths, and to make sound judgments (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). In this perspective, cognitive development is seen as embedded in contextual situations and necessarily a result of living through many experiences.

Theoretical Framework: Novice and Expert

Novice teachers come to teaching as both young adults and as midlife career changers. Midlife career changers are different developmentally than are young adults and enter their novice status in teaching through years of experiences in previous professions. Understanding how past experiences affect learning and problem solving in novice midlife adults can be studied through theories of novice and expert learning. This
section will revisit the theoretical framework of novice and expert discussed in Chapter 1. and will extend the discussion to research of selected studies in non-teaching professions and research of selected studies in the teaching profession.

*Theories of Expertise*

*Acquiring Expertise*

Novices in professions are often perceived as the new hires who are unfamiliar with the cultures and routines of an organization. This perception is exemplified by the inception of mentor programs in businesses during the past quarter of a century, and the fact that many of those mentor programs were designed to aid new hires in becoming situated in the organization (Hansman, 2001). A recent trend in education is to mentor novices toward a vision, most often toward educational standards (Odell, 1990). Thus, the idea of novice in education takes on the additional meaning of a person in need of continued preparation in prescribed pedagogy.

A goal of employers is to move novices to expert status and as quickly as possible. In education, a dilemma with the transition from novice to expert may rooted in the meaning of the word “expert.” Two meanings of the term are used in this study. One meaning pertains to procedural skills that can be repeated without error, without much thought, and with no adaptation or variation. This can be called crystallized expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) or routine expertise (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986).

A second meaning of expertise pertains to situations that are not routine, but require cognitive structures from which the expert draws information to solve new problems. Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993) call this fluid expertise, based on the concept of memory retrieval as discussed earlier in the section on Cognitive Development. Fluid expertise is
the result of building thinking structures that allow experts to recognize similar concepts from previous problem solving experiences, and allow them to retrieve and apply that information to new situations, thus building a new schema for the new problem structure (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

A similar theory of advanced expertise is called adaptive expertise (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). Adaptive experts “perform procedural skills efficiently, but also understand the meaning and the nature of their object” (p. 262-263), where a person at the routine level may only understand how, not why. As a person begins to wonder more about the experience, he begins to increase his level of expertise, thus building conceptual knowledge that “enables the performer to devise new procedures and make new predictions” (p. 263).

Germane to understanding the nature of expertise in teaching is a further discussion of the theories of Hatano & Inagaki (1986) that must be taken into account when listening to midlife career changers discuss their transition from expert to novice to expert. According to Hatano & Inagaki (1986), to develop beyond routinized expertise requires a desire to know more about the experience at hand. Thus, to become an adaptive expert requires that the performer be able to experiment with the object to gain more knowledge about it and to understand more fully what parameters surround it. However, experimentation will not happen if: 1) standardization of the object is required, thus causing the performer to simply maintain his status as a routine expert; 2) the performer is rewarded for status quo or the skill as it is defined; or 3) there is more value in prompt and efficient performance than on knowing and understanding.
How experts build knowledge schemas and, thus, solve problems is of particular interest to this study. Sternberg & Horvath (1995) identify three domains of expertise that can be helpful in listening to novice midlife career changers discuss how they approach new situations as teachers. The first domain of knowledge-building was introduced in Chapter 1 through the distinctions made in expert and novice characteristics (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Bransford, et al., 1999.) These researchers found that the behaviors of building knowledge and the results of the behaviors separate novices from experts. Novices approach problems with knowledge that is categorized by topics instead of by the structures of the problems. They rely on recipes and formulas rather than on similarities and differences between new problems and problems they have previously encountered. The reliance on formulas results in a quick attack of the problem, and the results often are not as thorough and sufficient as those of experts. Novices do not make connections among problems, but see them as isolated occurrences.

Sternberg & Horvath (1995) summarized their findings on knowledge-building for teachers:

The prototype expert teacher is knowledgeable. He or she has extensive, accessible knowledge that is organized for use in teaching. In addition to knowledge of subject matter and of teaching per se, the prototype expert has knowledge of the political and social context in which teaching occurs. This knowledge allows the prototype expert to adapt to practical constraints in the field of teaching—including the need to become recognized and supported as an expert teacher. (p. 12)
The final statement has significant implications for this study, especially with respect to retention of teachers. Teachers who leave teaching “are not equipped or required to think about almost all the factors that will impinge on them, shape them as persons and professionals, determine their self-esteem or self-worth, and stimulate or inhibit their creativity and intellectual growth” (Sarason, 1995, p. 115). Further, “The preparation of teachers is exclusively concerned with their responsibility to students, not with the responsibility of teachers to themselves or to their colleagues” (p. 114).

The second domain of expertise is efficiency (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). In this domain, crystalline expertise is performed “rapidly and with little or no cognitive effort” (p. 13) which allows the expert to devote more attention to problems requiring fluid expertise. Some studies show that experts deliberate longer in problem solving than do novices (Bransford, et al., 1999; Easton & Omerod, n.d.), leading one to believe that novices are more efficient. However, using the distinctions between crystalline or routine expertise and fluid or adaptive expertise provides the context for understanding the analysis and synthesis that are occurring in expert problem solving (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). “In particular, the prototype expert is planful and self-aware in approaching problems—he or she does not jump into solution attempts prematurely” (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995, p. 13).

The third domain of expertise is insight (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). “Experts don’t simply solve the problem at hand; they often redefine the problem and thereby reach ingenious and insightful solutions that somehow do not occur to others” p. 14). Three processes of gaining insight are identified by the authors: 1) selective encoding, 2) selective combination, and 3) selective comparison. In selective encoding, experts are
able to distinguish pieces of information that are significant from those that are not. Selective combination means that experts are able to recognize two or more seemingly unrelated pieces of information and combine them to draw a conclusion about a situation. In selective comparison, experts are able to recognize similarity in the structures of problems encountered in previous contexts, apply similar thinking to the new situation, and generate a creative solution for the new problem.

Insight may be similar to what Kegan (1994) calls wisdom, gained as a result of accumulated experience (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Midlife career changers have accumulated life experiences and may have been experts in their previous professions before becoming novices again in teaching. This study is concerned with how they make this transition. Thus, the unique characteristics of novices and experts are important to understand. The following descriptors do not take into account the age level or backgrounds of the populations.

**Characteristics of Novices**

Whether learning how an organization runs or learning how to extend professional practices, novices exhibit common behaviors and dispositions in their early experiences in their fields. To be a professional requires acquiring knowledge of the field during preparatory programs. Both novices and experts come to their professions with several forms of knowledge (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993): 1) procedural, 2) formal, 3) informal, 4) impressionistic, and 5) self-regulatory.

During their early professional experiences, novices are often bound to procedures learned in preparation programs. In particular, when confronted with problems, novices tend to use learned routines and face difficult dilemmas when the problem turns out to be
different from the memorized or practiced situation. In some situations, novices are likely not even to recognize what the problem is (Glickman, 2002; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995).

In situations where the problem is new but not recognizable, novices tend to assimilate the new information into an old schema, thus creating a best-fit of the knowledge even at the risk of making mistakes (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Bransford, et al., 1999). When novices realize that they are deficient in knowledge needed to solve unfamiliar problems, novices will turn to others for examples or models of how to solve the problem (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Daley, 1999).

Novices generally view problem solving as a tool to an end and not as a process to help them learn more about the situation at hand; thus, they are quick to jump to conclusions to solve the problem expeditiously (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). Also, due to their inability to understand a larger context for problems, novices use subjective judgments from their own limited experience and knowledge and are prone to provide simplistic interpretations of events. Novices see problems through very simple lenses, often mistaking rich problems for dull issues. They are more intrigued by issues that excite them, which often end up being issues tangential to the problem.

Novices are less likely to be able to notice meaningful patterns of information in problem situations at hand (Bransford, et al., 1999). Because they are new to the field, novices have not yet built mental schemas that allow them to conceptualize structures of problems and how to organize and recall them at critical moments. Novices are more likely to identify isolated features of problems and not see the interconnectedness of them. Novices are less able to approach an unrehearsed problem in more than one way. Problem solving for novices is perceived as memorizing, recalling, and manipulating
information to get answers (Bransford, et al.). Novices are less likely to discuss a problem in terms of the concepts underlying them, but more likely to focus on the learned model or strategy to apply in the situation.

*Characteristics of Experts*

Experts in any field have developed a bank of concepts about problem situations that allow them to identify new problems and compare them with the structures of existing problems (Bransford, et al., 1999; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). They are able to build a new mental structure to accommodate the new problem structure and use it in future instances. Experts view problem solving as a process that allows them to understand the complexities as well as the simplicities of situations. They understand that new and more elegant solutions are possible and desirable, and that there is no ceiling to solving problems.

Experts understand that in any problem there is probably more to be learned than is visible at first, and they assume all the information they have about the problem is important at the outset (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Bransford, et al., 1999). Further, they understand that problems that seem simple are usually deeper and more complex than they appear. They also recognize the need to look for multiple meanings of terms. To an expert, there are no “dull” problems, but rather problems that can have new ways of understanding them and solving them (Bereiter & Scardamalia, Sternberg & Horvath, 1995).

Experts are more able to recognize patterns and features of situations, and are able to link them to previous mental structures or to create new ones that accommodate the new features. "Expertise in a domain helps people develop a sensitivity to patterns of
meaningful information that is not available to novices” (Bransford, et al., 1999, p. 4).

They understand the interconnectivity of problems and realize that the contexts and circumstances surrounding the problem are critical to the solution.

Due to the mental network of problem structures, retrieving information to solve problems is both efficient and lengthy. Retrieval is efficient because of the expert’s ability to “chunk” information, yet it can be a lengthy process because experts take time to compare the new problem against existing problem structures, examine multiple solutions and options, and provide thorough descriptions of the solution (Bransford, et al., 1999). “Lacking a hierarchical, highly organized structure for the domain, novices cannot use this chunking strategy” (p. 4).

Metacognition is a critical characteristic of fluid and adaptive experts (Bransford, et al., 1999; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). “Beliefs about what it means to be an expert can affect the degree to which people explicitly search for what they don’t know and take steps to improve the situation” (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995, p. 16). Further, Sternberg & Horvath state that, “A model that assumes that experts know all the answers is very different from a model of the accomplished novice, who is proud of his or her achievements and yet also realizes that there is much more to learn” (p. 19).

The descriptions of expertise and the characteristics of novice and expert professionals provide a backdrop to understand more fully selected studies that compared behaviors of expert and novice professionals. The studies that follow are by no means exhaustive, but do provide a context for seeing the theories of novice and expert learning and problem solving in action. These studies provide a framework in which to examine
the transition from expert to novice to expert that midlife career changers will describe in this study.

Research on Professional Expertise in Practice

The numbers of people entering teaching at midlife are increasing (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000). This study examines the midlife adult career changer who had been an expert in a former profession and seeks to regain his expert status as a teacher, having experienced preparation programs and induction to teaching as a novice. Therefore, it is important to examine expert and novice learning in action for all professions before taking a closer look at expert and novice teaching in action. Understanding the characteristics of expertise in other professions can provide a point of reference to understand the phenomenon of making the transition from expert to novice to expert in teaching. Once again, the studies that follow do not delineate young adult novices and experts from midlife adult novices and experts.

Non-Teaching Professions

In a study of nurses in different stages of practice, novices were prone to seek answers for solving immediate problems through formal processes such as classes, seminars, and texts (Daley, 1999). As asserted by Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993), they looked to find solutions that “best fit” what they already knew from memorization and accumulating knowledge. In contrast, expert nurses applied a constructivist approach to learning, sought out colleagues and doctors to discuss the patient’s status, and differentiated and integrated their new knowledge with their experiences. Expert nurses tended to construct new knowledge schemas to accommodate new information. This is
compatible with the fluid and adaptive expert models of Bereiter & Scardamalia and Hatano & Inagaki (1983).

A further finding not mentioned in the expert-novice models is the feelings associated with learning. "Novice learning is framed by the feelings novices experience in the context of practice" (Daley, 1999, p.133). In particular, novices often expressed that their learning was affected by fear of making mistakes and the need for validation. In general, experts expressed a feeling of confidence in their learning. They also indicated regenerativity as their impetus for learning (Gould, 1978). "They felt a great responsibility to learn so that they could share information with colleagues, feeling a need to 'give something back to the profession by sharing what [they] know'" (Daley, 1999, p.142). Such feelings of responsibility motivated expert nurses to seek out the most current information on a variety of topics.

Eleven women who held executive status in a Fortune 500-type organization were interviewed to determine their perceptions of how they learned and developed in the corporate culture over time (Bierema, 1999). Based on an analysis of the interviews, three stages of learning were identified: Compliant Novices, Competence Seekers, and Change Agents.

The women described their learning during the Compliant Novice stage as occurring through company training, higher education, peers, authority figures, relationships, and mistakes. This "stage is characterized by the women devaluing their talents, doubting their skills, and attributing getting hired to sheer luck over ability. Many were unfocused about having a career and had no concrete plans" (Bierema, 1999, p.110).
When they advanced to the Competence Seekers stage, the women identified higher education, peers, mentors, informal conversations, mistakes, and risk-taking as their modes of learning. This stage is characterized by increased self-confidence in skills and adapting to the work demands. "Their motivation during this stage was fueled by an assumption that no one could argue against high competence when making promotion decisions" (Bierema, 1999, p.113).

As Change Agents, the women identified reflection, collaboration, and teaching as the modes of learning. During this stage, "the women reflected on self-development and competence, and paid less attention to the context of the work environment" (Bierema, 1999, p.114). Change Agents saw themselves as mentors and people who could influence the organization. Therefore, they became advocates for change and power.

Schools of business and industry in the United Kingdom use case analysis as a training tool in marketing and management. Easton & Ormerod (n.d.) conducted a study to identify the differences between experts and novices in this process. They described the expert participants as members of the marketing department at Lancaster University who had had extensive experience in teaching with the case analysis method. The novices were third-year marketing students. Participants analyzed several case studies. Protocols were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative methods. Some observations of the differences between novice and expert behaviors of case analysis are reported here.

Novices and experts spent essentially the same amount of time conducting their analyses, but the quality of the outcomes was significantly different. Novices tended to come to conclusions early in the analysis, sometimes after only one reading of the case,
and stayed firmly with their decisions. Experts tended to wait until toward the end of the analysis to reach conclusions, but most often reread and studied the case repeatedly. They were prone to change their opinions and in some cases never came to a conclusion at all. Novices were more concerned about the outcome than about the process; experts' dispositions were the opposite.

Novices' analyses "tended to be disappointingly shallow and constrained by the content and order of the case statement. Perhaps the most important general finding is that the final output of the analysis often seems to be a poor summary of the richness of the process that has gone before. This contrasted with expert analyses, which became more focused yet did not lose the richer issues generated early in the analysis" (Easton & Ormerod, n.d., p.2)

This study also examined differences in novice and expert analyses after the novices had been trained in case analysis. The results showed that "despite the apparent gains made by novices after training, the expert protocols were much richer and more compelling" (Easton & Ormerod, n.d., p. 3).

Teaching Profession

Glickman (2002) studied the professional development of teachers for over three decades and identified three levels of abstraction in teachers' development and three levels of commitment to solving the problems they face. At the "low" level of abstraction, teachers were confused about the problem, did not know what to do about it and wished to be shown how to solve it. "Moderate" level abstract thinkers could define the problem, could think of one or two possible responses to the problem, but had trouble thinking through a comprehensive plan. "High" level abstract thinkers could think of the
problem from many perspectives, could generate many alternative plans, and could choose a plan and think through each step.

Novice teachers enter the field with content knowledge, but lack pedagogical content knowledge (Bransford, et al., 1999; Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). Pedagogical content knowledge requires knowing the difficulties children face in learning, how different topics are taught differently, how to elicit students' prior knowledge of the subject to link it to new information, and how to assess student learning in different situations and for different purposes. Such pedagogical knowledge of content is difficult to add to a novice teacher's repertoire without substantive experience in the field.

Experienced teachers also have the same forms of knowledge as the novice teacher: 1) procedural, 2) formal, 3) informal, 4) impressionistic, and 5) self-regulatory (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). How they use their knowledge in problem solving situations distinguishes the expert from the novice, especially in the areas of fluid or adaptive expertise. Expert teachers are often understood to be people who can quickly put together a lesson plan, multitask launching the class period, and maintain order. To a novice, these activities appear to be routines and procedures. Yet when it is their turn to do it, they realize that much more background information is possessed by the expert teacher, even more so than by an experienced teacher who may still be operating at a crystallized or routine level of expertise.

Expert teachers not only possess a vast repertoire of content knowledge about their subject or domain, but they have pedagogical content knowledge. "Pedagogical content knowledge is an extremely important part of what teachers need to learn to be more effective" (Bransford, et al., 1995, p. 13).
Novices are more likely to observe the practice of teaching—the mechanics learned in preparation programs. They are more likely to see concepts as limited to their own learned knowledge, diminishing their ability to see connections among larger concepts. Thus, in situations where novices are asked to generalize, they are quick to come to conclusions without weighing new information against previous knowledge, for there are minimal mental schemas available to them at this time (Bransford, et al., 1999).

Expert teachers observe and interpret teaching episodes through generalizable concepts as opposed to the mechanics of teaching. “Their knowledge is organized around core concepts or ‘big ideas’ that guide their thinking about their domains” (Bransford, et al., 1999, p. 6). Experts are able to examine multiple pieces of information and develop elaborate understandings of the events and to pose alternative explanations for the events, substantiated with evidence.

DiGangi (1991) examined the differences in how expert and novice teachers made decisions about student behavior problems in the classroom (1991). Participants were identified as expert or novice prior to the study. Expertise was based on four criteria: 1) 10 or more years of teaching, 2) completion of at least a masters degree, 3) named as outstanding teacher by principal, and 4) selected as a mentor teacher by state public school system. Participants were given vignettes about problem behaviors in the classroom to read and address. Distinct differences were found in the two groups with regard to how they would handle the problems. Novices were concerned with solving the problem and failed to generate assumptions that could then be tested. They used no systematic procedures for thinking about and analyzing their decisions. Expert teachers conceptualized and defined the problem, used heuristics in the analysis, and used
systematic systems for understanding the situation. It is interesting to note that this study showed no significant differences between experts and novices when it came to making decisions about remedying the problems.

DiGangi (1991) recommended that teacher preparation programs pay more attention to providing students with methods used by seasoned teachers to assess and select intervention strategies. This is a noteworthy recommendation because DiGangi went on to state that there needs to be further attention to the definition of the term "expert." He states, "If we assume that 'expert teachers' are exceedingly good at what they do, we should extend the definition of expertise (years experience and supervisor nomination) to include an assessment of actual impact on student performance" (p. 23). This recommendation, perhaps, begins to recognize that the basis upon which the experts in this study were chosen may not be accurate, in light of definitions of fluid and adaptive expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Hatano & Inagaki, 1983).

Novice teachers, like novice nurses (Daley, 1999), often look for validation of their performance from administrators and supervisors (Richardson & Placier, 2002). If it cannot be found there, novices will seek validation from students. No data were found that delineated the need for validation in midlife novice teachers as compared to young adult novice teachers.

The three dimensions of environmental context, the situation of adult development, and the theoretical framework of expertise create the setting in which the phenomenon of transitioning between professions was studied. How these three dimensions were captured and explored is discussed in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to understand the phenomenon of how midlife adults transition between professions. Phenomenology was the methodology most suited to provide this insight and to answer the following overarching questions of the study:

1. How do midlife adults experience the transition through levels of expertise as they move from a previous profession to the profession of teaching?
2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?
3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

The Phenomenological Perspective

The firmament in the positivist sky twinkles with precision and rigor. However, the spaces between stars and those hidden by clouds recede and disappear. Phenomenology seeks to name those spaces, their relations to the stars and to us. (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 2)

Understanding the meaning of how midlife adults who change careers make the transition from expert to novice to expert in the context of recruitment, preparation, and retention could best be learned by listening to their stories and their descriptions of the
experience. Research provides a clearer understanding of the biopsychosocial
development of adults and can, therefore, situate the midlife adult's experiences in
relation to this development (Whitbourne, 2001). These experiences are the spaces that
lie between the stars of programs, processes, and procedures employed to solve attrition
problems and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, to truly
understand the experiences of the individual, the literature that guides our expectation for
the norm had to be suspended to clearly hear the meanings as told by the midlife career
changers.

The founding principal of the philosophy of phenomenology was based on epoche or
the ability of the researcher to suspend his own beliefs. The German mathematician
Edmund Husserl first developed the philosophy in the 1930s (Creswell, 1998; Stewart &
Mickunas, 1974; Tesch, 1990). The term derives from the Greek “phainomenon” which
means “appearance,” and “logos” which means “reasoned,” “word,” or “reasoned
inquiry.” Phenomenology, then, is the reasoned inquiry of an appearance (Stewart &
Mickunas, 1974, p.3). “Appearance is anything of which one is conscious” (p. 3). Husserl
believed that the existing movement—the study of all nature and philosophy through
empirical methods—did not give a true understanding of the causes of certain
phenomenon. The scientific process required grounding theories in accepted postulates.
“Phenomenology develops the mainsprings of old Greek philosophy, which was the
conviction that philosophy is the search for wisdom or true knowledge. ‘Philosophy
begins in wonder’ Plato observed, meaning that it is philosophy’s task to articulate the
questions arising out of the depths of the human spirit itself” (Stewart & Mickunas.
The emphasis of phenomenology is on the individual and on subjective experience in an effort to understand what the experience is like (Tesch, 1990; Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is not designed to generalize information or populations, but to find the essential pieces of the phenomenon that allow the lived experience to be understood more fully (Husserl, 1913/1967). The power of phenomenology is to explicate the lived experience of the people through careful question design and careful analysis of the information. Thus, the unique qualities that truly identify the phenomenon are revealed. These are what Husserl called the essences of the phenomenon.

"In order to gain access to others’ experience phenomenologists explore their own, but also collect intensive and exhaustive descriptions from their respondents" (Tesch, 1990, p. 68). The descriptions are then examined intensely for emerging themes. Themes may lead to finding patterns of what is common and what is unique about the experiences. The result is the “general structure” of the phenomenon (Tesch, 1990) or essence (Husserl, 1913/1967; Tesch, 1990; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974; Van Manen, 1990). Reflection occurs in this type of research, but it is informed largely by intuition or tacit knowledge. Barritt calls this “examining with a sense of wonder” (Tesch, 1990, p. 68). This reflection requires not only wonderment, but also searching deeply into the words of the individuals and self, becoming “awakened” to it, and “inspired” by it (p. 70).

These characteristics of phenomenology seemed most fitting to this study, for it is the space between the stars that needed to be examined in terms of its essence rather than its numeracy. The overarching questions in this study examined the essence of how midlife adults transitioned between professions, moving through levels of expertise during their
preparation and induction years in the teaching profession. This transition was studied in relation to the participants’ biopsychosocial development, and in the context of their preparation, induction, and induction to the profession of teaching. Further, this study sought to understand the qualities that midlife career changers brought to their new profession, and to learn how their transition, at their stage of development and experience, could inform designers of recruitment, preparation, and retention programs to improve quality and reduce attrition in the profession.

Procedures

Role of the Researcher

"[Phenomenological] research becomes an integrative, living form, where the researcher is being involved, committed, interested, concerned, and open to intuitive visions, feelings, sensings, that [go] beyond anything [one] could record or think about or know in a factual sense" (Tesch, 1990, p. 70). For this study, it was important for me to connect my own experiences of being a midlife adult, who made a life change, with the feelings, emotions, and experiences that the participants revealed to me in their stories. This connection created the necessary sense of “likeness” and “our” between the participant and me (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). At the same time, my experiences could not influence how I listened to my “peers” describe their transition experiences. All judgment about what was relevant to the study was postponed until the end of the study.

Creating “likeness” with the participants required developing an early sense of trust that included building rapport with my participants. Patton defined rapport as “a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. I care very much that that person is willing to
share with me" (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 84). My rapport with the participants was also aided through my insider status (Merriam, 1998), meaning that I shared common characteristics with the participants, such as being a secondary teacher and an intercareer changer, moving from the middle of the country to a new situation, and being a midlife adult. Building rapport began with our first conversation on the telephone, when I invited them to participate in the study. In that conversation, I described myself in terms of age bracket, my changes in geographic location and professional goals, and connected with them in terms of my background as a secondary teacher. Through humor about our age brackets and changes in our professional lives and through demonstrating a desire to understand their unique experiences in such transitions, I was able to establish a beginning level of openness for the face-to-face interviews.

While it was necessary to allow participants to talk almost exclusively, it was also necessary to continue the rapport throughout the interview. Thus, there were empathic responses and laughter along with probes for clarification and depth. My role was not one of distant reporter.

At the same time, it was important for me to have neutrality with respect to the content of the interview responses (Merriam, 1998). Thus, as an outsider, I was mindful that I had never worked in a profession other than education, that my induction to the profession was different from novice teachers today, and that being a career teacher carries with it a different set of epistemologies than those of career changers. The literature was used to design the interview questions and to guide the formation of probes but did not influence how the responses were interpreted until the within-case and across-case analyses are completed.
Participants

Participants were two teachers who had taught less than five years in the same large school district in a southern Nevada metropolitan area. A pilot of this study had been conducted the previous semester, with three elementary female teachers who also taught in the large southern Nevada school district as the participants. To extend my understanding of the phenomenon of transitioning between professions at midlife, this study focused on secondary male teachers. Because the intent of this study was to identify the unique lived experiences of midlife career changers, it was important that the participants be of the same gender and similar level of instruction so that any resulting differences of experiences could not be attributed to those factors.

For this study, participants were selected based on recommendations from peers as meeting the criteria for the study: male, had acquired a bachelor's degree in another profession in which they practiced, had acquired a master's degree in education, had taught for five years or less in secondary education in the district in which they were currently teaching. The current perceived success of the teachers was not relevant to the selection, nor was the perceived success of the participants in their former professions.

Permission to conduct the study was received from the university Center for Educational Research and Planning Board on March 1, 2002; from the university Social Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board on March 21, 2002; and from the participants' County School District Committee to Review Cooperative Research Requests on May 8, 2002. Following these approvals, the potential participants were contacted by telephone to discuss the nature of the study. Once they had agreed to be interviewed, the participants established their own place and time for the interview.
which was expected to last approximately one hour. Participants were given the Letter of Consent (see Appendix A) to read and sign, and were reminded, per the letter, that follow-up interviews and clarification sessions were necessary. When the participants understood and agreed to all conditions of the study, the interviews began.

For the purpose of this study, the first participant was called Ben. Ben came to my home to be interviewed on a week day afternoon during the summer interim. We were both under the impression that the interview would last under one hour. However, rich conversation led to three hours of tape-recorded information. The interview had concluded twice during the session, but the untaped conversations kept leading to more important ideas, so the recorder was turned back on twice before the interview was finally concluded. Thus, the level of trust between participant and researcher was high from the beginning, perhaps due to shared age ranges and shared concern for how career changers regain expertise after changing professions.

The second participant was called Mark. I went to Mark’s home to interview him on a week day morning during the summer interim. Mark and I had been classmates during our advanced degree studies the previous spring. We did not, however, recall this event when I asked him, via telephone, if he would be willing to participate in this study. When we greeted each other at the door, the first moments were spent becoming reacquainted and learning of Mark’s special gardening skills and meeting his dog. Due to our previous work not only as classmates but also as group partners in the graduate class, Mark and I had little trouble building a trusting relationship for the interview. Our similar ages and my long history as a middle grades mathematics teacher gave us common ground upon
which to quickly build a comfort zone for a candid conversation. As with Ben's
interview, Mark's interview lasted well past the predicted one hour.

Data Gathering Strategies

Phenomenology relies on the stories and descriptions of the experiences as told by the
participants. The stories and descriptors are studied and reduced to the essence of the
phenomenon. Therefore, the first step in the process was to develop a semi-structured
interview protocol so that each participant was asked basically the same questions (see
the complete interview in Appendix B). This format allowed the respondents to become
conversational. Specific probes were written ahead of time. An interview guide was used,
ensuring that the same questions and probes were asked with the same wording. The
guide was structured so that there was room for taking notes along the side, providing an
audit trail for anyone in the future who may become involved in a similar study
(Merriam, 1998).

The entire interview was audiotape recorded, excluding the participants' names, and
with the exception of the 45 to 60 minute period during Mark's interview when the
batteries had died. Hand-written notes were useful in filling in the gaps. The tape
recording was transcribed verbatim and coded for pauses and emphases on various
responses according to a coding scheme (Ochs, 1979).

Questions were designed to elicit the meanings of the transition from expert to novice
to expert as midlife adults, in the context of their preparation and induction to the
profession of teaching. In particular, questions were designed to enlighten understanding
of the overarching research questions (see Appendix A):
1. How do midlife adults experience the transition through levels of expertise as they move from a previous profession to the profession of teaching?

2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?

3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

Pre-selected questions from the Daley (2001) study, in which the learning processes of novice nurses were compared with expert nurses, were edited to apply to teachers and used in a pilot study of elementary women teachers. Select questions from the pilot study were used in this study to learn more about the learning processes of secondary male teachers. The final interview protocol appears in Appendix B.

Data Analysis Strategies

"Analysis begins as soon as the first data are collected, which may consist of no more than a single interview" (Tesch, 1990, p. 92-97). The heuristic for phenomenology becomes the researcher herself because it is a subjective process requiring many actions such as reflecting, exploring, sifting, analyzing, and conjecturing (Tesch, 1990). No one methodology for conducting a phenomenological study is recommended (Husserl, 1913/1967; Spiegelberg, 1965; Tesch, 1990; Van Manen, 1990; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974; Creswell, 1998). However, various researchers have suggested particular steps that can be followed for conducting a phenomenological study (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; LeCompte & Priessle, 1993; Tesch, 1990; Spiegelberg, 1965; Moustakas, 1994). The strategies used in this study were a synthesis of the steps and language used by these researchers.
Bracketing. This first important step in the research process required that I, as the researcher, had to clarify my preconceptions of the phenomena under study (Tesch. 1990; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974) and try to hold them at bay (Tesch). “Even so,” Tesch explained, “biases cannot be controlled completely” (p. 92). This is the foundational step of Husserl’s (1913/1967) methodology of phenomenology, yet even he was not able to adequately carry it out. In fact, in his later writings, he revealed that he suspended this part of his methodology in some of the studies that turned out to be among his best analyses (Spiegelberg, 1965). Spiegelberg positions this as one of the last steps in the procedures because it may be among the hardest to accomplish, thus it is not reasonable to begin the process with this difficult task.

My own stance was that, during the interview process, I attempted to probe more into comments that did not appear to be significant to the study at the time. I then had a record of these comments that I later examined for relevancy to the study. Thus, I attempted to have an attitude of bracketing from the beginning as well as a practice of inclusion of all comments. I was constantly aware of the influences of the literature and my own experiences on how I listened and what impromptu probes I made. It was true that at several points in the interviews I was tempted to shut off the recorder and censor “ramblings” that I thought had no bearing on the topic. These later turned out to be extremely revealing stories that influenced what I interpreted to be critical attributes of the transition experience.

Immersion. During the immersion process the researcher becomes deeply familiar with the data to achieve closeness with the data and a sense of the whole. I read and re-read the entire data set for each participant and listened to the tape recordings several
times for voice inflections, pace, and voids. According to Tesch (1990), even though it is desirable to conduct one study at a time, many phenomenologists will do across-case analyses (Merriam, 1998), comparing for commonalities between/among them, which was the goal of the analysis. I maintained the integrity of each case by immersing myself in the data for one participant at a time, writing the first draft of the within-case analysis, and then immersing myself in the second participant’s data. When both within-case analyses were drafted, I then examined the data as a whole. It was critical that all data were considered, “real or unreal or doubtful, as having equal rights, and investigate them without fear or favor” (Spiegelberg, 1965, p. 692). As was the case with the interview sessions, I wanted to speed through the tapes or ignore the transcriptions of sections for which I held preconceived attitudes. However, continual listening and reading allowed me to begin to see the wisdom that was being shared by these participants.

*Horizontalization.* In this third step, I looked at all the verbatim statements within a single case, both transcribed and audio, and examined them in the different contexts of time, space, the world, and relationships (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). This required attention to innuendo, things that were not said, off-hand comments, and physical gestures. All data were treated as equally important (Spiegelberg, 1965). Statements that were redundant or overlapping were eliminated. I listened not only for specific statements that seemed to either support or refute the literature, but also especially for those that brought voice to the lived experience in a unique way. The significant statements were then listed for further analysis.

*Meaning Units.* The listed statements were then grouped into “meaning units,” the fourth step in the analysis process, which took into account various frames of reference,
such as the participants’ point in their biopsychosocial developmental, which included their perceptions of themselves as teachers and their perceptions of themselves from their former professional image; and cues from their speech, such as voice inflections, hand gestures, and pace of speech.

The following is an example of how I determined meaning units from verbatim transcripts in two separate segments of an interview:

Segment 1: I don’t think it has to do with your educational preparation. I think it has to do with I’m a better teacher than they are and now why? I’m a better teacher than they are because I have the energy to do it, I have life experiences to bring forth in the classroom and they’re jealous of that. They’re jealous that I don’t need to teach to put the next meal on the table. They’re jealous of me. They have to teach.

After listening to this segment on the tape and reading and re-reading the transcript, I noted the following meaning of this passage in the margin of my transcript, “jealousies—reasons he is not respected by colleagues but is by students.” A few moments later, the participant stated, in response to a very positive letter he received from an incorrigible student:

Segment 2: The peers hate you. “What are you doing? You let them get away with murder?” “No. They don’t do it in my classroom. They don’t. They respect me too much.”

Upon continued examination of this segment, I gave the following meaning to this reaction, “peer discord.”
Thematization. The meaning units were then extracted into phrases or themes. This fifth step in the process allowed me to cluster and categorize the phrases to determine themes that were common within the case. Because the interview protocol was designed to elicit information about the participants' development, environment, and levels of expertise, these themes were easy to identify. However, the same interview questions designed to elicit specific information also revealed ancillary themes that had not been expected. Further, I was able to identify some of the participants' emotions of living the experiences.

Using the example provided in the previous step of analysis, I clustered these two meaning units of "jealousies" and "peer discord," along with several other similarly related meaning units. I eventually labeled this cluster as the theme of "relationships." Ultimately, six themes were identified, three of which were anticipated, due to the structure of the interview: 1) levels of creativity in the context of the experiences, 2) the participants' situation of biopsychosocial developmental, and 3) changes in levels of expertise between professions. The three "ancillary" themes were unexpected and had great impact on understanding the phenomenon of shifts in levels of expertise: 1) relationships, 2) change agent, and 3) novice culture.

Extracting meaning units and developing themes are laborious tasks, but they do provide insight to the phenomenon. Still, I found that these two steps in the analysis were fairly simple compared to what came next.

Descriptions. The sixth step in the analysis process is to describe the themes in terms of textual and structural meanings. The textual meanings describe what the lived experiences were. The structural meanings describe how the lived experiences occurred.
(Moustakas, 1994). This step in the process became very difficult because of its dynamic quality and interpretive nature. The interview was designed to answer three overarching questions, but the heart of the study was in learning how midlife professionals handled changing levels of expertise. Therefore, I kept asking myself, "What was the experience of changing levels of expertise and how was it experienced?" The "how" of the experiences seemed easier to identify than did the "what," which seemed to be the reverse order required to coming to an understanding of the essences of the experiences.

Certainly the themes that I identified had messages about the change experiences in terms of their biopsychosocial development, their environments, and their relationships, for example. While the themes helped me understand the answers to my three overarching questions, I gained a deeper understanding about the change in levels of expertise by focusing on just that theme and allowing the other five themes to penetrate that contemplation.

To continue with the example cited earlier, the structural description of the change in levels of expertise is that the participant experienced accusations from peers about his teaching methods and often felt blocked in his progress to move his team forward. Therefore, the textual description of what he experienced was grounded in the emotions of confrontation and jealousies from peers.

**Reporting.** The final step in the within-case analysis process is the reporting of the findings. The findings of the analyses were organized thematically according to: 1) the context of the experience in terms of creativity and structure, 2) how the participants were situated in their biopsychosocial developmental, and 3) the theoretical framework of changes in the participants' levels of expertise. These three themes supported the
structure of the study, as described in Chapter Two. Ancillary findings were reported in a fourth section, "Realizing Personal Professional Potential." Analytical points were exemplified by direct quotes from the participants. Representative data were reported in the form of tables and are found in the Appendices C-G.

**Across-case analysis.** The same techniques were used to examine the second participant’s responses. After analyzing both data sets, a comparison was made between the two sets to see where the commonalities existed and what was unique to each participant’s experiences. By doing this, I was able to see commonalities among male secondary teachers, elementary female teachers in the pilot study and other teaching and non-teaching professionals, as presented in the review of the literature. Most significantly, I was able to see some of the unique qualities that emerged from two secondary novice midlife career changers.

I also attempted to identify the essence of the experiences from an across-case analysis perspective, which led to identifying what might be common for these two participants. Making generalizations across populations is not the intent of phenomenology. However, several of the qualities that were unique to each participant as compared to teachers in general also revealed some "commonly unique" experiences that these men had as midlife career changers. It seemed appropriate to identify these in the final interpretation.

**Interpretation.** The final step in the analysis process is to interpret the findings of the phenomenon. The purpose of interpretation is to describe "aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 107). The transitional experience of midlife career changers is
described in Question #1 of Chapter Five through three fundamental lifeworld themes: 1) spatial, 2) temporal, and 3) relational. Interpreting the phenomenon through these themes revealed aspects of the phenomenon that were not as visible when examining the themes in relation to the three dimensions of the study: 1) the situation or biopsychosocial development of the participants, 2) the context or environments, and 3) the theoretical framework or levels of expertise. For example, when examining the context of the phenomenon, the findings were reported in terms of the creative and structured environments experienced by both participants in their current and former professions. The interpretation of the findings through the theme of spatiality allowed me to recognize that the spaces in which the participants lived their first and second careers gave them a very different feeling about professionalism. Examining the data through the theme of temporality brought an understanding of how past experiences in previous professions carried into the new one and projected a need for continued professionalism in teaching. The relational theme added an understanding of how natural it was for both men to understand teaching as a dynamic that included the entire school community rather than just a classroom full of students. These three themes of spatiality, temporality, and relationality provided new perspectives of the transitional experience and affected the implications for the profession.

*Evaluation of the Results*

The evaluation of the results of the study occurred at two points. The first was through member-checks (Merriam, 1998), wherein participants were asked at various points in the analysis for their clarification of any dubious points and/or for extensions of thoughts where necessary. Each participant had signed a Letter of Consent agreeing to
follow-up interviews and was willing and eager to participate in this important evaluative task. These member-checks enhanced internal validity of the study (Merriam, 1998). This task was extremely important to the validity due to the spontaneous nature of the interviews. The member checks provided participants an opportunity to refine what had been said in moments of passion. The changes that were made by each participant made it clear that their statements were said as they had intended. In some cases, the original statements were strengthened during the member check.

The second point of evaluation was self-monitoring for epoche. This was an important on-going process wherein I continually searched for my own biases about the responses and tried to keep the literature from leading the study. In this type of study, it was critical that the voices of the participants be heard first, and that any relationship to preconceived hypotheses or expectations drawn from the literature or my own experiences did not influence the study ahead of time, but rather that any resulting connections were made or refuted during the discussion phase of the study.

*Integrity of the Study*

The integrity of the study depended upon my integrity and in my ability to be current with the literature, to formulate meaningful questions, to be sensitive to the responses of the participants, and to continually search myself for honesty and lack of bias in reporting the results (Van Manen, 1990). It was essential that I approached the study from different angles, examining the phenomenon through content and voice, through what was said and what was not said, and through multiple domains of meaning. These multiple domains of meanings are examined further through the analysis and results in Chapter Four and the discussion in Chapter Five. There were many things said in these interviews that
contradicted what I had experienced or that raised questions about practices and beliefs that I had held firmly as a career educator. These are discussed in Chapter Five. Through many hours of hearing the voices and listening to what was said and through understanding the backgrounds and integrity of the participants themselves, their words began to make sense, and I developed a new understanding of what they experienced as professionals in transition. It is this “opening” and “changing” of my mind, as the researcher, that may be most important to the overall integrity of this study.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The goal of the study is to understand the phenomenon of transitioning between professions, specifically:

1. How do midlife adults experience the transition through levels of expertise as they move from a previous profession to the profession of teaching?
2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?
3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

To understand the phenomenon meant that the “space between the stars” (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) needed to become known. However, the first requirement was to find and describe the stars themselves. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to find and describe the stars.

To find the stars meant to find answers to the questions of the study. A semi-structured interview was conducted (see the interview questions in Appendix B). The findings are discussed in this chapter in three sections: 1) Within-Case Analysis of the first participant, Ben; 2) Within-Case Analysis of the second participant, Mark; and 3) Across-Case Analysis of Ben and Mark, compared simultaneously. A synthesis of the findings is reported in Appendix C.
The Within-Case Analysis for each participant is reported in the following themes: 1) the environmental context of the transition experiences, 2) how the participant was situated in his biopsychosocial developmental level evident at the time of this study, and 3) evidence of the participant’s levels of expertise experienced during the transition process. A fourth theme, Realizing Personal Professional Potential, describes the participant’s perceptions of himself as a change agent and his relationships with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Finally, a synthesis of the participant’s experience is described at both the textual and structural levels as is the essence of his experience, as understood at this point in time.

Within-Case Analysis: Ben

Contexts of the Experiences

The first dimension of the study concerns the contexts in which the participants experienced their first professions, their preparation to teach, and their novice years of teaching. The comparisons among these contexts provide insights to the phenomenon of the participants’ transition through levels of expertise. The reasons for leaving their first professions are briefly discussed.

First Profession

Description. Ben’s former professional field was medicine. He earned his baccalaureate degree in pre-med biology in 1974 and an advanced degree two years later in sports medicine. He earned an associate degree in X-Ray technology four years later. He was a surgeon’s assistant and x-ray technologist and co-owned a physical therapy sports medicine clinic, expanding it from one location to six during a 13-year period.
Ben's positions in the medical field required crystallized expertise or the ability to conduct routine procedures quickly without thought. Fluid expertise, the ability to recall and adapt stored mental problem solving structures to solve new problems and to understand why the procedures worked, also occurred.

Environment. During his first professional experiences, Ben was in environments that required fluid expertise and encouraged his problem solving abilities. These environments existed for him in his clinical position as a surgeon's assistant as well as in his role as co-owner and administrator of the clinic. Many of Ben's stories about his former work in the medical profession revealed an environment that required cooperation and collaboration among people of different specialties, working in concert to solve both routine and non-routine problems for the well-being of his patients. Ben became used to working with a team of professionals in both a structured and creative environment.

Reason for changing professions. Health care management had changed during the mid-1990s, and Ben's role changed from working with patients to working in marketing and sales. Although the salary was rewarding, the work itself was not. Earlier in his medical profession, Ben had worked with high school athletes and university athletic teams in the sports medicine clinic and enjoyed working with these groups. His connections with local district public school personnel led him to a position in a new medical magnet program in one of the area high schools.

The benefits of moving from medicine to teaching included the increased family time with his son and his wife, a registered school nurse. Ben's placement on the district salary schedule at MA plus five year's experience was acceptable to Ben; had this not been the case, he would have stayed in the field of medicine.
Preparation for Teaching

*Description.* Ben began taking education courses at the local university to obtain an advanced degree in education. He earned an Occupational Education Endorsement by taking additional content coursework beyond his previously-earned degrees, participating in field experiences, and completing the required state licensure coursework.

Field experiences were limited to observing and interacting with good models of teaching. Ben took additional courses in pedagogy and classroom management through the university's Continuing Education program.

*Environment.* The learning environment for achieving the advanced teaching degree was accommodating, yet structured. Coursework was designed to meet the objectives of the program, and the program itself was designed to help novices learn to deconstruct learning tasks to teach the concepts and skills. Ben frequently commented on this task analysis method and identified it as a major factor in transferring his knowledge of medicine to his high school students in meaningful ways. To complete the program, Ben engaged crystallized levels of intelligence to apply prescribed procedures to teaching contexts.

The Teaching Profession

*Description.* At the time of this study, Ben had completed his fourth year as an instructor in the medical magnet program, housed in a high school in a low socio-economic-status neighborhood. Approximately 20% of the students in the school were part of a magnet program. Although his freshmen through senior students elected to be in the medical magnet program, not all students were able to complete the requirements to
succeed. Ben's department consisted of five teachers in a school of approximately 125 teachers.

The students in Ben's school were not typical of the average high school students in the district. A high mix of racial diversity existed in his school. The preceding year, nine percent of the senior students did not pass the district proficiency exam, compared to four percent for the entire district. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers at Ben's school had been teaching for less than three years, compared to the district average of 32%. The percentage of credit-deficient students and dropout rates were higher in Ben's school than the average for the district.

Environment. Ben's teaching environment was structured, and administrators generally did not encourage creative approaches to improve teaching. From Ben's perspective, administrators' roles were "more of keeping things on track and putting out the fires that occur along the way. We don't see a lot of administrators coming in and saying, 'Let's develop something here.'"

While the curriculum was prescribed, and expectations for students were identified through district proficiency examinations, Ben's program allowed a greater degree of creativity. The magnet program was relatively new, and his main goal was to determine the most effective ways of teaching students the essential information, both skills and concepts, that students would need to succeed at their next level of education or employment. Ben contributed to his school's professional development sessions on technology and engaged in mutual sharing of knowledge about innovative teaching strategies with colleagues he judged to be effective teachers.
Biopsychosocial Development

The phenomenon of making the transition between professions includes understanding the situation of the participants’ physical and biological health, their psychological/cognitive functioning, and their social and emotional development. A component of emotional well-being is the effect of identity shift on the person in transition (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). These finding are also discussed.

Physical Development

No direct questions were asked of Ben about his physical health. However, it could be deduced from his comments that his physical health was at least adequate for the job. Ben frequently attended students’ extracurricular activities, was at school every day before and after the scheduled teacher arrival and departure times, and completed necessary homework for each day’s work. His energy level appeared to be at or above that required of the job. He made no complaints about his stamina nor did he express concerns that the demands of the job were beyond his ability to physically perform his duties.

Psychological/Cognitive Development

Ben’s cognitive/psychological development level was revealed throughout the interview through his examples of how he diagnosed what his students needed to learn his curriculum and how he explored and experimented to transfer that knowledge to the students’ level. He often referred to his need to have experience in order to be able to learn how to connect his level of expertise to students’ level of understanding. “All right, I’m the expert. What are those absolute things that they need to know? What level do we teach them, and what level do we go in and apply those issues so they can do--almost develop some experience?”
To answer these questions required the use of fluid intelligence and dialectical problem solving abilities. Ben described the differences he saw in himself as a midlife novice compared to what he may have been like as a young adult novice teacher. "My perspective on teaching and what the kids should know would be significantly different than what it is today." Ben credits the difference to his lived experiences with both people and content. His years of expertise in the medical profession allowed him to find the essence of the content area rather than rely on text-driven curricula.

Ben's cognitive level of development was revealed through his evaluativistic belief system, which he shared regularly with his students. "I tell my kids. 'Find that employer that will give you those rewards that you want, whether they're monetary or non-monetary, find that employer, and if you enjoy your job, go to work and be—God bless you.'" He also recognized that students had many different values, and that as their teacher he needed to connect to those and help point students toward success.

Social/Emotional Development

Ben easily adapted to his teaching environment due to his previous involvement with school personnel through his role in the sports clinic. As a novice teacher, he also had a mentor, about whose help he stated, "I think that was a great help in two respects. One, classroom management is an individualized thing, and [two] I learned a lot from my mentor, part of what works and doesn't work." Ben also used peers as models for improving his teaching. He readily acknowledged the skills and knowledge of his seasoned colleagues and readily availed himself of them.

During his earlier profession, Ben recognized the important role of approval in job satisfaction and gained an understanding of the place of administrative or supervisory
approval. He recognized that administrators did not grant approval either in medicine or education. "If I relied on administrators for reward to say, 'Hey, great job.' no." The approval Ben needed came from student feedback on self-initiated student evaluations and from informal compliments from students as well as from peers. Ben speculated that if he failed to receive approval from his students, then he would need to re-examine his program. It did not mean that he had chosen the wrong profession.

Ben was adequately established financially and in terms of his family life. Thus, unlike young adult novice teachers, Ben had few, if any, concerns in these areas that could detract from his ability to perform his job.

Identity or image. Ben's description of himself as a teacher began with a sigh and a pause. Then, "Oh, that's hard! [laugh] .... Um... you have to look at, how do .... The question you ask is, 'How do you describe success?' As a teacher, did you get people to gain success at something because of what you did? And hopefully some did."

To probe more deeply into any possible change in identity due to the transition experience, I asked Ben to tell me his identity in industry. He answered with a job title. I then asked him to define himself as a teacher. Ultimately, he came to this summary, "My rewards are, one, that I did [the job] well, and, two, that I think a lot of people were better off because they came in contact with me." It was the last statement that probably best captured Ben's identity. His stories revealed a very caring, passionate person who felt the same way about his students as he did his patients. This caring nature, manifested in building relationships, created the smooth transition between professions.
The Experience: Transitioning Through Levels of Expertise

The theoretical framework for the phenomenon of transitioning between professions is grounded in understanding the changes in levels of expertise experienced by each participant. Therefore, to gain a perspective of how the participants perceived this transition, the findings in this section are discussed as comparisons among their perceptions of their levels of expertise in their first professions, in their preparation programs, and during their novice years of teaching. The participants’ reactions to their induction years and their likelihood to remain in teaching are described as part of the transition experience in teaching.

First Profession

Ben’s level of expertise in his former profession of medicine required both crystallized and fluid/adaptive expertise. As an x-ray technician, much of his work required being able to perform routine work quickly and efficiently. At the same time, he had to be alert to the unknown and to search out possibilities that were not obvious—a task requiring a mental schema of previous problem situations. As a surgeon’s assistant, Ben had to be able to use both fluid and crystallized expertise to perform tasks required of him, as well as to react to each situation as though it were a unique case. “Technically I loved to work with [this surgeon] in surgery because we did a lot of technical stuff in surgery. But he relied on his staff to take care of his people—to take care of his patients. The patients learned more from us.”

As co-owner and administrator of a sports medicine clinic, Ben was responsible for performing routine work as well as exploring alternative solutions to problems that emerged from the changes in legislation. Both fluid and adaptive expertise were needed
in marketing situations to remain competitive and to seek additional market shares (referrals from physicians).

Perhaps the greatest evidence of Ben's levels of expertise came from his stories of helping clients in the clinic. His abilities to calm distressed patients, to help them with their injuries, and to assure them that they were receiving the best care possible required the ability to listen to patients as though their situations were unique, and to diagnose and treat each case both from his previous knowledge structures as well as to recognize that the problem could be more complex than what it appeared.

*Preparation for the Profession of Teaching*

Ben's expertise in his medical profession provided him with a foundation for studying the occupational education coursework for teaching licensure. However, Ben declared himself a novice in two areas: 1) knowing how to teach the content at a level that students would understand and 2) in being able to build relationships with 30 – 35 students at a time, especially to prevent discipline problems. Further, his field experience did not include student teaching, and so his ability to perform teaching responsibilities during his preparation years was at the novice level. Ben left his preparation program with concepts of what good teaching looked like, but had not been able to test his own abilities through personal performance. He had gained knowledge of how to perform task analyses on his curriculum, but to become an expert required regular experience with the procedure. As a student, Ben had applied both fluid and crystallized expertise in learning the course content, but his ability to perform the required duties of teaching upon leaving the preparation program was at a novice level.
Ben believed that teacher preparation programs could be improved by allowing students to observe both good and bad classrooms. Further, teachers need to know the relevance of what they are teaching and to bring relevancy to the students both in instruction and materials. Ben also recommended that teachers develop people skills, and that there should be measures for regular, on-going teacher accountability instead of relying on student proficiency examinations as evidence of effectiveness.

The Profession of Teaching

Because Ben left the preparation program as a novice, it was logical that he would begin his role as a teacher at the novice level. “The first year out, there were some frustrations. And then I learned probably the second year that there would always be some frustrations—don’t let it get to you. And then, how do you handle these?”

Ben gained classroom management skills over time with the aid of his mentors and teachers who he observed conducting effective classrooms. “I relied on [learning from other colleagues] heavily during my first years, not for the academics, ‘cause I was kinda brought in expected to know that, but to learn the teaching skills.” Although Ben gave credit to colleagues for teaching him about classroom management, he did not simply adopt other teachers’ styles. Ben had compassion for his patients in his former profession, and it was clear from his conversation in the interview that this part of his character would be at the core of his teaching persona. Therefore, it was critical to his success to learn how to manage a classroom with compassion for his students. “But I’ve learned those as I’ve gone on, and I have no confrontations with students.”

Ben’s second concern as a novice teacher was how to bring his expert knowledge to the level of his novice students. He was an expert in every aspect of sports medicine from
the playing field to the operating room and to physical therapy. He described his ongoing struggle to determine the correct content. “As an expert, I think an expert understands the essential parts—the essential academic components that a student has to know. Now, how do you as an expert simplify that and then connect all those together?” Through trial and error, Ben grew to realize that once he identified the essential components of the knowledge base, his next task was to bring the knowledge to the students through virtual lived experiences. His major focus for his older students was their ability to become problem solvers. “We need to teach our kids that when they graduate, whatever type of job they take, they are problem solvers. Our kids need to take that attitude that they will do problem solving.”

A strength that Ben brought to teaching from his previous profession was not only examples of how the medical profession worked, but also how the profession should not work, as evident by the mistakes made in the profession. I tell my kids, “This is not the day you want your physician to be absent from medical school!” This type of knowledge provided Ben with a unique strategy to motivate his students.

Ben exhibited the use of fluid expertise in his daily problem solving episodes at school. He was able to recognize patterns from previous situations, contextualize them in his existing problem solving structures that he used in medicine, and adapt an appropriate solution for the new situation. This was evident from his stories of communicating with parents, administrators, peers, and students. For example, administrators measured his success at solving potential student problems as the absence of parent complaints and referrals to the discipline office. “[The administrators] are happy, and I realize they are happy if [they say], ‘Guess what? You didn’t have to send any kids to the Dean’s office,”
and I don't have any parents yelling at me. Good job." This was a consequence of Ben's ability to prevent and solve problems on a case-by-case basis, with parent involvement.

When asked about how he used other specialists in the district or school to aid him in solving student-related problems, Ben said that he most often sought out assistance from colleagues on an informal basis. He rarely used specialists unless there was a formal documented case that required involving a specialist. Nor did Ben seek out instructional leadership from the administration. "[When] you come out of industry, you're really pretty much an expert in your field. Yes, you have to learn how to teach that, but your school administrators are not experts in your field. So academically a lot of your administrators won't be able to tell you what to do academically."

*Induction.* Ben suggested that a need for tailoring induction to meet the specific needs of the novice. These needs would be dependent upon the quality of teacher preparation experienced by the novice as well as the maturity of the individual. He was appreciative of and supportive of continuing the use of mentors for novices.

*Retention.* Ben believed he was likely to stay in teaching because of his tenacity, which he attributed to his prior knowledge of what teaching was and what it required. He had no illusions about the difficulty and complexity of the profession. In addition, Ben believed that, "When you have good people skills, when you work with people and they cooperate with you, then it becomes a very cooperative relationship and will be benefited."

Ben's realistic expectations and people skills were not the only factors necessary to keep him in the field. He referred to the research that identified job satisfaction as the most important feature in retaining employees. "Things like recognition, recognition by
peers, recognition by your superiors, recognition by those people who you serve or work with as customers . . . achievement,” were the necessary ingredients for Ben’s continued work as a teacher. If Ben eventually failed to receive recognition for his teaching, he said, “Then . . . I think if you’re passionate about what you do you need to look at restructure somewhere.” Ben did not say that the cause for lack of rewards was due to unappreciative students or that he must be in the wrong field. “If you’re excited about something and if you have a passion for it, there’s going to be some rewards. And those are the kids that come back and say, ‘Thank you.’ Those have to be ongoing rewards.”

Ben discussed teacher retention issues from his experiences in his current teaching position. He cited the mismatch between novices and their placements, the consequences of teachers who transfer to schools that are closer to their homes, and the problem of seniority issues taking precedence over novice teachers’ opportunities to teach courses for which they prepared. Ben’s greatest concern was the unfairness of expecting novice young adults to adjust to so many demands in their first three years of teaching, including: 1) attending to fulfilling their biopsychosocial needs, 2) being deficient in content and pedagogical knowledge, and 3) adjusting to the intensity of the duties of teaching.

*Realizing Personal Professional Potential*

The phenomenon of transitioning between professions was not limited to the three domains of environment, development, and expertise. Through extensive analysis of the data, it was apparent that both participants experienced transitions in their roles as change agents, and both participants experienced their transitions in relation to the environment and people around them.
Change Agent

Throughout the interview, Ben referred to areas in education that could be changed, including: 1) providing individualized instruction through technology; 2) creating school reform that required partnerships with parents, teachers, and administrators; and 3) instituting teacher accountability procedures that required regular goal setting, planning, assessing, and debriefing sessions as teams. (See Appendix D for a synthesis.) The most disturbing difference between industry and education, according to Ben’s experiences, was the failure to account for teacher ineffectiveness. Ben missed the accountability aspect the most.

Ben saw himself as a role model who could affect change at the grass roots level, but he did not see himself as one who affects administrative change from the top down. “But at the same time, personally, I am not going to let the school change me – I have no desire to sink to the lowest level and just get by.” Ben elucidated on the last comment by describing teachers who came to work at the last minute and left at the first minute, who never came to any of the students’ events, who had low expectations for students, and were, essentially, in a rut. “If you’re that upset with the job that you’re just going to do a marginal job, then let’s either raise the margins, let’s put some more accountability into it, or find another position.”

Relationships

Creating and maintaining working relationships with all people in the school culture was the cornerstone upon which Ben built his successful transition experience. (See Appendix E for a synthesis.) He supported students outside of the classroom as well as modeled for them that he believed they could be successful in their futures. He learned
their culture and showed his appreciation for the lives they were living, while trying to help them see new visions for their own futures. “If I point them in the right direction and they take up the extra information along the way then I am happy that they did, too.” He asked for and honored student evaluations of how well his courses met their needs. Their validation of his work was important to him. In these ways, Ben built relationships with his students that led to success for him and for them.

He regularly participated in and led professional development seminars with colleagues. He cared whether or not his colleagues learned from him. “Whether they came back and started using it and [said,] ‘Thank you for the tips; that helped me’,” is an important validation to Ben and indicates a strategy in building professional relationships with his colleagues.

Ben believed intensely about the role parents played in their child’s development and success in school. He called parents at night to enlist their support and to design strategies with them to help their children be successful in class. He was compassionate with the needs of parents and how difficult it was to raise children today and how the school needed to work with parents to help children succeed. Ben availed himself before and after school to help parents who were in distress about their children and to help students who had difficulty meeting school goals because of home situations.

Ben approached administrators who were willing to help and to problem solve means to improve the magnet program. Yet he realized that not all administrators were positioned to be creative problem solvers, nor did they desire to be instructional leaders. “Again, I realize that, due to the governmental structure, they’re involved in so many
issues, and I will let them do that job." Thus, Ben's relationship with administrators was predominantly one of being a non-problem to the system.

**Synthesis of the Experience**

Ben's experiences in changing levels of expertise from his former profession to the profession of teaching began with feelings of inadequacy in his ability to know what knowledge was essential for his students and how to transfer that knowledge to them (see Appendix G for a synthesis). To successfully achieve a fluid level of expertise in teaching, Ben engaged in constant reflection about his own former profession of medicine. During his reflections, he realized that his years of hands-on experience accounted for a significant portion of his expertise and that to transfer that to students was an unrealistic a goal. Therefore, he had to constantly seek out the essences of his own expertise to determine which pieces of it were essential for his students to understand. He then had to develop methods of simulating real experiences from medicine and apply them in a classroom setting.

To reach his teaching goal, the learning environment had to be highly productive, which it was not. Ben experienced frustration with the management portion of his teaching. Therefore, he sought counsel from colleagues and experienced their support and guidance to create a learning environment compatible with his own identity as a caring and compassionate, yet highly productive, professional. From his own experiences in building relationships with people, Ben applied a common understanding to his students—attending their extra curricular activities and supporting them outside the classroom. He also called upon parents to provide him with insight to redirect challenging
students. Thus, Ben was able to demonstrate to his students the desire for them to become successful people, which resulted in a productive learning environment.

Through critical reflection, problem solving, and experimentation and through modeling passion for the field and demonstrating concern for his students’ success. Ben was able to increase his level of expertise in transferring critical components of his knowledge to students. The feeling of encouragement from students, parents, and his teaching team affirmed his choices and methods, moving Ben toward a higher level of expertise in pedagogical content knowledge and classroom management. At no time did Ben ever experience the feeling that he had made a mistake in his choice to become a teacher.

*The Essence of the Experience*

Ben’s passion for his work came from years of experience in working in many different medical situations as a team member with people of various specialties, and with the goal of improving the well being of his patients. He brought that passion to his new profession. Ben understood the power of building relationships with his students, parents, and colleagues; he learned how to combine well-chosen content with lived experience to create meaningful learning for his students; and he modeled passion for learning and worked to inspire his students to gain passion and satisfaction with their lives. The essence of Ben’s experience was his process of gaining pedagogical content knowledge while instilling passion for knowledge in his students.
First Profession

Description. Mark began his professional career in the military by being drafted to serve in Vietnam. He joined the United States Marines and, ultimately, served 26 years in the military. As a Marine, he flew F-4’s while based in Hawaii, did two Pacific tours on the U.S.S. Enterprise, was a Top Gun pilot, and after 13 years in the Marines, received an inter-service transfer to the United States Air Force to fly F-111’s. After flying the F-111 for three years and participating in the Libyan Raid, Mark served a three-year tour as a staff officer on the Tactical Air Command Staff. Not liking all the paperwork, Mark volunteered to become the Air Force Liaison Officer to in the 82nd Airborne Division and commanded 72 men into Desert Storm. He served the entire 10 months of the mission, which involved taking over 400 prisoners, and won the Bronze Star for action in Iraq.

Mark was stationed at an Air Force base in the Southwest United States, where he flew F-16’s as an aggressor pilot, was Chief of Protocol, and promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He attended Air War College and was transferred to the Pentagon where he worked under the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. During this duty he was the Task Force Director for the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force.

Environment. By the nature of the work, the environment in Mark’s first profession as a fighter pilot was necessarily one of a high degree of structure. Those engaged in combat and those leading men and women into combat must follow well-defined, well-articulated, and well-rehearsed procedures. Although this environment was grounded in structure, it also required and encouraged creative problem solving abilities from its
leaders during unexpected changes in combat situations. Mark explained, “Flying a combat aircraft or leading human beings into combat with their lives in my hands forced you to think on your feet and make quick, correct, life saving decisions. You have to be creative to exist and keep people and yourself alive.” Later, when he became Chief of Protocol and when he served under the Chief of Staff of the Air Force at the Pentagon. Mark’s work was conducted in a very structured environment.

Reason for changing professions. After 26 years in the military, Mark’s marriage ended, leaving him with two children to raise on his own. He moved to the Southwest with his children and applied for and was accepted into the city’s Metro Police Force. While waiting for a date to begin the Academy, Mark’s neighbor, a school principal invited him to accept a long-term substitute teaching position in her school. He accepted the position without realizing that the school served exclusively Special Education students, ages six to 22, with mental handicaps ranging from “moderate” to “severe and profound.” Mark admitted coming into the position with many mistaken stereotypes of these children, and throughout the next two-and-a-half years of substitute teaching in that school and around the entire district, “I fell in love with that population.”

The Police Academy did offer him a position at $48,000 to work full days and nights, Thursdays – Sundays. These hours were not conducive to raising his children as a single parent. As Mark recalled, “everybody’s told me that I ought to be a teacher. I’ve always had a way of communicating with kids and they listen to me.” However, he said with some wistfulness, “When the cops drive by, my heart would love to do that.” Nevertheless, he followed that with, “I love kids, and I love to teach. I’ve always wanted
to be a teacher, and when it came right down to cutting the grass—a cop or a teacher?—I think I can have more impact as a teacher. And that’s why I decided to go that route.”

Preparation for Teaching

Description. Mark’s baccalaureate degree was in Political Science: his first advanced degree was in Human Resource Management, earned during his years in the military. He earned a second master’s degree in education in the local university graduate teacher preparation program. This degree required 34 hours of education courses, field experience, and advanced courses in social sciences. He completed his degree in three years, all the while raising two children and substituting around the district. He fulfilled his practicum and student teaching requirements in the school in which he was later hired.

Environment. Mark’s preparation for teaching also took place in a fairly structured environment. Most of the professors predetermined the content of the coursework. In one exception, the professor personalized the course to fit students’ needs by encouraging the students to think creatively about solving problems they encountered in their own schools. The student teaching experience was conducted in the same school in which he was teaching at the time of the interview. According to Mark’s comments, this environment was not particularly creative. Mark’s special area courses were also structured to meet pre-established outcomes through prescribed procedures. Thus, the basic environments in which Mark completed his teacher preparation were fairly structured.
The Teaching Profession

Description. At the time of this study, Mark had just completed his third year of teaching. The school, an upper middle class, predominantly white middle school, housed grades six through eight, with academic class sizes average 35 students per teacher. Only 12% of the students received free and/or reduced meals. According to the 2000-2001 school Accountability Report, the number 1 goal for the academic year was to enhance instruction in the core content areas to increase performance on standardized tests. The school had received national recognition twice for its high caliber programs. Mark taught eighth grade geography is his first year at the school. Most recently he taught U. S. History on one of the four seventh grade academic teams, consisting of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts.

Environment. The school in which Mark teaches now appears also to be fairly structured. This is validated through statements such as, "They don't want different teachers," and "Those of us who try to be daring and try to do things a little different? They—the administration AND the static teachers—DON'T like it." Mark believed that younger, enthusiastic teachers became "stuck in the school system and beat down so long that they don't care anymore. The administration wants you — they want all teachers to fit in one mold. And the kids hate that mold!"

At the team level, however, the environment seemed to be more creative, depending upon the make-up of the team that year. During his first year, Mark's team seemed to be more traditional and unaccepting of some of his activities. The most recent team was almost all "on the bandwagon" with him and with his methods for motivating students. They implemented activities designed to meet the needs of the students. They engaged in
social outings together, and the students on their team enjoyed off-campus adventures as both learning events and rewards. His team encouraged each other and other faculty to explore new ways of motivating students to learn.

One reason for the structured environment in Mark's school was the state-mandated curriculum. Mark perceived this to be very restrictive and impossible to implement in the nine-month time frame. He used his lived experiences to adjust the curriculum. “So I’m gonna teach these kids what I want them to know. And it’s gonna be U.S. History, but it’s gonna be life, too, because that’s my job and I’m professional.” Thus, Mark had decided to build a fluid, adaptive environment in which he decided how to meet his students' needs, despite and in addition to, the prescribed curriculum.

Biopsychosocial Development

Physical Development

Having retired from active military duty only five years previously, Mark ran three miles a day and worked out at a fitness club. Through his stories of his teaching experiences, including his frequent attendance at extracurricular school events and the physical energy that he put into conducting his classes, it was clear that he had the stamina to perform the duties required of him. He had not missed a day of teaching in all three years for any health-related issues.

Psychological/Cognitive Development

Mark set the tone for his classes by telling them that he is “The World’s Smartest Human Being.” While it revealed his high expectations for student learning and set a tone for humor in his classes, Mark's self-imposed label also put a cognitive expectation on himself that had to be engaged in every classroom every day. Mark’s mental acuity
appeared to be commensurate with the norm of midlife adults. “It’s harder, I find, to learn stuff now than when I was 20. Age forces you to have to concentrate a little bit more to grasp things—I have always grasped [factual information] pretty quickly but remembering things now is more difficult.”

Knowledge that related to his own life was easier for him to remember because it could be applied to some point in his life. “These things that they talk about you understand better as an older person because you can relate them to life experiences. Younger teachers don’t have years of life to base their learning on. I have to work a little bit harder, but some things are easier.”

Mark chose his curriculum as a consequence of dialectical thinking, based on a belief system developed throughout his lifetime of experiences. “I think teachers have a responsibility to the nation and to the school district and to themselves to make the kids grow and learn and become responsible citizens. That’s my age group.” To that end. Mark’s beliefs about what it means to teach were clear. How Mark met this goal resided in his own lived experience more than in district curriculum.

Social/Emotional Development

The social/emotional status of Mark appeared to be healthy. He quickly adapted to a less-than-desirable situation in his school when he was told that his team would be teaching in portable classrooms, removed from the rest of the faculty and school facility. While waiting for portable classrooms to be placed on the football field for his team, he became a “roaming” teacher, moving from classroom to classroom during the day, starting with Homeroom in the cafeteria. He quickly availed himself of a grocery store shopping cart and adorned it with empty cans and a tennis shoe to simulate a homeless
person and had fun with the students as he dubbed himself a “homeless teacher.” “That very first year, you weren’t in the teachers’ lounge every day and you weren’t getting to know the faculty as well because you were an outcast. Instead, I got to know the students. I called the trailers our homeless shelters and we were proud to be the ‘Homeless Team’.” This concept was humorous because of the high socioeconomic status of the school population, making “homelessness” improbable.

Although the physical distance between his team and the rest of the faculty that first year diminished his chances to build relationships with other teachers, he had since bonded well with his new seventh grade team through in-school and out-of-school team activities. Mark also attended student extra curricular events daily and built relationships with parents of his students and with school staff. It was not unusual for Mark to end his day by helping secretaries answer telephones.

Mark made some comparisons about himself as a midlife adult novice teacher with what it might have been like had he begun teaching as a young adult. “Older people have a stability that is noticed in the classroom,” because they don’t have to deal with the issues young teachers face, including trying to become established in relationships, becoming financially independent, and trying to learn the routines for becoming professionals. As a midlife career changer, Mark commented. “We’re not trying to impress anybody except the kids. I can give 100% toward the kids, whereas a younger person has that other baggage attached to them, which makes them a different teacher. Not necessarily a bad teacher, but a different teacher than those of us from other careers.” Mark attributed part of the difference between young adults and mid-career changers to
the fact that mid-career changers have faced many more crises. "so I think your demeanor in your classroom is calmer."

On occasions when administrators or colleagues challenged his teaching methods, Mark found validation for his methods in the continued support from students and parents, which came in significant numbers. During this interview, Mark produced several letters of support from students. An example of the closing of one note read, "So thank you again and don't expect me to forget what a wise and wonderful person you are for becoming a teacher." Mark did not rely on administrators or outside faculty members for validation of his teaching.

Identity or image. Mark used many words to describe himself, including "unorthodox," a "loose cannon," a "role model," the "Mayor" of the school, and a "risk taker." In some ways, Mark's image appeared to grow out of his military background. He told his team the first day, "I'm going to be the best teacher you ever have seen. My kids are coming out of my class and they're going to be juiced up and ready to learn, and I dare you to be as good as I am. I challenge you."

Students saw Mark as a person they could come and talk to about serious issues they faced. "The kids just trust me." Perhaps that trust came from Mark's inner core. "If there's one thing I can say helps you in the classroom, it's showing the kids that you love them and that you care about them. That would be two things—love and care. I guess they both go hand in hand."

Mark felt that he was fulfilling his image as a teacher, but he did not feel that his potential was being realized within his school community. Mark believed that the administration did not take advantage of his wisdom or of the wisdom of any of the older
teachers in the building. The administration did know about his background, but they did not seem to avail themselves of his skills and knowledge. He believed this to be true for most of the second career teachers at his school.

Mark showed the letter of a girl who had been rather difficult for most faculty members to teach:

Thank you for not only being one of the best teachers, but also someone who understands me. You make learning fun and exciting. Surprisingly I myself learned a lot from your class. You showed us that school can be fun as long as we work hard and you always pushed us to do that. I guess I’m just really grateful you’re around, and showed us that not all teachers are mean and gave us hope. I wish all your students could appreciate what you’re doing for them like you did for me. Thank you. Signed

The comments in the letter provide insight about student perceptions of Mark’s expectations and relationships with his students and about how close he was to realizing his identity of “being the best teacher.”

*The Experience: Transitioning Through Levels of Expertise*

*First Profession*

As a leader of men in combat, Mark exhibited a crystallized level of expertise because it was mandatory that routines were memorized and executed automatically with precision every time. As a leader, it was necessary for Mark to understand the nature of every situation and to know not only how to solve problems routinely, but also why various actions created certain reactions. This required fluid expertise as well as adaptive expertise, even though the environment for combat was not one that could be compared
to an experimental laboratory where trial and error was encouraged. In life-threatening situations, Mark’s superiors encouraged thinking creatively to solve the problem.

During his years as Chief of Protocol and during his service to the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Mark’s work required him to not only follow existing procedures, but also to attend to situations that were unique. Again, Mark’s life experiences and his growth in fluid intelligence placed his level of expertise at solving these problems at the fluid level. Even though he was not in a military culture of experimentation. Mark needed to understand the complexities of military protocol to carry out his work assignments. Therefore, he exhibited adaptive expertise in these roles as well.

*Preparation for the Profession of Teaching*

The teacher preparation program Mark attended was fairly structured, while specific classes provided more room for exploration and personalization. The tasks Mark needed to successfully perform to complete the program required both crystallized and fluid intelligence.

Mark’s experiences in his content-area courses in geography and U.S. History were motivational experiences for him and allowed him to connect his previous professional expertise in the military to the new content. Despite the fact that the courses themselves were delivered in a structured environment, Mark called upon both novice and crystallized intelligences to succeed.

Mark’s background as a successful military leader, his role as a single parent, his energetic involvement in school activities, as well as his dedication to a full teaching schedule, were all benchmarks for his ability to achieve during his graduate school experiences. However, he faced a barrier to achieving his teaching license when he failed
the comprehensive examination. He described his feelings with the words “intimidated,” “humiliated,” and “like I was a failure—that I goofed up the comprehensive exam. I’m the best teacher that can’t even pass a stupid comprehensive exam. I had to eat a little crow.” Mark did meet with his professors and prove, through oral examination, that he was able to meet the objectives of the examination.

Mark recommended that preparation programs include substitute teaching as a realistic way to learn classroom management techniques. He also cited his role as a parent as one that provided him with insights for managing teenagers. Mark compared his military training with what he believed teacher preparation should emulate. “Both flying and combat are fluid, changing arenas—you have to be creative to exist and keep people and yourself alive.” Mark believed that military training was perfect for preparing new teachers to operate in very restrictive environments.

*The Profession of Teaching*

Mark did not come into teaching knowing the curriculum, but he used his own lived experiences and his research about student needs to drive his content decisions. He used many devices to teach the material and to aid students in recalling it, such as mnemonics, emotional attachment, relevance, and kinesthetic engagement. “We all stand up and march around the room screaming, ‘Emancipation Proclamation.’ They got it. Once they start, they’ll never forget that.” These strategies were learned in methods classes and through his experiences as a substitute teacher.

Mark was operating at a fluid level of expertise with respect to his content and pedagogical choices. As a result of this blend of content and pedagogy, Mark achieved success in motivating his students to learn. He had many written testimonials from
students, praising him for how he helped them learn. These testimonials came from students of all levels.

How this third-year midlife adult handled conflicts with administrators and colleagues was a consequence of his past experiences. “Coming from a different career I know what’s right and wrong, and I know what sword to stand on and what sword to fall on and how far you can push that because this is a system much like the military where you have a hierarchy that you have to follow and a hierarchy that’s resistant to challenge.” Mark did experience an unpleasant situation as a novice teacher, despite his ability to discern problems from non-problems.

During his first year of teaching, an incident arose between Mark and a colleague regarding his choice of an activity for his classes and the resulting communication tactics between the colleague and the administration. As a novice teacher, this situation was upsetting to Mark on several levels: 1) his team member failed to communicate with him first, 2) he was humiliated in front of his peers at that faculty social event, where he was trying to become established, because the teammate chose that setting to resolve the issue, and 3) his administrator and team member appeared to distrust his ability to make appropriate curriculum decisions. “I probably would [handle the situation differently next time]. I realize now that, as off the wall as I am, there are still boundaries that you have to cover yourself—you have to cover your butt at all times.” Mark told other stories that illustrated continued distrust and lack of communication, despite his status as an experienced teacher.

*Induction.* As a new teacher coming from another profession, Mark’s induction to teaching was less than satisfying. He equated induction with district orientation. The
orientation consisted of a large banquet, hosted by the local teachers' union, and was
designed to provide survival information to young adult novices and to recruit teachers to
the union. "I think people like myself should be treated a little different. Maybe not more
respected," but it should be conducted with the older, seasoned teacher in mind as well.

Mark discussed induction at the school level. He had no mentors when he began
teaching. "There's not a real new teacher indoctrination at the school level. The school, I
think, thinks it's being done somewhere else; it's not. The school thinks it's being done in
your student teaching; it's not. Nor is it being done in the practicum." Even more
frustrating to Mark was the induction of the young adult novice who, according to Mark,
are simply escorted to their rooms, given their materials, and told to be ready to teach on
Monday. "And the new kids [teachers] that are showing up there are way intimidated, and
they're searching for somebody to simply help them."

Retention. With respect to retention in the profession, Mark said that he would stay where
he was as long as it was fun. When it was no longer fun, which he predicted to be soon in the
middle school, he would go to a high school or quit the profession, despite the fact that his
current school was ranked among the top six in the nation for middle schools and was made up
of high-achieving and talented students, was a high SES school, and had supportive families.
He stated that the relationships between teachers and administrators were very strained and
upsetting to many of the teachers.

Realizing Personal Professional Potential

Change Agent

Mark believed he had the ability to create change in his school and that "the school
could be run a lot smarter." (See Appendix D for a synthesis.) He did not see that
happening because, “[Administrators] really want you to dummy up and just do traditional [teaching].”

Mark was a change agent in his own classroom and among his colleagues. Mark credited his position of change agent with being in a position of having “nothing to lose.” He cited his position in life as an important quality that allowed him to be more daring and to take risks. He speculated that academic teams were less likely to make changes in their teams because “they don’t have a mover and a shaker on the team. Change is the enemy of the school system, and it’s sad that it’s like that.”

Mark’s team also encouraged each other toward being change agents for the school. An example of acting as a change agent was told in the story of how Mark refused to report female students for inappropriate dress. Male teachers now express their concern about female student attire to the women teachers, who then report the infraction.

**Relationships**

As the seasoned teacher, Mark developed good relationships with his teammates. (See Appendix E for a synthesis.) His original eighth grade team was disbanded his second year because of low enrollment. During the year prior to the study, there were three new teachers on his seventh grade team. Through a personally-designed mentoring program, Mark “provided the leadership to make this the most-requested team by parents for the following school year.” These relationships were the source of his professional learning and sharing. Most often, Mark’s learning was filtered through his own experience. Mark wrote several of his teaching materials, and he offered to share these with anyone who would like to use them. He felt secure enough in his teaching methods that he did not feel a need to ask for help in this area, but he was willing to ask other colleagues about
students who had problems with which he was unfamiliar. Mark used specialists to help
him with students on rare occasions and only with two trusted specialists, despite the fact
that these specialists were not assigned to his team.

Mark also modeled respect for families, showing support to parents as well as
students. He regularly attended extra curricular events and went to many parents during
the games to give enthusiastic support for their children’s efforts, despite the fact that his
own children were playing on nearby fields. “A lot of teachers don’t like to do that. And
the kids would do anything for me . . . the majority of them.”

As a result of giving parents respect, support, and caring, Mark received a lot of
support from parents, including principals who had children in his classes. At the same
time, Mark perceived this support as the impetus for peer jealousies. “We are the most
sought after team at the school this year! Every parent wants their kids on our team!”
Mark had been told by the administrators to tell his students to have their parents quit
requesting Mark’s team for their children.

While some administrators wanted Mark to be the teacher of their children, there
were those who, according to Mark, “don’t trust that I’m a professional. They don’t trust
that I have the kids’ best interest at heart. and sometimes they try to second-guess you on
most issues that you do.”

*Synthesis of the Experience*

Mark’s levels of expertise throughout his transition between professions varied
according to events that challenged his image as a professional (see Appendix G for a
synthesis). Mark’s experience of failure in the teacher preparation program created a
feeling of humiliation because he had been a highly-trained and capable professional in
his former field and he had been a successful substitute teacher. Yet he failed to meet the program requirements, which would give him a license to do what he had already been doing. He regained his feeling of being a professional by meeting with the professors and taking an oral examination to demonstrate his knowledge.

Mark also experienced accusations of using unorthodox methods of teaching and of selecting inappropriate activities for his students. Mark felt he was accused of not being a professional and, consequently, did not believe he was being treated professionally. When colleagues and administrators confronted Mark about his teaching methods and choices of activities, he met with the people involved to resolve the issues.

Throughout his novice years, Mark created an environment of esprit de corps in his team and in his classroom. He used his lived experiences from his former profession to make curriculum choices and to determine pedagogical strategies. He then challenged his teammates to be as good a teacher as he was. Through challenge and humor, Mark increased the camaraderie of the teachers and increased the likelihood for a motivational learning environment for students on their team.

Mark also enhanced his own teaching environment by supporting parents at extracurricular activities. By building supportive relationships with parents and students and by creating a positive and productive learning environment in his classroom and on his team, Mark experienced validation for his teaching decisions.

Essence of the Experience

The essence of Mark's experiences in moving from one profession to another was to maintain his professional status in a traditional school culture and avoid the transitional novice status. This was also evident in his experience in the teacher preparation program.
Mark wanted to continue to be an expert, despite his novice level of demonstrating some of the teacher preparation program objectives.

Across-Case Analysis

The findings for each participant have provided a clearer understanding of what each man experienced during his change in professions. To better understand the phenomenon of the transitional experience as a whole, comparisons were made between the participants and their experiences in the form of an Across-Case Analysis. These are discussed in three sections: 1) general similarities and differences in the participants and their experiences, 2) textual and structural differences in the experiences, and 3) unique qualities of the participants. The tables in Appendices C. D. E. F. and G provide a synthesis of the comparisons.

Discussion of Selected Similarities and Differences in the Experiences

This section provides a brief discussion of some noteworthy similarities and differences between the participants and their experiences. Responses to all the interview questions are found in Appendix C. “Synthesis of Interview Responses.”

Similarities

Ben and Mark were approximately the same age at the time of this study and were physically fit, emotionally and socially grounded, and had been previously employed in professions that required the use of crystallized and fluid intelligences. Both men were leaders in their previous professions and were required to use crystallized and fluid expertise and apply them in crisis situations, some of which were a matter of life and
death. In both professions, accountability for excellent performance was required. After approximately 25 years of service, both men felt a need to leave their first professions.

Both men chose teaching because of their natural abilities to relate to teenage students and their desire to inculcate learned values about being successful in life. They each had a deep regard for their students and regularly supported the students by: 1) attending students' extra curricular activities, 2) conducting discussions with their students about values important for success in life, and 3) modeling the virtue that was at their core.

Both men received job satisfaction through the encouraging comments from students and parents.

Both teachers filtered curriculum decisions through their own lived experiences, and they chose pedagogical strategies to motivate students to learn, based on their knowledge of how students acquire and process information. Relationships with team members and department faculty were important to the success of their programs and to their students. Neither man saw himself as a change agent in his school, despite the fact that each had instigated change at his level (see Appendix D for a comparison).

Even though the makeup of each school was decidedly different, the observations and assessments both men made of their school cultures were quite similar (see Appendix F for the list of similarities). Each man expressed dissatisfaction with the overall quality of teaching, especially from many of the seasoned teachers. They found the following characteristics to be discouraging: 1) the small number of teachers who attended students' extracurricular events, 2) teachers who seemed to be out of touch with student needs, and 3) teachers who did not appear to invest in the students in any way. Further, there was mutual dissatisfaction with the failure of the system to monitor and correct
ineffective teaching. Administrative practices and attitudes were blamed for lack of changes in school culture and school practices. Neither man believed that the administration was willing to recognize and utilize the expertise each man brought to education from his previous profession.

Both men believed that their ability to learn at the concept level was stronger than in their earlier years, due, in part, to the number of experiences they had had. They both found value in their content area teacher preparation courses, but found the education courses to be too theoretical and unrelated to actual teaching. Nevertheless, they saw the process as necessary for gaining the license to teach.

Both men equated “induction” with “orientation” and believed that the process for bringing midlife career teachers into the profession should be tailored to meet their needs, which were much different from the young adult novice teachers. Their orientation was described as ineffective for them and for midlife career changers in general.

Both men were dismayed that young adult novice teachers were treated poorly. They cited weak induction practices and unfair expectations placed upon novices, despite the administration’s clear understanding that young adult novices were disadvantaged with respect to content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of the school culture and demands.

Differences

Ben’s first profession was built upon nurturing and compassion and took place in an environment of both structure and creativity, while Mark’s profession was built upon extreme discipline and control and took place in a predominantly structured environment. Ben’s profession required crystallized, fluid, and adaptive expertise; Mark’s profession
required the engagement of crystallized expertise, but, as a leader, Mark was also
required to apply fluid and adaptive expertise in non-routine situations.

Ben relied on his previous successful experience in working with teenagers and
young adults to guide him in his decision to teach. Mark’s decision to teach came from
encouragement from friends and a talent for relating to adolescents and teenagers. Ben
was financially able to accept a teaching position because he was given credit for five
years of experience and the advanced degree status; the teaching salary was not a factor
in Mark’s decision to teach due to his financial security from his years of military service.

Ben’s goal as a teacher was to help students become problem solvers, for his students
to learn the concepts behind the knowledge, and to model passion for learning and
working. He measured his success through his students’ success on the job and in their
lives. Mark’s goal as a teacher was to teach his students essential knowledge and lessons
from life, to teach his students respectful behavior, and to model respect for them. He
measured his success by the number of written and oral comments from students and
parents and by the numbers of times he was selected by his administration to discuss or
model teaching for outside visitors. Ben’s image of himself as a teacher was that his
students would be better off for being in contact with him; Mark’s image of himself as a
teacher was to be the best teacher his students had ever had.

Because of the nature of the course and the advanced level of the students, Ben
focused curriculum and pedagogy decisions on bringing his students to a fluid level of
knowledge, teaching concepts and problem solving. Thus, gaining expertise as a teacher
meant that Ben focused on moving himself from an expert in content knowledge and a
novice in pedagogical knowledge, to an expert in pedagogical content knowledge. Mark
focused his curriculum on the important facts that students need to know to be productive citizens, based in part on his own lived experiences. His pedagogical strategies were, therefore, geared toward motivating students to learn, memorize, and recall information in a stimulating environment. Mark called his methodology “unorthodox,” resulting in several conflicts from peers and administrators. Thus, gaining expertise as a teacher meant that Mark focused on maintaining his status as a professional.

Productive and positive relationships with students, parents, peers, and administrators were the heart of Ben’s transition between medicine and teaching (see Appendix E for a synthesis). He was a collaborative department member and encouraged understanding and compassion among his students. Relationships were also a major component of Mark’s success in teaching, especially with students and parents (see Appendix E). Mark supported parents and, as a result, gained their support as a teacher. While his relationships with his teaching team were also positive, this was not always the case with other teachers and administrators. When faced with issues of distrust, Mark sought justice and had little patience for those who expressed jealousies for his team’s success. He did not discuss collaborative problem solving as a means to resolve conflict.

Ben perceived his school administrators to be effective with respect to “putting out fires,” which Ben recognized as a main duty in schools. (See Appendix F for a list of concerns.) At the same time, Ben spoke from his background in industry when he said that school administrators were not experts in the content fields as are administrators in industry, and, therefore, could not be co-problem solvers nor could they create environments that rewarded the development of adaptive expertise in teachers. Ben missed the accountability system used in industry and suggested that it may be a reason
why ineffective teaching continued. Mark’s concerns about administration focused on actions administrators took to thwart creativity in their schools, including hiring practices. Additionally, Mark was discouraged with the school climate generated by poor administrative communication.

The teacher preparation experiences showed some significant differences for the two men. Ben’s program offered limited field experience, which he found to be insufficient for preparing him to teach. His coursework focused on meeting certification requirements and on providing theories of classroom management and curriculum analysis techniques, which he found useful. When he left his preparation program, Ben was concerned about his deficient pedagogical knowledge and the management of 35 students in a class.

Mark’s teacher preparation program did include practicum and student teaching experiences, and his background included two-and-a-half years of substitute teaching. His content coursework was stimulating, but his educational coursework was perceived to be predominantly theoretical and difficult to learn because of its “irrelevance” to what he needed to know to teach today’s students. Nevertheless, Mark felt prepared to begin teaching, mainly because of his former professional experiences and his substitute teaching experiences.

Discussion of the Textual and Structural Experiences:

Similarities and Differences

The participants in this study were quite similar people. Perhaps as a result of their previous professions, both men wanted to know what the job was and how success was to be measured. Both men wanted the freedom to creatively approach how they achieved the objectives of the job. Neither man had tolerance for ineffective colleagues or leadership.
Both men had high standards of achievement for themselves and for their students, and they expected the same from their peers and supervisors. Both men had a deep core of caring and compassion for pre-teens and teenagers, and they believed in their students' abilities to learn and achieve. Both men had the same hidden curriculum: to teach students important lessons to carry them through their lives. Both men had an overarching agenda that they each modeled daily: passion; respect.

The experiences themselves (textual) and how each man faced the experiences (structural) are the major differences in this study. (See Appendix G for a synthesis of the textual and structural descriptions of the experiences.) Ben's transitional experience was located predominantly in his classroom. He was able to identify and diagnose his problems with classroom management and pedagogy and could access his previous problem solving schema to begin exploring solutions to his problems. He ultimately created a learning environment that matched his character and promoted the objectives for his students, which was to gain a fluid level of expertise with the concepts of medicine. Ben's challenges and triumphs were nested in his own ability to reflect on what caused him to be an expert in his former profession and then simulate those experiences with his students. His strength was his expertise in content knowledge and skills; his weakness was that he entered teaching with a limited repertoire of pedagogical strategies. His metamorphosis from novice to expert became his acquisition of insight to pedagogical content knowledge, gained through reflection and experimentation.

Mark's transitional experience was located across the entire school culture. Mark's high energy level and his confidence in his abilities to teach were not typical attributes of novice teachers. His strategies for motivating his students and his team were found to be
outside the accepted protocol, or in Mark’s words, “unorthodox.” His support of parents
at extra curricular events and the assistance and caring he gave to support staff were atypical behaviors for novice teachers. His direct methods for dealing with confrontations
did not follow the rules of etiquette. Mark was not willing to accept being a crystallized expert in the traditional school culture. He wished to creatively meet the needs of his students by applying his lived experiences to the district curriculum. This fluid, adaptive level of expertise conflicted with the structured school environment and the traditional nature of the school’s culture. Therefore, Mark’s transitional experiences were a collection of actions and reactions in an attempt to maintain his status as a professional.

*Unique Qualities*

In addition to the similarities and differences experienced by each participant are serendipitous findings that revealed unique qualities in each person. These findings were uncovered by hearing each participant’s voice, by listening for what was not said, and by watching for visual signs of how the phenomenon was experienced.

*Ben*

Ben’s background in business was quite apparent in the language he used to discuss his experiences in becoming an expert teacher. Terms such as “justify achievement,” “value of accounts,” “stock,” “shareholders,” and “restructure” were sprinkled throughout the interview. Most often, these terms applied to situations where he discussed accountability for learning and teacher effectiveness. Ben’s background in a field that required compassion for patients may have influenced his overarching goals for students: acquiring passion.
Ben answered nearly all the interview questions from a global, holistic perspective. His speech was often fast-paced and then slow and deliberate on points that he wanted to emphasize. He often had so many ideas in his head at once that it was difficult for him to finish a sentence. He spoke passionately about being passionate about teaching and learning. His speech was peppered with quotes, going into and out of mock conversations with students, parents, teachers, and administrators. These frequent quotes illustrated Ben’s teaching style as a storyteller, providing the settings of lived experiences for his messages.

The combination of the business language and the passionate delivery of his stories brought out an interesting blend of person—one who was accountable to the system while being a nurturer of spirits. He exhibited strong signs of caring deeply about the minds and hearts of his students, and he struggled daily with finding the most effective teaching methods to create content expertise in his students. Yet he was adamant that education was remiss in allowing waste to occur. He described methods for bringing teachers into account for their actions, and he outlined procedures for increasing the productivity of students. In neither plan did Ben dispense with his core value of passion for learning. Quality, productivity, and passion were integrated qualities.

As a physician’s assistant, Ben measured his success by noting the clients he helped each day. This spirit carried into his teaching role, but with an added dimension. As a teacher, Ben measured his success by being aware of the number of students who claimed that his teaching helped them or who could show evidence of being successful people as a consequence of something that they learned from Ben. Throughout the interview, Ben identified himself and his achievements through his students. It was difficult to elicit
direct answers when the subject was about him. As a midlife career changer, Ben’s experiences appeared to be totally centered on improving students’ knowledge and quality of life.

Mark

Mark’s military background appeared to influence his language as he described his teaching experiences. His use of phrases such as “know which sword to stand on and what sword to fall on,” “chain of command,” “get out of line,” “split-second decision,” and “went to war against” added the color of his background to the discussions. His military background may have influenced his overarching goal for students: having respect.

At the beginning of the interview, Mark was fairly professional in his choice of words, but as the interview progressed, he became more relaxed in his phrases. His rate of speech and his hand gestures showed passion for his ideas. During the member check phase of the analysis, Mark said of his own speech, “I guess I was trying to get soooooo much info to you that I was having one of those random flows of conscientiousness and sometimes not fitting all the pieces together. If we did this again, I would slow down, take a couple days and get my thoughts better organized. I hate how I start something, stop half way through to cite an example, and not finish the first thought.” Such rehearsed responses might have created more cohesive thoughts, but one cannot rehearse passion, and that is what was evident in his voice and in his speech patterns.

Mark’s leadership in the military required a high level of confidence in his abilities to perform at an expert level in every mission and task. This confidence carried over into his preparation to teach as well as into his beginning years of teaching. He did not assume
the role of a novice, despite having to learn some lessons through unpleasant experiences.

His attitude toward failure was that it was unjust, and he confronted the injustices personally instead of ignoring them. “I am NOT a rebel without a cause. I get upset that the administration doesn’t appreciate success in the classroom! My kids are learning! Somewhere we have lost sight of that goal!

The voice that Mark brought to understanding this experience was one of frustration and passion. As a successful professional, Mark wanted to generate excitement for learning in his classroom. Perhaps what was unique about Mark was that he truly had nothing to lose, and so he did “go to war” against a culture that purposefully put him in a role he refused to accept—being a novice, even if for a short while.

Through the analysis of these data, the stars themselves have been identified. The phenomenon of transitioning through levels of expertise is the space between the stars that becomes visible through the interpretation of the findings.
CHAPTER 5

REVIEW, INTERPRETATION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings reported in Chapter Four can be thought of as descriptions of the stars in the phenomenological sky. To understand the phenomenon means that the descriptions must be interpreted to find that “space between the stars” (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992). Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to interpret the findings of the study in relationship to the literature and to the lived experiences of the participants and this researcher.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is a review of the study, which includes the impetus, framework, methodology, and a synthesis of the findings.

The second section is an interpretation of the findings for the phenomenon of transitioning between careers, at this moment in time, in relation to the three overarching questions posed by the study. The interpretation is made through the themes of: 1) spatiality, 2) temporality, and 3) relationality. Implications of the findings that make visible the qualities of mid-career changers and that inform the practices of recruitment, preparation, and retention are discussed.

The third section of the chapter identifies limitations of the study, and the fourth section addresses recommendations for further research. In the concluding remarks, I summarize the needs of the mid-career changers in this study and reflect on my personal experience of conducting this study as a midlife adult in transition.
Review of the Study

As a midlife adult pursing a doctorate in a university far removed from my roots, I experienced a variety of adjustments and changes in my perceptions of myself as a professional and especially with respect to my changes in levels of expertise as an educator and scholar. Throughout my doctoral studies, I became curious about how other professionals in my age group experienced their transitions when changing from previous professions to teaching. Two perspectives guided my interests: 1) the ever-increasing rate of professionals who leave their fields (Henke & Zahn, 2001) and 2) the increasing numbers of mid-life career changers entering teaching (Brougham & Rollefson, 2000). These points suggested the phenomenon of transitioning through levels of expertise had the potential to provide insight to developers of teacher preparation programs and to designers of local school induction and retention programs. Equally important, these insights would benefit those of us who are in a transition period and are uncertain of what constitutes a “normal” experience. Three over-arching questions were posed:

1. How do midlife adults experience the transition from expert status in one profession to novices and experts in a new profession?
2. What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?
3. What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults?

To understand the phenomenon of transitioning through levels of expertise first required understanding the characteristics of novices and experts during problem solving situations. A review of the literature across fields of study revealed my own attributes as
a problem solver and I realized how different these abilities are now compared to when I began teaching in my twenties. The studies also amplified the differences that can occur between midlife adults who enter a field alongside young adults whose abilities to tap into fluid expertise to identify and solve problems are diminished simply because of a lack of natural development.

Understanding the transition experience also required understanding the development of the people engaged in the phenomenon. This meant I had to situate midlife career changers physically, socially/emotionally, and psychologically/cognitively. I discovered that midlife development researchers of the past two decades are re-examining the development of adults and are recognizing important differences between young adults, ages 22 to 30, and midlife adults, ages 40 to 65. The differences in cognitive development (Lachman, 2002), juxtaposed with the differences in novice and expert behaviors, created a need for a study open to questions regarding novice midlife adult recruitment, preparation to teach, and retention in the profession.

To make sense of the midlife adult’s transition experiences required conversations with professionals who had left their fields to become teachers. A semi-structured interview protocol was designed and conducted individually with two midlife male secondary school teachers who had been teaching less than five years and in the same school district. Both men had held responsible, leadership positions in their former professions. The data from the interviews were analyzed repeatedly through different lenses, searching for what was said, how it was said, and what was not said. During this process, member checks with the participants were conducted through phone calls and email correspondence. The analyses resulted in the findings reported in Chapter Four.
These findings can be considered to be the stars in the phenomenological sky. They shine the light on the three dimensions of the study (development, environment, and expertise) and on the emergent theme of Realizing Personal Professional Potential (relationships and roles as change agents). A synthesis of the major findings follows.

Both participants in this study were as vibrant and well-grounded in all three levels of biopsychosocial development as described in the literature (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Gould, 1978; Erikson, 1978; Levinson, 1982; Katchadourian, 1987; Whitbourne, 2001; Kegan, 1994; Parks, 2000). They exhibited high energy levels, enthusiasm for teaching, and fluid and adaptive levels of expertise (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1993; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986) with which they consistently solved complex problems (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Their ability to identify problems was at the high level (Glickman, 2002), and their approaches to solving problems matched those of expert nurses (Daley, 1999). Both participants found it easy to describe their identities in terms of their former professions, but it was more difficult to define themselves as teachers (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Both men had an overarching goal for students: one was passion, and the other was respect.

Both participants had previously experienced environments where creativity and fluid and adaptive problem solving were necessary (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). In their new professions, both participants were discouraged by leadership that stifled the need for creative problem solving and seemed to dissuade teachers from seeking alternative routes to solving problems for students.

Both participants were successful professionals in fields that required adaptive expertise, and they became teachers in situations that did not support or encourage these
same levels of problem solving (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Bransford, et al., 1999).

Thus, both participants struggled with their transitions from their previous professions to their roles as students in their preparation programs and as beginning teachers. The essence of this struggle for one participant was his need to gain pedagogical expertise, a characteristic of novice teachers (Bransford, et al., 1999). The essence of the other participant’s struggle was to maintain his perceived status as a professional throughout his preparation and novice years.

To realize their personal professional potential, both participants recognized the power of building positive relationships with students and parents. Both men claimed that the support and encouragement from students and parents were the reasons they would remain in teaching in light of the current school culture. Both men appreciated positive support from colleagues and administrators, but neither man felt significant validation from either group.

Both participants saw themselves as change agents at the classroom level but not as change agents in the school as a whole. Neither man was willing to be changed by the system, which each perceived to be stagnant and destructive to students. Both men lamented the lack of teacher accountability and the unsupportive, sometimes destructive, behaviors of administrators.

The phenomenon of transitioning between these stars became visible through the interpretation of the findings. In the following section, I interpret the findings in relation to the three overarching questions of the study and provide implications for preparation programs and schools. The essence of the transition experience as whole, reflected against the three overarching questions, is described.
Interpretation and Implications of the Findings in Relation to the Three Overarching Questions

*Question 1: Experiencing the Phenomenon*

How do midlife adults experience the transition from expert status in one profession to novices and expert status in a new profession?

The essence of the transition experience was different for each man. For Ben, the experience was his process for learning the pedagogy and classroom management skills necessary to transfer, as much as possible and feasible, his expertise in his content area to his students. His overarching goal was to bring passion for learning and for work to his students. For Mark, the experience was his struggle to maintain his perceived status as a professional. His overarching goal was to inculcate respect for selves, community, and the country into his students. See Appendix G for details of the experiences in the changes in expert status, and see Appendices D through F for summaries of the transition experiences.

Shared characteristics that captured the essence of the experience as a whole also existed. Rather than reiterate the findings in Chapter Four by interpreting the findings through the context of environment, the situation of development, and the theoretical framework of expertise, I chose to interpret these findings in relation to three "existentials" or fundamental lifeworld themes: 1) lived space or spatiality, 2) lived time or temporality, and 3) lived human relation or relationality or communality (Husserl, 1913/1967; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). By doing so, I was able to identify a new dimension of understanding the phenomenon that transcended analytical review.
Spatiality

The lived space of human experience is that which gives feeling to our experiences and invites us to become one with that space (Van Manen, 1990). Ben and Mark lived their first professions in a variety of spaces that required both creative and structured problem solving. Their work and their identities were attached to both the people they were serving or leading and the places in which the tasks were performed. Ben developed his fluid and adaptive levels of expertise in his former profession in examination rooms, operating rooms, corridors, X-ray rooms, athletic fields, waiting rooms, and offices. Ben became a part of these spaces and performed his duties at both a routine and adaptive level of expertise. His sense of professionalism was attached to this environment.

Likewise, Mark’s expertise was developed in cockpits, tents, barracks, offices, military bases, and the Pentagon, and they were experienced on domestic and foreign soil. Mark also became a part of these spaces and understood himself in the context of his work and his workspaces. He felt his professionalism in that global space.

As teachers, the workspaces for both men shrunk to classrooms. Rather than be restricted by one location to meet their goals of teaching, both men immediately saw the campus as their work space, including athletic fields, field trips off campus, and virtual trips to parents’ homes via phone calls. Still, the majority of their work took place in one central location—the classroom. Both men had to make a shift in identity from professionals whose spaces were the tools of work to those who were encapsulated by four walls. The phenomenon of change in space led to both men’s goal to bring their previous multiple-spaced environments into the one-room space and re-create their lived experiences with the students. In essence, the challenge became to take their lived
experiences and transfer them to students so that they imagined they, too, were living the experiences outside of the classroom walls. In this way, both men used adaptive expertise to transfer experiences to their students.

The change in size of workspaces from the previous to the current profession is only one aspect of the transition experience. I interpreted from the interviews that Ben and Mark also experienced a change in feelings about their professionalism in these spaces. As medical and military professionals, they felt professional because of the culture contained within those spaces: the expectations, the services they provided, the demands, the sharing, the leadership, the accountability, the camaraderie, and the levels of expertise at which they were functioning. The teaching spaces did not carry forth the same feelings of professionalism. The men were essentially isolated at various phases of their induction years, were not a part of a team that had goals and accountability measures in place, and were in charge of seeking out their own niche in the schools. The cultures of the schools did not exude professionalism, but rather isolationism, frustration, and a sense that the focus was on fulfilling pre-determined curricula and procedures. Both men had to create their own teaching teams and their own sense of professionalism.

This shift in lived spaces is one that had not been apparent to me at the outset of the study. My own professional choices are embedded in the type of space in which I work and the freedoms that are afforded me by those spaces. My joy of being a student is deeply connected to the spatial freedom in which I claim my identity. The change from medicine or military service to teaching had a more restrictive quality to it than did my change from teacher to student. The transitional experiences that are necessary for professionals to become teachers in restrictive environments, both physically and in terms
of lack of opportunities for creativity may play a significant role in mid-career changers' decisions to remain in teaching.

It is also interesting to me that both participants immediately claimed the entire campus and community as part of their teaching space. This is not as common in young adult novice teachers, or in many cases, seasoned teachers. Most often, teachers talk in terms of their classrooms instead of in terms of the entire school community. Ownership seems to lie inside their four walls rather than around the school lives of their students and colleagues. Midlife teachers may perceive their classrooms as the only spaces wherein they have a sense of creativity, ownership, control, and a place where they can solve problems. This may also explain why Mark's relationships with other teachers became strained—he may have been perceived as a person who was trying to expand these qualities outside the classroom when others' have not been able to successfully do so.

Temporality

Our lived time can be experienced both subjectively and objectively. The subjective experiences are those related to the sense of time, such as the perception that time goes quickly or slowly. The objective time connects past, present, and future and allows our identities to shift and change with each progression. Objective time affects our language, gestures, and mannerisms (Van Manen, 1990). To be a midlife adult automatically includes the element of objective time. Time is necessary to gain the cognitive maturity that allows one to think multi-dimensionally, to develop an evaluativistic belief system, to experience the lessons that life has to offer, and to reflect upon and make sense of the lived experiences. One cannot speed up time in the manifested plane. Through the
element of time, midlife adults have gained that which cannot be gained in preparation programs for any profession: lived experience. This experience provided the platform upon which both men felt confident in the gifts they brought to their students, which were lessons from life. These lessons shaped how both men filtered their curricula and how they determined their pedagogy.

Each participant’s past experiences affected their current practices in their classrooms and around the school community. Ben and Mark’s former identities affected how they approached the job of teaching. Ben’s nurturing attitude toward all students and parents was evident in his willingness to be at school well beyond the required time so that he could be available to students in need. Mark’s military experiences demanded teamwork and excellence in how they delivered the curriculum, and his former responsibility to bring men home alive carried over into his philosophy of engaging every student to learn, no matter the strategy. What these men saw for their futures as teachers was a consequence of the culture in which they began teaching. Both men desired to transfer their previously-acquired professionalism to teaching, but the field of teaching did not promote similar standards.

It is interesting to me that both men tried to bring to their students the essence of a quarter of a century of lived experiences in a nine-month period. They both struggled with this problem and recognized the difficulty of bringing real experiences, gained over time, to their students.

Relationality

“The lived other is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them (Van Manen. 1990, p. 104). It includes a communal sense,
"a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living" (p. 105). Both men built relationships with parents and students, and both men worked to build positive and productive working relationships with their team/department members. Ben built positive relationships with other teachers and administrators. Mark, however, believed that others should meet his standards and was less conducive to use collaborative problem solving as a method for working through conflict or for building programs. Both men struggled with the educational system's acceptance of and, in some cases, fostering of ineffective teachers and ineffective teaching.

What appears to be essential to the transition experience for both men was their inner faith—the belief that they had something worthwhile to give to students. They were both discouraged with a system that allowed mediocrity from the teachers and administrators, and they both knew tacitly to engage both students and parents from the beginning to build a learning community within their own classrooms. Both men were poised for success in teaching, for neither had to worry about establishing a family or generating comfortable incomes. Therefore, they were able to take risks in their fairly structured environments and traditional cultures, exercising their fluid problem solving skills to meet their students' needs.

The interconnected elements of time, space, and relationships had a critical impact on how these two midlife adults transitioned between professions and to what degree they sensed satisfaction with the change. Both men had lived the content they were teaching. Therefore, developing pedagogical knowledge was a matter of connecting themselves with their students. In one case, the intent to connect the content was to generate expertise in student understanding of concepts and problem solving. This required
simulation of the real experiences—condensing time into space. In the other case, connecting the content from the teacher to the student required making the material fun and engaging so that students would be motivated to learn it. Both men were sensitive to the age levels of their students and the need for students to know the material. Given this knowledge, both teachers developed teaching methods that best served the needs of the learners.

The essence of gaining pedagogical content knowledge for Ben was nested in an individual struggle, moving him from expert in his former profession to novice as a teacher. It was difficult for him to seek help from colleagues in this area, for none of them had actually lived his experiences in medicine. Therefore, gaining pedagogical content knowledge required patience, persistence, belief in himself and his students, trial and error, some failures, and some successes.

The essence of Mark’s experiences to continually substantiate his teaching methods was also nested in a struggle in moving from an expert professional in his former field to maintaining his status as a professional in the new field of teaching. To counteract the feelings of humiliation and anger, Mark needed to draw on his belief systems, his past experiences in conflict, trial and error, some failures, and some successes.

These participants were highly-developed, intelligent, responsible, caring men. An inner light of either passion or respect guided each, and each believed in his mission to regenerate his lived experiences through teaching teenage students. Ben’s transitional experiences with reflection and experimentation in an attempt to reach pedagogical content knowledge expertise excited me. Although he claimed he probably would never be an expert, his processes matched those that teacher preparation programs try to imitate.
with undergraduate students. I was also excited about the enthusiasm and gusto with which Mark approached his teaching and the problems he faced. Young adults often do not have the experience, wisdom, confidence, or courage needed to challenge existing practices and to follow their beliefs.

**Question 2: Qualities**

What qualities do midlife career changers bring to the profession of teaching?

Both participants shared characteristics of young adult novice teachers upon entering the profession, including: 1) a belief that they could make a difference in students’ lives. 2) eagerness to learn the students’ culture and to relate to the students. 3) a high physical and emotional energy level, 4) a need for approval, 5) discouragement with seasoned teachers who fail to support students outside of the school day. 6) frustration with teachers who have ceased to find creative ways of teaching, and 7) displeasure with teachers who refuse to grow professionally. I have observed these characteristics in young adult novice teachers throughout my 38 years in the profession, and I have also experienced these characteristics first hand.

At the same time, both novice midlife adults entered teaching with attributes of their age cohort: 1) fluid intelligence, 2) crystallized, fluid, and adaptive expertise from their previous professions. 3) the ability to identify and solve critical problems through multiple strategies and through creativity, 4) life experiences. 5) regenerativity. and 6) comfort with their personal lives and economic status. These characteristics of midlife adults are substantiated in the literature. I have observed these characteristics in myself and in my age cohort.
Because of their successful experiences in previous professions, both men brought unique qualities to teaching. In addition to their quarter century of content experience in their former professions, as discussed in the previous section, Ben and Mark also brought to the profession a zeal for learning about their students and supported them in and out of the classroom. Both men came from professions that gave them a sense of purpose, and their new professions renewed that sense. This relational sense, or what Erickson (1982) called regenerativity, allowed the men to bring their past into the present and make a difference for students' futures. Further, regenerativity occurred in a new space where both men attempted to build a oneness with that space and the people within it (Van Manen, 1990), thus creating a culture in which they could pass on lessons from their lived experiences.

Taken in concert, the themes of spatiality, temporality, and relationality create a new question about the midlife characteristic of regenerativity: does regenerativity manifest more prominently when midlife adults change places and people? Becoming a mid-career changer creates a change in spatial and relational dimensions, and the occurrence at midlife allows temporal dimensions to permeate the experiences. Perhaps midlife adults who do not change careers do not manifest regenerativity in their professions, but do so in areas outside of their professions, such as volunteer work or extended family relationships. If this is the case, the opportunities for conflict between seasoned professionals and mid-career changers may increase, due to differences in the levels of commitment to regenerativity within the profession.

Another quality that both men brought to teaching because of their lived experiences was confidence. Their lived professional experiences over time gave them confidence...
with their content. Their years of parenting gave them confidence with their personal understanding of how children grow and think and enhanced their sense of purpose in working with youth. Both men had gained a personal sense of what living in the world meant to them, and they wanted sincerely to pass on that information to young people.

To understand this sense of confidence in greater depth required seeing it through the themes of spatiality, temporality, and relationality. A graphic representation resulted in a three-spoked wheel with the men standing in the hub. At the end of one spoke was their confidence in their content knowledge, gained through the theme of temporality. At the end of another spoke were the youth they wished to teach, who were their "grounds for living," as understood through the theme of relationality. The final spoke of the wheel was the men's lived experiences in the world, which was their source of content knowledge, gained through the theme of spatiality. The confidence these men brought to their new professions was the dynamic of their world experiences informing their content which was taken to the students who soon enter a world of lived experiences of their own, having been prepared through the experiences of these men. Thus, students gain life knowledge, enter their world of experiences, create personal knowledge, and pass it on to others. The cycle of spatiality, temporality, and relationality continues in a living dynamic.

To compare this model with career teachers, I drew a new hub of a circle and placed the career teacher, in the existing system, in the center. Again, three spokes were drawn. The first spoke also led to content, and the second spoke led to students. To parallel the previous model, I had to consider the impetus for teacher content knowledge. Most often it begins with teacher preparation programs rather than lived experiences. To observe the
dynamic of this model. I began as I did with the mid-career changer model, moving from preparation programs, to content, to students. At that point, the model terminated. Once content knowledge is given to students, then they must take the knowledge off to their own worlds, but it does not connect back to the teacher preparation spoke, unless the student becomes a professional teacher.

Although these models may be flawed, the exercise allowed me to sense the depth of a quality that these mid-career changers brought to the profession, and that is a complete cycle of learning and teaching that occurs during the regenerativity period of life, gained through life experiences. This cycle is enhanced because of the spatial, temporal, and relational dimensions of the transition. An examination of the two drawings created an awareness of the dissonance between the discrete elements of the participants' educational systems and the interrelatedness of their transitional experiences. This, then, allowed me to see more clearly the participants' disfavor with the accountability system in education.

Both men believed that standardized performance assessment tests were out of touch with student needs, impossible to achieve, and an incorrect measure of educational effectiveness. Instead, they wanted the system to account for teacher and administrative behaviors. They wanted to see teachers show that they cared about students, that teachers were interested in learning about students' cultures and needs, that teachers were willing to continue their education by being active in professional development, and that teachers could demonstrate sincere attempts to motivate students to learn by means other than performance assessment tests. Further, both men wanted to see administrator accountability for increasing communication among faculty, for being instructional
leaders, and for becoming co-problem solvers to build better programs instead of only caring about discipline and the enforcement of regulations.

When I examined the dynamic of the cycle of learning and teaching that occurred in Ben and Mark's model, I could see why they believed that educators need to be accountable for how they interact with students rather than to define success in terms of achievement test scores. The model for Ben and Mark revealed a dynamic among people, their spaces, and their interconnectedness through time. To teach in this model requires a focus on all three themes. However, the model of the existing system showed disconnections between what students were to learn and why they were to learn it. The model appeared to be static and lifeless. In such a model, it would naturally follow that achievement tests would be the tool to measure student success and that teachers would concentrate on improving their pedagogical skills at the exclusion of building a culture for learning.

An invaluable quality that these midlife career changers brought to the profession was that they were caring, nurturing teachers who could also see the need for accountability in the profession. Their ability to bridge the gap between the analytical and the emotional made me aware of the power of hearing the voices of those who have walked in other moccasins before joining our tribes.

This brings me to the last quality that stood out to me—the voice. Both men had voices of passion, reason, and wisdom. Whether struggling with gaining pedagogical content knowledge or holding on to the status of being a professional, both men came to teaching with voices that were shaped by spatiality, temporality, and relationality, and the voices needed to be heard. Somehow our whole educational community, regardless of
age or status, must take turns telling our stories and writing new ones that include the
richness of experience, wisdom, and compassion from all those who devote their lives to
educating children.

Question 3: Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention

What might the transition experiences mean to the profession in terms of program
design for recruitment, preparation, and retention of midlife adults? The answers to these
questions are offered in the context of this study, which was limited to two participants,
and, as stated by Husserl (1913/1967), should not be considered to be generalizable
across populations as a whole.

Recruitment

As discussed in Chapter 2, recruitment of teachers often focuses on the regenerativity
quality of midlife adults, appealing to the emotions of those who would like to make a
difference in the lives of young people. In this study, Ben had already built a relationship
with youth and knew he wanted to teach them. Mark was recruited to a temporary job in
teaching by a neighbor while waiting for a permanent position with the local city police
academy. It is difficult to know how many midlife career changers become teachers
because of their regenerative nature. At the same time, I have not seen advertisements
that promise potential teachers professionalism, accountability, and continued growth in a
climate of collegiality.

Based on the experiences of Ben and Mark, recruiting midlife professionals to
teaching would be more successful if the focus were on professionalism as much as on
helping students reach their full potential. Professionalism in this case refers to: 1)
participating in building a culture that promotes creativity, 2) giving teachers a voice in
creating exciting and productive curriculum and pedagogy, and 3) providing a forum for teachers to use their wisdom, expertise, and lived experiences to enrich the lives of their students.

Although midlife adults are entering teaching at higher rates than in the past, it is still uncertain how many of them actually stay in teaching. It is not clear why those who leave, do so. This study revealed that professionals who enter teaching need to be able to "grow students" while continuing to grow as people themselves. This type of culture needs to exist and needs to be promoted to attract professionals to teaching.

The participants in this study brought a sense of accountability to education. They experienced it in their former professions and expected it in education. They saw the effects of not having teacher behavior accountability procedures in place. Recruiting professional midlife adults to teaching may be more effective if they are encouraged to not only make a difference in students' lives, but also to be accountable to the public, their students, and their peers for taking actions to make that difference. The accountability should occur in a way that creates both teacher-centered and learner-centered cultures and where all people grow and develop together, creating symbiotic relationships between students and teachers and among teachers as colleagues. What attracts midlife adults to teaching may begin with a sense of regenerativity, but it must continue with a sense of being valuable, talented, intelligent leaders who are part of a vibrant professional culture.

Preparation

Both men in this study had become vital resources to the profession of education through their previous lived experiences. They had gained a sense of being a part of
professional cultures, had developed a sense of history and identity with their content areas, and had developed a sense of purpose and meaning in those professions. All three midlife career changers in this study and in my pilot study conducted the previous semester stated that most professors and classmates in their preparation programs did not know who they were or what they had experienced in their previous professions or what they had to offer education. Their identities were muted and seemed unimportant to the system. In rare instances did professors ask them to bring their own experiences into the class and use them as the basis for identifying and solving problems. In short, preparation programs did not seem to be designed for midlife career changers, but seemed, instead, to be a set of classes in which midlife adults enrolled and followed the prescriptions for completion.

A teacher preparation program designed to prepare midlife career changers should begin by learning about the participants' past lived experiences, their attributes, and their needs. Course activities should be designed to build on the talents, intellect, and experiences brought by the collective to the program. Midlife adults bring evaluativistic belief systems, advanced cognitive functioning, and experience in working with human nature to their preparation programs. While midlife career changers may need assistance with pedagogy, it is possible that midlife career changers, who have lived the content area, may have much more to offer in the way of designing meaningful teaching strategies than do authors who write only from a theoretical point of view. In addition, midlife career changers should be given many opportunities to actually teach and, as Ben suggested, to see both productive and non-productive examples of successful teaching and classroom management.
Teacher preparation programs designed for traditional young adults and as isolated courses may need to be redesigned to take advantage of the developmental levels of both young adults and midlife adults. Significant differences exist between these two groups in terms of maturation of belief systems, levels of intellectual and cognitive development, and the depth of prior experiences. The issues that each group brings to teacher preparation are also significantly different. For example, experience shows that young adults have difficulty relating to the experiences of the midlife adult and, because of their levels of cognitive development, are prone to dismiss the wisdom and advice of the older students. At the same time, the concerns of younger students are seldom of concern to older students, and attending to these issues as a whole class may simply create “seat time” for the older student. The increasing rates of non-traditional students who enter teaching provide impetus for developing cohesive, integrated undergraduate programs that have synergism as a goal for both age groups.

Retention

Induction and mentoring. Induction was understood by both participants to mean orientation, intimating that their district/schools did not seem to have a well-conceived process for inducting new hires to the profession. Ben had mentors, but Mark did not. Ben used his mentors and found them to be very helpful, especially in solving problems with classroom management. Beyond that concept, neither man felt properly inducted to the profession. However, they were successful in starting their teaching careers in part because of their previous experiences with students in the age ranges they taught and, in Mark’s case, because his practicum experiences took place in the school in which he was later employed.
Both men believed that the induction of young adults should be different than it is for midlife career changers. Midlife career changers are in need of a colleague with whom they can share, explore, refine, and reflect about teaching. This need matched the problem solving behaviors of expert nurses (Daley, 1999). Both Ben and Mark were adamant against becoming tarnished by the existing system. Thus, neither of them saw professional development opportunities or the existing communication system as processes designed to enhance teaching. A well-crafted induction program needs to be designed so that seasoned-novice relationships consist of mutual sharing and are growth-inducing to both parties, where career teachers are willing to not only assist novice midlife adults, but also to listen to their stories and learn from their experiences as well.

Both midlife career changers lamented the treatment of young adult novices during their induction years. As novices, midlife adults have several advantages over young adults, especially in light of their advanced biopsychosocial development. Midlife adults are able to distinguish which situations are problems and which are simply tasks to be accomplished. Young adult novices have little sense of how to operate in their new cultures and how to protect themselves (Parks, 2000). Mentor programs and induction programs for novice teachers need to be designed to meet the vast differences in needs between young adults and midlife career changers.

Culture. In this study, the culture for teaching and learning seemed to play a significant role in both men's decision to continue teaching. Both participants claimed that they would quit teaching if they sensed that they were turning into the same uncaring, disengaged teachers they saw around them. The uncaring teachers seemed to be disassociated with their teaching space; had disconnected their past desire for teaching
from their present status, and certainly showed little desire to continue teaching in the future; and had appeared to find little purpose for life in teaching.

These statements connected to me personally and were, in fact, the impetus for this study. The cause for my lost passion and purpose may have been the loss of the same element that both participants found to be so important—validation of our work. Ben said that if he did not receive validation from his students, then he knew he had to "retool" his program. In reflecting upon my own willingness to be evaluated by students, I realized that, more than anything, such an activity requires the capacity to listen to the students' ideas. Many teachers choose not to listen to their students. This may be a consequence of having lost their own voices.

Mark said that when teaching was no longer "fun," he would quit teaching. For Mark, fun meant the opportunities to "jazz" up his students and to interact with them and receive the positive and supportive feedback from students and parents. He was not interested in having to defend his positions, to take criticism from administrators and colleagues who had never taken the time to talk with him about his choices of teaching activities and decisions, or to have to teach through traditional, uninspiring methods. He wanted to be respected as a professional and to make decisions based on his own knowledge and beliefs.

Mark's struggle to maintain his professional status in his school culture reminded me of situations in my peer group of doctoral students. Some professors in the department were convinced that doctoral students should experience status of a novice despite the students' strong backgrounds coming into the program. It may have been the case for doctoral students, as was the case for the masters' level students in this study and in my
pilot study, that the identities of the doctoral students were not known. Fortunately for me, many of my professors and committee members did recognize my history and abilities and worked to provide me with experiences that matched my goals as well as my attributes. They took an interest in me as a person, and they encouraged me to design my assignments, exams, and timelines with my life, rather than the program, at the core. They listened to my voice and allowed me to create. They appeared to have an intuitive understanding of the interconnectedness of space, time, and relationships and their role in my education as a midlife adult. This was not the case for many of my peers, nor is it the case for many K-12 teachers or teachers in preparation.

During a conversation with the co-coordinator of a unique local university alternative licensure program, I learned that the local district teachers treated many of the university students unkindly during practicum experiences because the students were achieving their licenses through a shortened program. Graduates from the program complained of being treated with disrespect or virtually ignored altogether during the induction years of teaching in the local school district (M. McKinney, personal communication. March 23, 2002 and September 3, 2002). I pondered the reason that teachers gain and perpetuate a culture of unkindness toward new peers and unacceptance of new ideas. Part of the answer may lie in one's ability to invite and accept change. The literature on change is vast and beyond the scope of this study, although certainly connected to it in terms of the novices' eagerness to affect change and the seasoned teachers' unwillingness to accept it.

In addition to the factor of change is the culture of disenfranchisement. Both participants in this study described a culture wherein teachers were no longer working toward the
good of the students, but were part of a bogged down system. Yet these participants were uplifted by the support and enthusiasm of their students and parents.

Part of the dissonance in the culture may be attributed to the novice’s need to have validation. Studies show that young teachers need such validation (Richardson, 2002), and the participants in my study clearly needed validation even though they were successful, seasoned midlife adult professionals. Perhaps this need never stops. Maybe teaching, considered to be a nurturing profession, has created a culture where little nurturing for its own community members occurs. The focus may have shifted from people to programs, outcomes, and assessments.

Retention of novice midlife adults may increase in a professional culture of acceptance, collegiality, encouragement, and an environment of experimentation. Both of the participants in this study were fluid experts in their former professions. Their new environments discouraged the use of those qualities. For teachers to be vibrant, they must create, especially as they mature. Perhaps another reason that seasoned teachers lose their zeal for teaching is that they are frustrated with a lack of opportunities to create because of the state curricula and administrative dictates that prohibit such activities.

The midlife career changers in this study seemed to lack a supportive school culture as novices. It is common knowledge that the “sink or swim” mentality has ruled many school cultures for decades. That midlife professional career changers must experience a novice status may increase the probability that these valuable people will take their talents elsewhere. Such a situation would leave schools with the same people who have known only schooling all their lives. This focused resource may not provide schools with the richness of experiences that leads to vibrant education.
Essence of the Phenomenon

The essence of the transition experience in the framework of expertise was different for each participant. However, the transition experience through the themes of spatiality, temporality, and relationality was similar for both participants in that they both had to adapt to new environments that had different standards, territories that defined their working space, and a culture of isolationism.

Both men had been accustomed to high levels of defined expectations for performance and for professional growth. In their new professions, the standards were different and did not seem to reflect the dynamic of bringing lived experiences to students so that the students could assume a responsible, productive place in that world to repeat the cycle. In education, the focus for accountability was on student performance rather than on teacher behaviors.

In their previous professions, both men had become a part of their lived space so that they could meet the objectives of the profession among a team of skilled professionals. In education, their space became limited to that which was assigned to them. However, both men assumed the entire school campus as their working space, which allowed them to more fully meet the needs of their students, both in and out of the classroom.

Both men were accustomed to being members of teams wherein all the members had different expertise and worked as a unit for the good of the client or the mission. In teaching, they learned that teamwork was nearly nonexistent, and that any functioning teams consisted of people who had the same responsibilities and skills. Little teamwork occurred between people of different responsibilities or expertise.
The essence of the transition experience for these men seems to be their ability to redefine their space and relationships to perpetuate their expertise gained throughout their lived experiences. The space between the stars for these men was their ability to transfer their beliefs and expertise to a different culture in which students' needs remained the guiding light.

Limitations of the Study

The different age levels taught by each participant and the nature of the programs in which they were teaching necessarily limited the findings of this study. One participant was able to focus his transition experiences on the quality of his high school students' learning outcomes in a specialized and focused program, while the other participant felt a need to concentrate his experiences on maintaining his status as a professional in a culture of pubescents and uniformity.

The different teacher preparation programs experienced by each participant also limited this study. One participant had limited field experiences, which led to a transition issue. The other participant had a complete field experience component and substitute teaching experience. Thus, his attitude toward his ability to manage classes was minimal.

Likewise, the very different nature of each participant's previous professions may have had a large impact on how they perceived their induction to teaching and how they compensated for any deficiencies in the induction process. It is impossible to know if the previous professions influenced the dispositions of the men or if their dispositions influenced their choice of previous professions. Nevertheless, direct relationship between
the abilities required in their former professions and how the participants approached their new challenges as novice teachers may exist.

A significant limitation for replicating the results of this study is the fact that it is, by design, a study of opinions and perceptions of two participants. Any findings that imply a deficiency in procedures and processes in programs need to be validated before making global recommendations that would lead to changes for entire populations.

Need for Future Research

The quality of teacher preparation programs needs to be examined in light of the unique developmental levels of midlife adults. The research by Knowles (1988) has provided a basis for formulating course content for adults, but perhaps more studies need to be conducted to identify development of whole programs, based on the biopsychosocial development and advanced cognitive thinking skills of midlife adults.

The attention to the differences in previous levels of operation in fluid and adaptive expert environments compared to the environments in which midlife adult career changers find themselves as novice teachers also is important. Further studies need to be conducted to learn more about the significance of these environmental differences on the potential for midlife career changers to remain in teaching.

Mid-career changers who enter crystallized teaching environments may find dissatisfaction with such environments if they inhibit opportunities to be change agents. It is not known if this situation exists or to what extent it affects retention. Further studies may provide insight to this potential source of teacher attrition.
Mentor relationships for midlife career changers who have held positions in former professions that required creativity and problem solving skills may be the basis for a related study. When midlife adult novices are provided with a mentor, how must that relationship be defined so that the novice midlife adult is able to continue his high level of performance and to expand his potential in the profession of teaching?

It is necessary that future data describing novice teacher situations be disaggregated to shed light on the actual problems faced by and overcome by novice young adults and novice midlife adults. Today, young adult and midlife adult novices are described in the same data, making it difficult to understand the realities of recruitment, preparation, and retention of either group. Further, the data need to delineate the types of programs mid-career changers have completed. The practice of aggregating all midlife adults, from any teacher preparation program, with young adult baccalaureate degree novice teachers, retards the process of understanding the true nature of preparing each category of teacher and delays the process of reducing the problem of attrition.

It was interesting to note that in both the pilot study and this study, the man and woman who had been in medical professions were both highly student-centered as teachers. The fact that the man was a secondary teacher and the woman was an elementary teacher did not seem to have a significant difference in the results of the study. Thus, further studies that compare mid-career teachers by professions as well as by gender and grade levels may be necessary.
Concluding Remarks

The midlife adults in this study entered teaching as a second profession with a unique combination of young adult enthusiasm and faith and of career teacher wisdom, knowledge, and expertise. They had solid content background knowledge as a result of their lived experiences in the content of their former professions, and they had the mental maturity to quickly learn pedagogical knowledge, thus creating the expert pedagogical content knowledge that had capacity to extend beyond that of some career teachers. Regardless of these attributes, these two midlife adults who entered teaching had unique needs that could increase their likelihood of remaining in teaching (see Figure 1).

Ben and Mark could have benefited from having their educational programs tailored to their talents, developmental levels, and their expertise. This may be true for licensure and advanced degree programs and for continued professional development experiences for other mid-career changers as well.

Perhaps the most important need was that of maintaining and perpetuating professionalism in a culture that encouraged and rewarded creativity, regenerativity, and the advancement of teacher knowledge. This culture did not exist for Ben or Mark. Creating partnerships between seasoned teachers and novice midlife adults may foster such an environment. Unlike mentor relationships designed to mentor the novice toward established mores and standards, the partnership could be designed to create synergism and symbiosis. In this relationship, the life experiences of the mid-career changer and the pedagogical experiences of the seasoned teacher would become a platform for content and pedagogical exploration, action research, and adaptation, creating a symbiotic relationship.
As the partnership continues to flourish, both members would have the potential to create a synergistic force for change. Change could occur in pedagogical content knowledge, in procedures for operating the system, in accountability practices, and in other factors that impact the school culture.

A midlife adult partnership between career changers and career teachers can have a profound affect on both members. According to the stories of colleagues and teacher candidates and my own lived experiences in schools, many seasoned teachers lose their voices of zeal and vision as their careers proceed, and crystallized levels of expertise replace what once was a love for experimentation and discovery. At the same time, current cultures that expect novices to be initiated in the “sink or swim” paradigm strip these novice professionals of their voices and reduce them to practitioner status in a structured environment. Instead of fostering traditional independent and isolated cultures, schools could develop professional cultures that expect both the seasoned and novice midlife adult teacher to re-generate each other, advancing their levels of expertise by allowing them to create and to be heard. This may be a space between the stars that midlife adults experience as a result of a synergistic relationship.

Midlife adults can be a valuable resource to today’s youth. They must continually be encouraged to extend their levels of expertise and be rewarded for it, and they must be allowed to become change agents for a system that focuses only on outcomes or that which could be described as “the firmament in the positivist sky [which] twinkles with precision and rigor” (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 2). If the educational community can create truly professional cultures, schools may increase their chances for retaining quality teachers, both seasoned and novice, as they reach for their own spaces between the stars.
Conducting this study has been a regenerative experience for me and has allowed me to understand more fully the element that mortals cling to and cannot control: time. The experiences of Ben and Mark have clanged loudly in my mind since the first day of the first interview. To grasp the meaning of their experiences in a short timeframe has been like eating gelatin with a knife—I’d think I had it and then I didn’t, and the clock just kept ticking. Everyday a new meaning would come forward. I realize that this will be true for as long as the data exist and for as long as my own experiences change over time. It has been refreshing and stimulating to realize that we midlife adults are dynamic beings who do not stop developing and who need creative environments where we can hone our expertise.

My journey across the country began by manifesting itself in physically distressing ways. At the end of this journey I recognize my own cognitive, emotional, and physical growth experiences that were transformative. My past professional experiences had been accomplished at a traditional understanding of expertise, which I now realize was at the most routine level. How I defined myself as an expert was in terms of student and teacher success in the tasks and concepts I taught. Throughout this journey, I have gained new insights to the meaning of fluid expertise and now recognize that I must seek an adaptive environment in which to exercise my need to create. New ways of hearing and learning were required to reshape my understanding of myself and to know what it means to be an expert. In this place in the universe, at this time in my life, with these people who inspired me, a renewed desire to hear and to learn has been my space between the stars.
Figure 1. This figure represents the needs of midlife career changers in teaching, beginning with recruitment and moving throughout the first three years of teaching.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

I am Merrie L. Schroeder, a doctoral student at the [local university] in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

I am requesting your participation in a research project about induction of novice teachers into teaching, and especially novice mid-career changers (delayed entrants to teaching). The purpose of the research is to learn about special needs of young adult novice teachers compared to midlife adult novices, and especially about the learning processes of these two different age categories as they enter their new profession.

The expected length of time of your participation is approximately 1 hour for the interview, and approximately 1 hour of writing time. There may be brief follow-up interviews (approximately 30 minutes) and a follow-up conference (approximately 30 minutes).

Your participation will involve a face-to-face interview, a brief writing assignment in which you will reflect on and describe an episode in which you learned something significant in your new profession, the potential for a follow-up interview to clarify data, and a follow-up conference to approve interpretations of your interview.

There are only minimal risks associated with this study. Minimal risks may include feeling uncomfortable when responding to some of the questions asked or describing the learning episode. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time. This survey is anonymous and your answers will be kept completely confidential. All data will be stored in a locked file cabinet at [the university] for at least three years after the completion of the study. You will not be compensated in any way for your participation.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at ***-**** (office) or my faculty advisor ***-****. For questions involving the rights of research subjects, please contact the [university] Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at ***-****.

By signing below, you are acknowledging your receipt of the information provided to you and agree to participate. You will be given a copy of this form.

______________________________  ________________________
Signature of Participant            Date

______________________________  ________________________
Signature of Researcher            Date

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APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MID-CAREER CHANGERS: SECONDARY

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of how professionals make the transition from expert status in a previous profession to regain expert status in a new profession, specifically teaching. I will be asking several directed questions and some follow-up questions. There are no anticipated results, so you are encouraged to say what honestly represents your thinking about this transformation from expert to novice and to expert again. I will be visiting with you later in the summer or during the school year to check for accuracy of my interpretations and potentially for new information. (Consent form.)

Demographics:

1. Where do you teach? ____________ How would you describe the culture of that school? ________________________________________________
2. How many years have you been teaching there? ______
3. Who is your principal? ____________________________
4. How many years have you been teaching? _____
5. Home or school mailing address: ____________________________
6. Previous profession:
   a. What was it? ____________________________________________
   b. How long did you practice it? ______
   c. Did you consider yourself an expert? (distinguish between fluid and crystallized expertise) ___
7. From what type of teacher education program did you receive your certification? ____________________________________________

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Interview:

1. What were the factors that led you to change professions?

2. What did you go through as a result?
   a. Social
   b. Emotional
   c. Cognitive
   d. Professional

3. What was it like to leave a field of expertise, become a novice, and work toward becoming an expert again?

4. Can you describe a situation in which you realized you were responding as a novice?

5. How would you handle that situation now as a more experienced person?

6. How did you learn to do it differently?

7. When you need to learn something in this profession, how do you go about it?

8. If you encounter a new problem with a student, how do you go about solving it?

9. Compare how you learned as a young adult with how you learn now?

10. Describe yourself as a teacher.

11. Are you living the image yet of who you hoped to be as a teacher?
   a. If not, what remains to be learned or done to become that image?
   b. Is your potential being realized?

12. How could your teacher preparation and/or induction help your reach your potential more quickly?
## SYNTHESIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Topic</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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</table>
| **1. Factors that led to the change in professions** | • Desire to leave administrative position in medicine  
• Wanted to work with young adults in high school medical magnet program  
• Desire to help young adults begin a career in medicine and to become passionate about it  
• Salary was adequate | • Need to put more energy toward family  
• Always wanted to teach  
• Encouraged by others who saw teaching talent in him  
• Desire to help youth gain respect for themselves, their school, their country  
• Financially secure going into teaching |
| **2. Biopsychosocial development** | • Physical: Very healthy, high energy, able to exceed demands of the profession  
• Cognitive/Psychological: fluid intelligence and fluid and adaptive levels of expertise provided the tools to reflect, experiment, and problem solve how to determine essence of curriculum and to bring it to students in a meaningful way.  
• Social/emotional: induction to profession was of little help, but he was able to build relationships with faculty, administrators, and parents and to assume his role as a teacher with little difficulty; people skills transferred from his roles in medicine; passionate about working with students; rewards from student success in their careers and “thank you’s” from students, colleagues | • Physical: Very healthy, high energy, able to exceed demands of the profession  
• Cognitive/Psychological: fluid intelligence and fluid expertise provided him with the tools to identify content and pedagogical strategies to motivate students to learn.  
• Social/emotional: induction to profession was of little help, but his experiences as a student teacher in the building and his substitute teaching experiences provided him with the necessary dispositions to succeed in the role of a teacher; team housed in trailers, led to isolationism; quickly built relationships with team; was familiar with the school prior to accepting teaching position there; rewards from student and parent validation; feelings of failure or being 2nd guessed |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Topic</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Transition experiences</td>
<td><strong>Preparation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Additional coursework to meet licensure requirements—added to expertise in content area&lt;br&gt;• Novice level in pedagogical courses&lt;br&gt;• Novice-level field experiences—did not have student teaching&lt;br&gt;• Novice level understanding of how to manage large numbers of students&lt;br&gt;<strong>Teaching:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Used dialectical thinking skills to identify essence of curriculum content to teach students&lt;br&gt;• Used fluid expertise to match his personality with classroom management techniques (changed procedures at mid-year to improve learning climate)&lt;br&gt;• Novice level of pedagogical understanding during first year&lt;br&gt;• Novice level of pedagogical content knowledge during first year&lt;br&gt;• Used experience and exploration to learn successful pedagogical methods&lt;br&gt;• Used experimentation to learn how to connect his expert content knowledge with pedagogy&lt;br&gt;• Used experimentation to find Zone of Proximal Development for student learning&lt;br&gt;• Modeled passion from previous profession and encouraged passion in his students as they moved from being novice to expert in content knowledge and concepts&lt;br&gt;• Sees difference between medicine and teaching: medicine has more demands for accountability; teaching allows people to move along daily with no accountability for what and how they teach and for being unmotivational to students&lt;br&gt;• Transition from industry was not as “black and white” because of his people skills, necessary in both professions.</td>
<td><strong>Preparation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Additional coursework in content area added to experience in previous profession&lt;br&gt;• Student teaching field experience at crystallized expert level, due to concurrent role as substitute teacher&lt;br&gt;• Examination requirements in education college plunged emotions to novice status in pedagogy&lt;br&gt;<strong>Teaching:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Used experience in substitute teaching and previous profession to establish pedagogical strategies&lt;br&gt;• Used dialectical thinking skills and former professional experiences to identify essential content for students to learn&lt;br&gt;• Used crystallized expertise to design classroom rules, procedures, and rewards&lt;br&gt;• Used life experiences and fluid expertise to know which issues are worth fighting for and which should be left alone.&lt;br&gt;• Novice level of knowing the system and how to navigate through communication channels during first year&lt;br&gt;• Modeled respect for students and parents</td>
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<td><strong>Interview Topic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ben</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mark</strong></td>
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<td>4. A situation in which he responded as a novice:</td>
<td>Lacked pedagogical content knowledge and effective classroom procedures. Concerned about how to take his area of content expertise and teach it to novice-level learners and in a way that helped them understand the concepts of the content. Struggled with how to teach it so that the students could have a sense of experiencing it as he did. Ben recognized that he became an expert by experience; how was he going to give his students experience? Further, how could he get his students to have passion for learning the material and at an expert level?</td>
<td>Failed to communicate with team members about an activity he was teaching. The results of the unit seemed ordinary to him as a teacher, but a team member took issue with them. The team member went to the principal, who told her to counsel Mark in how to do such activities correctly. The counsel came during a faculty social event where Mark was trying to meet colleagues. The situation became stormy. Mark insisted on a meeting with the team member and the principal to get the truth out regarding the activity and to agree on proper communication channels for the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How he would handle the situation as an experienced teacher:</td>
<td>• Telling real-life stories from his previous profession • Simulating medical situations in which students must problem solve the procedures • Finding the Zone of Proximal Development • Talking with parents • Changing classroom procedures at mid-year • Supporting students in extracurricular activities</td>
<td>• He would make sure that all parties who needed to know would be informed, especially the administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How he learned to do it differently:</td>
<td>• Exploration and experimentation (adaptive environment) • Consultation with trusted colleagues</td>
<td>• On-the-job experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Topic</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Mark</td>
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| 7. How he learned the profession: | • Listened to mentors  
• Attended professional development sessions  
• Took continuing education courses  
• Sought out trusted colleagues who have similar background and similar problems | • Through challenging teammates  
• Went directly to the people who have the answers or service needed  
• Filter of experience over theory |
| 8. How he solved problems about students: | • Sought out colleagues who had similar problems with similar students (informal)  
• Rarely used specialists (formal)  
• Talked to parents | • Went to Master Teacher  
• Specialists work with most needy teachers, which was not him  
• Would go to the two specialists he trusted  
• Teammates  
• Parent conference, if needed |
| 9. Learning as a young adult compared to learning as a midlife adult: | • Younger years: rote learning; knowing "what" without knowing "why;" little reason for understanding; little motivation; no passion  
• Midlife adults years: task analysis; learning why something works; experience: application; concept learning—sought examples and counter-examples; had passion for knowing | • Younger years: didn't pay much attention to courses in college (skied 4 days); got a decent grade point for not attending much; rote knowledge level: excellent memory.  
• Midlife years: crystallized knowledge was less functional; required concept learning, life experiences, application, relevance; had to study harder, take better notes, concentrate harder. |
### Interview Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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</table>
| 10. **Description of himself as a teacher** | “The World’s Smartest Human Being”  
- Described himself in terms of his students’ success: “did you get people to gain success at something because of what you did?”  
- Recognized several people as role models—his image, therefore, was eclectic  
- Roles kept changing with students, so his image was dynamic  
- Reward: did the job well, and people who came in contact with him were better off because they did  
- Interview showed a man who was passionate about teaching students to understand why concepts worked, and in instilling similar passion for intrinsic motivation to learn in his students | Caring and loving teacher  
- Role model for respect for self, school, country  
- Contributor to the whole school  
- Fun-loving  
- Dedicated to helping kids be successful  
- Trustworthy  
- In control  
- Unorthodox in teaching methods  
- Nothing to lose |
| 11. **Living the image:** | Kids saw him as their confidante  
- In some respects because students who had gone on returned with success stories, crediting him  
- Received validation from students  
- Modeled passion for learning | Parents trusted him  
- Administrators sought him out because they knew students talked to him  
- “Wears a shirt and tie”  
- Respected the kids  
- Letters from students validated that he was living the image |
| **If not, what remains to be done?** | Proper length classes |
| **Using his potential:** | Sees ways the school can be improved but does not have the ear of the administration or other faculty  
- Administration does not acknowledge his attributes and accomplishments or use him other than as a connection to information on students  
- Feels distrusted as a professional  
- Most kids will do anything for him  
- Has ideas about how the system could be changed to allow more faculty accountability, based on experience in his previous profession  
- Has ideas about how to gain more achievement from students in a meaningful and timely fashion |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Topic</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12. Recommendations:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teacher Preparation</td>
<td>• Teacher candidates need to:&lt;br&gt;  * see relevant curriculum&lt;br&gt;  * use relevant materials&lt;br&gt;  * see examples of both good and bad teaching&lt;br&gt;  * learn people skills&lt;br&gt;  * learn how to do task analysis&lt;br&gt;  * learn how to link pedagogy and content&lt;br&gt;  * learn that classroom management requires a connection to your own personality&lt;br&gt;  * Teacher preparation program needs to set realistic standards for measuring student/teaching success</td>
<td>• Need professors who have experience in the field—most have not been in today's classrooms&lt;br&gt;  • Recognize that advanced degree students have experience and can help teach the classes&lt;br&gt;  • Have realistic and relevant examination questions&lt;br&gt;  • Require students to become substitute teachers for a year or two prior to licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Induction programs</strong></td>
<td>• Induction was seen as equivalent to orientation&lt;br&gt;  • Induction was not understood to be a year-long process of bringing novices on board&lt;br&gt;  • Recommended that induction be dependent upon how well prepared the individual is to teach: individualized induction programs</td>
<td>• Induction was seen as equivalent to orientation&lt;br&gt;  • Hire people to schools based on what they can bring to the school instead of on favoritism and filling slots with warm bodies&lt;br&gt;  • Give orientation to midlife adults based on their needs instead of selling union memberships&lt;br&gt;  • Know who the midlife career changers are&lt;br&gt;  • Communicate among preparation institutions, district, and school as to who is inducing who and how&lt;br&gt;  • Bring young adults on board with more care and professionalism</td>
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</table>
| **Retention** | • Job satisfaction comes from recognition by peers and superiors<br>  • If customer isn’t satisfied, re-tool the teaching/teacher<br>  • Unfair expectations are placed upon young adult novices: social/emotional, financial, professional<br>  • Young adult novices are given the worst teaching assignments<br>  • Need to look at causes of attrition, including mismatch between school and teacher, location of home to school, giving novices classes they did not prepare to teach | • Climate in schools between administrators and faculty has to be positive. No one will stay when leadership is distrusting of faculty, closed to change and innovation, and noncommunicative with faculty.
APPENDIX D

MID-CAREER CHANGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS CHANGE AGENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Agent</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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</table>
| Perception of self as a change agent | • Partnered with parents to change communication system about grading  
• Parents used as resources to help create better learning environment  
• Provided professional development to colleagues to use technology  
• Modeled use of technology to encourage others to move toward using it for teaching and accountability  
• Did not see himself as a “top down” change agent. He saw this role as administrative.  
• Perceived himself to be a “bottom up” change agent by being a role model. | • Changed procedures for reporting dress code violations for female students  
• Influenced teachers to begin using technology in classrooms  
• Created a common atmosphere for learning in his team—challenged all the team to be as good a teacher as he was  
• Did not see himself as a change agent.  
• Administration did not encourage change, but stifled it  
• School personnel hired teachers who would not make changes |
| Changed by the system? | “Personally, I am not going to let the school change me—I have no desire to sink to the lowest level and just get by.” | Was already considering leaving his building/profession because of the stifling attitude of the administration… would not be changed by it. |
APPENDIX E

THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships With Students</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brought his skills of working with people into the classroom</td>
<td>• Student safety and happiness were an essential – gave cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Considered relationships with students to be fundamental to success—both his and theirs</td>
<td>number to students in case of emergency</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Attended student extra curricular activities often to show support for students</td>
<td>• Was seen as student confidante</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Listened to students to learn what was important to them</td>
<td>• Rewarded students with team outings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Asked for student evaluations; paid attention to them</td>
<td>• Attended student extra curricular events on a daily basis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Student validation was important as a reward for his work</td>
<td>• Learned what the students’ culture was about; respected it and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>connected to it while implementing curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Worked to engage students in learning that was fun and meaningful</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Student feedback was an important reward for his work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Relationships

### Ben
- Sought peers to assist in improving his methods
- Appreciated peer approval, encouragement
- Collaborated with peers to improve the program and solve problems
- Was discouraged with the number of teachers who were ineffective and seemed to choose to be
- Sought specialists in formal student situations; sought guidance of colleagues in informal situations
- Mentored new colleagues in his department

### Mark
- Devoted energy and time to building, mentoring, and bonding with his grade level team
- Had little patience with ineffective teachers
- Challenged other teachers in the building to be as good as he was
- Teachers who were not on his team were jealous, in conflict, and seen as blockers of his team's progress
- Saw seasoned teachers as selfish with teaching knowledge and materials, especially with younger teachers
- Shared and volunteered his time and materials with novice teachers

### With Administrators
- Recognized adm. as managers more than education leaders
- Desired a collaborative, problem solving relationship with administrators
- Did not expect validation of his performance from administrator
- Saw the absence of administrators as good news (adm. usually are visible when something is wrong.)

### With Administrators
- Recognized administrators as blockages to change
- Saw administrators as poor communicators and problem solvers
- Administrators called on him for information on students
- Administrators called on him as a model for school visitors to see
- Administrators saw him as a “loose cannon”

### With Parents
- Involved parents to provide support and insight to helping solve student problems
- Saw parents as partners

### With Parents
- Supported parents at extra curricular activities
- Saw parents as a major support to his program
## APPENDIX F

### CULTURE ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY MIDCAREER CHANGERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics: Former Profession:</th>
<th>Medicine: Physician's Assistant – Administrator</th>
<th>Military: Ranking Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Teaching Level:</td>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Area:</td>
<td>Medical Magnet School Program</td>
<td>Social Studies (geography, U. S. History)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School SES:</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System:</td>
<td>Teacher quality not defined</td>
<td>Impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System does not make demands on teachers, as does industry</td>
<td>Causes teachers to lose desire to be innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards not defined, as in industry</td>
<td>Politics of mainstreaming students is too hard to tackle, but it needs to be addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success is not measured, except on proficiency exams which students can't pass</td>
<td>Parents want their students in Special Education because that program is more lenient regarding behavior problems and consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No regular accountability sessions: goal setting, action plans, debriefing</td>
<td>State curriculum is out of touch with what students can accomplish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removes passion from teachers</td>
<td>Insufficient resources to support mainstreamed students, all of whom are placed on the same team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fosters attrition by failing to make good matches between novices and school, assigning toughest work loads, expecting expert level teaching in novice level people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Issues With:</td>
<td>Medicine — Ben</td>
<td>Military — Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran teachers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No one monitors whether teachers actually motivate students to learn</td>
<td>• jealous over others’ successes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Caring in veteran teachers is low</td>
<td>• not willing to share time and materials with novices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Veteran teachers are often dull and entrenched in old methods</td>
<td>• do not teach to students’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty are impersonal</td>
<td>• do not know students’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers don’t go outside of school to learn the students’ culture</td>
<td>• are too entrenched in old methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers don’t spend time with students outside of school at extra curricular events and support students</td>
<td>• are quick to accuse those who do things differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty have undesirable learning traits</td>
<td>• do not support and encourage students to learn and grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty can create an ethical climate in their own classrooms, unlike industry that is sometimes subject to unethical practices</td>
<td>• don’t spend time with students outside of school at extra curricular events and support students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients: Students and Parents</td>
<td>• Students do not value education</td>
<td>Students who violate rules in other buildings end up in this school and are allowed to continue to be uncorrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Many families cannot provide a proper home learning environment</td>
<td>• Some parents support child’s bad behaviors and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents who are contacted for support do provide it</td>
<td>• Parents are supportive of Mark’s teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Most students are talented, enthused by Mark’s team, and work to achieve; most students not on Mark’s team are bored with other teachers’ methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Issues With:</td>
<td>Medicine — Ben</td>
<td>Military — Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators don’t visit classrooms—that’s good news</td>
<td>• Don’t visit trailers—that’s good news</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators are not experts in the areas they evaluate, as are the superiors in the medical field</td>
<td>• Distrust teachers who show innovative teaching methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators do not share building knowledge and expertise with teachers, as is the relationship between surgeons and surgical assistants</td>
<td>• Second-guess methods—don’t treat innovative teachers as professionals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators do not push for adaptive environments, as does the medical field</td>
<td>• Do not consider former expertise of mid-career changers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators in neither field reward personnel for good work</td>
<td>• Discourage change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators put out fires; they do not help prevent them through advocating and partnering in building pedagogical content knowledge expertise</td>
<td>• Allow ineffective teachers to remain that way—no accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrators are not co-problem solvers with teachers</td>
<td>• Hire teachers who they consider to be malleable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators don’t visit trailers—that’s good news</td>
<td>• Put teachers into one mold and make them accountable for being in it, whether or not they are effective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrust teachers who show innovative teaching methods</td>
<td>• Ineffective communication with faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-guess methods—don’t treat innovative teachers as professionals</td>
<td>• Out of touch with students’ worlds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not consider former expertise of mid-career changers</td>
<td>• Create poor attitudes in faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourage change</td>
<td>• Bring visitors to Mark’s room to demonstrate effective practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow ineffective teachers to remain that way—no accountability</td>
<td>• Seek out Mark to find out what students are doing wrong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

SYNTHESIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF TRANSITIONING BETWEEN LEVELS OF EXPERTISE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Ben</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Textual (What was the experience?) | • Inadequacy, frustration  
• Support, encouragement  
• Insight  
• NOT: feeling of wrong choice of profession | • Failure  
• Confrontation  
• Jealousies from peers  
• Esprit de corps, Validation  
• NOT: feeling of wrong choice of profession |
| Structural (How was it experienced?) | • Students not behaving in productive manners  
• Students not understanding why concepts worked and not having a passion for learning  
• Seeking and receiving advice from peers on student management  
• Changing classroom procedures  
• Constant thinking about how he gained expertise in his field and why it was important  
• Choosing essential knowledge, based on lived experience  
• Trying different methods of giving students meaningful information  
• Providing students with virtual reality as "medical personnel"  
• Relationships: attending student events, connecting with parents, sharing techniques with team members, working with administrators, becoming involved with professional development in the school  
• Modeling passion | • Failing part of teacher certification requirements  
• Being accused of teaching in unorthodox methods and teaching inappropriate activities  
• Peers blocking his progress  
• Meeting face-to-face with dissatisfied colleagues to resolve problems on the spot  
• Choosing what and how students would learn based on his experience, district curriculum, and how students are motivated to learn.  
• Creating a learning environment that is full of energy and focused on student success: love and caring  
• Challenging teachers to be as good as he; challenging students to learn and remember  
• Attending student events, supporting parents, helping office personnel, bonding with team, becoming involved in professional activities/duties throughout the school  
• Modeling respect |
| Essence | Gain pedagogical content knowledge while instilling passion for knowledge | Maintain professional status in a traditional culture while instilling respect for self, others, and country |

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REFERENCES


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No Child Left Behind Act. (S. 940/H.R. 1990)


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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Merrie Lynne Schroeder

Home Address:
652 Paulson Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89123

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts, Mathematics Education, 1969
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Masters of Arts, Secondary Administration, 1983
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Special Honors:
Phi Kappa Phi

Publications:


“Against All Odds: Reversing the Decline at One At-Risk School,” with Dr. Jane McCarthy, Dr. Nancy Gallavan, & Linda Goodman, Accelerated Schools Special Interest Group Conference Proceedings, New Orleans, LA., April 24-28, 2000


“Lesson Design and Reflection,” Mathematics Teaching in the Middle Grades, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, January 1996

“Student-Led Conferences, Middle School Reforms that Work,” co-author with Dr. Lyn Countryman, Educational Leadership, April 1996


Dissertation Title: A Phenomenological Study: Mid-Career Changer Transitions Through Levels of Expertise

Dissertation Examination Committee:
Chairperson: Dr. Martha Young, Ph.D.
Committee Member: Dr. Lori Olafson, Ph.D.
Committee Member: Dr. Linda F. Quinn, Ed.D.
Graduate Faculty Member: Dr. LeAnn Putney, Ph.D.