MID-CAREER TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THE SUSTAINING POWER OF HOPE: A Q METHODOLOGICAL STUDY

A dissertation submitted to the
Kent State University College and Graduate School
of Education, Health, and Human Services
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Anita C. Levine

May 2011
A dissertation written by

Anita Clare Levine

B.A., Rutgers University, 1978
M.Ed., Kent State University, 2004
Ph.D., Kent State University, 2011

Approved by

______________________________, Director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
James G. Henderson

______________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Claudia Khourey-Bowers

______________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Steven R. Brown

Accepted by

______________________________, Director, School of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum
Alexa L. Sandmann

______________________________, Dean, College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services
Daniel F. Mahony
Public school teaching is notorious for being a high-stress profession with significant attrition rates. Most educational research typically focuses on factors that influence teachers’ decisions to leave the profession, yet little is known regarding what sustains teachers to remain, particularly those who are in their mid-career (teaching between 6–15 years). One factor considered influential in teachers’ decisions to stay is that of hope, as it can offset factors that lead to burnout.

Q methodology, a mixed methodological approach that explores subjectivity, was utilized. Twenty-five mid-career public school educators were recruited from rural, suburban, and urban school districts in Ohio, New Jersey, and Maine. The multidimensional hope model developed by nurse researchers Farran, Herth, and Popovich (1995), modified to highlight the aspect of time, served as the conceptual basis for this dissertation research.

Four distinctive factors or themes emerged from factor analysis and interviews. Factor 1 (Making a Difference Through Advocacy) stresses teacher advocacy, caring relationships with students, recognition of the importance of time in terms of student learning, and the deep need for friends and family as a hope-sustaining influence. Factor 2 (Faith-Based Calling to Teach) favors the building of supportive relationships with colleagues, the felt-sense of being called to teach, and the power of religious and/or
spiritual faith. Factor 3 (Professional Autonomy and Respect) centers on the need for control, being acknowledged and respected by colleagues and administrators, and, as with the first factor, reliance upon friends and family. And Factor 4 (Total Reliance on God) relies solely on God for its source of hope.

Based on the findings, suggestions for hope-sustaining, burnout prevention strategies that could be utilized by individual teachers, school districts, and teacher education programs are offered.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the aid of so many caring friends and colleagues, I seriously wondered if I would ever finish this dissertation. Hope, at times, seemed dim, when faced with all the challenges that accompanied such a daunting, and at times overwhelming, endeavor. I value everyone’s support, encouragement, and friendship throughout this dissertation journey.

The following persons were vitally important to me on this journey of persistence and hope: Edward Siegel, Martha Malik, Dr. Russ Hurd, Dr. Lennise Baptiste, Dr. Raphael Kelani, Dr. Raisa Ignatieva, Dr. Andrea Adolph, Stefanie Nagorka, Bryan Drost, Lisa Bircher, Leah Subak, Mary Kay Pieski, Kat Clark, Charlene Alaimo, Frank Peters II, Aunt Irma Levine, Nika Franchi, Colin Godwin, cousin Garrison Hack, Amal Alkhateeb, Greg Blundell, Deanna Rohr, all my teaching buddies, and Superintendent of North Canton, Ohio, Mr. Mike Gallina.

A special note to Ed: Thank you for making it possible for me to take a semester off from teaching so I could focus on data analysis, plus helping me through that summer period of severe writer’s block. For my best buddy Colin: Thanks for the huge guffaws and all our disgustingly hilarious conversations that helped lighten my emotional/psychological stress. Humor does work! Russ: Thank you for ALL your help with my study! Whew! You’ve been such a godsend. Martha: You’ve stuck by me all these years as I wept and wailed and thrashed with frustration at this near-decade long process from when I began in the Masters degree program, and never stopped believing in me. Your friendship is precious to me. Frank: You’ve been steadfast in your belief...
and faith in me all these years. What more could one ask in a friend? Mike: You’ve been a great source of inspiration for me, and selfless with your time! Stefanie: What a long, strange trip this’s been, as well you know. And for my dear friend and colleague Lennise: Yes, you were right. Had I listened to you from the beginning, I probably would have finished sooner.

A huge “thank you” goes to my advisers Dr. James Henderson, Dr. Claudia Khourey-Bowers, and Dr. Steven Brown. You all helped push me out of my comfort zone and challenged me to stretch my thinking in so many areas, while providing the support I needed to meet your expectations of quality. Dr. Brown: Thank you for your patience with my messy APA formatting and all my Q questions! And Dr. Khourey-Bowers, forever will your emphatic words of “Keep Writing!” be blazoned in my memory. Thanks for pushing me to get this done. It worked! Dr. Don Bubenzer, as my graduate faculty representative, thank you for your willingness to serve on the committee and for your wonderful support.

A huge thanks for Dr. Kaye Herth, without whom this research would have been less rich. You welcomed me into your home and, despite your busy schedule, assisted me with making sure the Q statements were aligned with the theoretical model used for this study. Dr. Herth, you are the embodiment of hope. May I provide for my students the type of generous support and realistic hope you have given to me.

Ultimately, this study would not have been possible without the willingness and cooperation of all the participants. Thank you. This study is for you. May your experiences be of help and hope for others.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions and Methodology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of This Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions and Limitations of This Study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Dissertation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Terms</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why a Model From Nursing Research</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope: Theoretical Bases</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry and Psychology</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy and Theology</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality and Transcendent</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendent</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farran, Herth, and Popovich Multidimensional Hope Model</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHP Hope Processes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rational Process</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relational Process</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Experiential Process</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritual/Transcendent Process</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporality as Its Own Hope Process</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Interaction of the Five Hope Processes</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Concourse and Q Sample</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Sort Procedure</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factor Analysis ................................................................................................ 71
Factor Rotation................................................................................................. 72
Factor Interpretation ......................................................................................... 73
Assumptions of the Study ..................................................................................... 74
Limitations of the Study ........................................................................................ 74

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS .............................................................................. 77
The Four Factors ................................................................................................ 81
   Factor 1: Making a Difference Through Advocacy ......................................... 81
   Factor 2: Faith-Based Calling to Teach ........................................................... 98
   Factor 3: Professional Autonomy and Respect .............................................. 112
   Factor 4: Total Reliance on God .................................................................... 124
Consensus Statements ......................................................................................... 133
Summary of the Results ...................................................................................... 135

V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ............................... 138
Summary of the Study ........................................................................................ 139
Discussion of Findings ........................................................................................ 140
   Factor 1: Making a Difference Through Advocacy ....................................... 140
   Factor 2: Faith-Based Calling to Teach ......................................................... 147
   Factor 3: Professional Autonomy and Respect .............................................. 154
   Factor 4: Total Reliance on God .................................................................... 159
Consensus Statements Among Factors 1, 2, and 3 ............................................. 164
Summary as Respects the Research Questions ................................................... 167
   Research Question One .................................................................................. 167
   Research Question Number Two ................................................................... 170
Unexpected Findings .......................................................................................... 173
Gaps in the Literature ......................................................................................... 177
Limitations ......................................................................................................... 177
Implications ......................................................................................................... 180
Future Lines of Inquiry ....................................................................................... 186
Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 190

APPENDICES ................................................................................................................ 191
APPENDIX A. LETTER OF CONSENT ...........................................................192
APPENDIX B. AUDIOTAPE CONSENT FORM .............................................195
APPENDIX C. DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE ...................................197
APPENDIX D. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS WITH KEY .....................199
APPENDIX E. Q SAMPLE WITH HOPE PROCESSES AND TYPES OF HOPE LISTED FOR EACH .................................................................202
APPENDIX F. COMPOSITE FACTOR ARRAYS ............................................206
APPENDIX G. WORDS OF WISDOM FOR NEW TEACHERS .....................209
APPENDIX H. PARTICIPANTS’ DREAM TEACHER SUPPORT SYSTEM ..................212
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Items of the Q sample in a near-normal forced distribution (40 items)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hope processes associated with Factor 1 based on high-positive statements</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hope processes associated with Factor 2 based on high-positive statements</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hope processes associated with Factor 3 based on high-positive statements</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hope processes associated with Factor 4 based on high-positive statements</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Descriptive Characteristics of Participants (N = 25)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Structure for Q Sample</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Factor Loadings With (X) Indicating a Defining Sort</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. FHP Hope Process and Type of Hope Abbreviation Key</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Distinguishing Statements for Factor 3</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Distinguishing Statements for Factor 4</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“Hope is at the very essence of teaching.” Sonia Nieto

Public school teaching is notorious for being a high-stress profession with significant attrition rates, particularly in this era of mandated high-stakes testing and accountability. Most educational research that explores issues of teacher attrition and retention typically focus on factors that influence teachers’ decisions to leave the profession, yet little is known regarding what sustains teachers to remain. One factor considered influential in teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession is that of hope (Nieto, 2003). Hope is important to explore, as one of the symptoms that many teachers report experiencing due to the teaching profession’s myriad and often relentless stressors, and which often leads to attrition, is a sense of hopelessness (D. N. Harris & Adams, 2005).

Ever since Pandora unloosed the evils of mankind from her jar, hope has been deemed vital for facing life’s challenges. Hope has been explored extensively in the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, theology (Godfrey, 1987; Lynch, 1965; Snyder, 1995), and health care—predominantly that of nursing (Benzein & Saveman, 1998)—and its influence in people’s lives, particularly when coping with stress. Hope has alternately been defined as a goal-oriented approach towards life (Snyder, 1994; Stotland, 1969); a desire for a better future in comparison to the present moment; a cognitive, relational, emotional, spiritual and/or transcendent strategy used for coping with challenges (Farran,
Herth, & Popovich, 1995); an ontological need (Freire, 1997); an existential attitude (Marcel, 1978); and a creative process that is integrally linked with the imagination (Lynch, 1965).

Despite the wealth of theories regarding the meaning and purpose of hope and investigation into and research on hope’s influence in the lives of people, there is a dearth of research that specifically focuses on hope and teachers; that is, exploring teachers’ perspectives regarding the role that hope plays in their decision to remain in the teaching profession, despite its many challenges and stressors that could lead to teacher attrition.

Stressors in the teaching profession include student discipline problems, inadequate school administrative support, lack of collegial and parental support, limited faculty input and influence into school decision-making and limited opportunity for advancement, low salaries, overcrowded classrooms, isolation, limited resources and supplies, inadequate planning time, unmotivated students, pressures of increased accountability, and feeling that creativity is hampered due to being held responsible for raising student achievement as measured by state-mandated standardized high-stakes tests (Certo & Fox, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). These factors have been found to contribute to many teachers’ sense of anger and frustration and, when combined with unrelenting stress, can eventually lead to impaired well-being such as physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion (Betoret, 2006).

This relationship between teachers’ well-being and high degrees of stress has been recognized since the early 1900s. Frances Ross Hicks (1934), in her doctoral dissertation entitled “The Mental Health of Teachers,” discussed how, from 1925 to
1930, there was a steady increase of teachers who were admitted to the hospitals for neurasthenia. Neurasthenia is “a condition that is characterized especially by physical and mental exhaustion usually with accompanying symptoms (such headaches, insomnia, and irritability), and is believed to result from psychological factors (such as depression or emotional stress or conflict)” (Merriam-Webster, 2011b). This definition of neurasthenia is remarkably similar to that of burnout, as will be seen.

The concern of many school districts regarding the stressors endemic to the teaching profession is its resulting in teacher attrition. “Teacher attrition” is a term used to describe the departure of teachers from their jobs (Ingersoll, 2001). Statistically, the highest rate of attrition occurs among new teachers: approximately 30% of teachers leave the teaching profession within their first three years, and nearly 50% leave by their fifth year (Ingersoll, 2002). Overall, the highest attrition rates occur in small schools; in high-needs, high-minority urban schools, and schools with low-income and low-performing students (M. Brown & Wynn, 2009); at the high school level; and in mathematics and science disciplines (Allen, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001). One study found teacher attrition rates upwards of 16% nationwide regardless whether urban, suburban, or rural (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2007). Contrary to popular thought, teacher retirement has been found to play a minor influence in overall teacher attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2001).

Research has also found that more females than males leave the profession, more special education teachers than regular education teachers, and more White teachers as compared with minority teachers (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Age is also a
predictor of departure from the teaching profession: Teachers over the age of 50 and under the age of 30 are most likely to leave (Luekens, Lyter, & Fox, 2005) with reasons encompassing burnout, seeking another occupation, marrying to have children, having children, relocation due to a spouse, or retirement (Arnold, Choy, & Bobbitt, 1993; Johnson et al., 2005). Attrition is not necessarily always voluntary; some teachers leave due to layoffs, illness, or disability (Arnold et al., 1993).

Attrition rates follow a U-shaped pattern by age and years in service. As previously discussed, the highest attrition rate occurs within the first five years of teaching. Mid-career teachers, also called second-stage teachers or experienced teachers (4-10 years, 6-15 years, or 10-19 years service, depending upon definition—see Arnold et al., 1993; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Van Soelen, 2000), have moderate attrition rates. Research suggests that many mid-career teachers leave the profession due to symptoms of burnout (Huberman, 1993, as cited in Johnson et al., 2005). Veteran teachers (approximately between 14-25 years of service) have the lowest attrition rates. Some proposed explanations for the low attrition rates of veteran teachers are that they feel effective with their work with their students, have well-developed stress-coping strategies, are comfortable and confident with the curriculum, feel they are in a supportive work environment, and feel appreciated (Johnson et al., 2005). Attrition rates begin to rise as teachers approach retirement (Arnold et al., 1993; Johnson et al., 2005). According to research, retirement eligibility generally occurs between the ages of 55 and 60 years of age, with many teachers staying till after the age of 65 (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997). Retirement eligibility would explain the rise in the U-shaped pattern of attrition.
Research consistently shows that qualified, experienced teachers are a strong predictor for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher attrition, therefore, has a direct influence on school districts’ need for staffing classrooms with qualified teachers. Attrition results in a continual influx of inexperienced beginners, particularly in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-performing schools that need experienced teachers (NCTAF, 2002). Teacher attrition disrupts a positive sense of school community, cohesion, feelings of belongingness, and performance among staff and students (Ingersoll, 2003).

One aforementioned contributor to attrition that can have deleterious effects on teachers is burnout. *Burnout* is a term coined by psychoanalyst Freudenberger in the 1970s (Dworkin, 1986). Freudenberger and Richelson (1980) found that when “the expectation level is dramatically opposed to reality and the person persists in trying to reach that expectation” (p. 51), burnout can occur. In general, burnout is the sense that one’s inner resources are being used up in the effort to cope with daily stressors which adversely impacts one’s ability to function. A range of behavioral, physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms then ensues, depending on the level and severity of burnout.

Burnout symptoms include feelings of chronic fatigue, anger, depression, boredom—often due to job routinization, decreased self-esteem, heightened irritability, psychosomatic complaints resulting from stress and emotional tension, disillusionment, despair, hopelessness, emotional distancing from students, loss of job commitment, and loss of meaningfulness in one’s work and/or life (Freudenberger, 1974; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Kopetz, Lease, & Warren-Kring, 2006; Maslach, 1982;
According to Betoret (2006), some people experience a dulling or even deadening of emotions from burnout. These stress-related symptoms have been shown to play a role in teachers choosing to leave their profession (D. N. Harris & Adams, 2005). As Julianne (name is pseudonym), a teacher and personal friend of mine, described, “I felt hopeless, actually—not sure it was burnout as much as it was giving up . . . maybe this was burnout or I wouldn’t have left my position” (personal communication, October 18, 2009).

Freudenberger (1974) found that people who typically experience burnout are those who tend to be hard workers, strive for goals, care about helping others, and have a need to give. Many tend to be idealistic, particularly in the first few years of employment. Burnout seems to be especially prevalent in individuals who work in the “helping professions” that require a significant amount of interaction with others, such as nurses, doctors, teachers, social workers, police officers, and counselors (Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980).

The terms stress and burnout are often used interchangeably. However, they are not the same. Stress in general is considered a condition of intellectual, emotional, and physical disequilibrium, judged as either positive or negative, of long or short duration, as a threat to one’s well-being, and where one’s coping process is perceived as compromised (Gold & Roth, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is defined as the thoughts and behaviors people use to manage the demands of stressful events, and is directly related to one’s emotions and sense of well-being (Folkman, 2010; Lazarus, 1990). Burnout, in contrast, is considered a consequence of prolonged experiences of
stress and reduced coping abilities, along with the perception “of unmet needs and unfulfilled expectations” (Gold & Roth, 1993, p. 44).

Teacher burnout refers to a teacher’s chronic perception of his or her unsuccessful attempts to address unrelenting stressors and the inability to cope with life’s demands, particularly when unable to meet the emotional demands required for working with others, such as students and colleagues (Durr, 2008; Farber, 1984; Maslach, 1982, 1993; Pines, 1993). Teacher burnout symptoms are the same as with burnout in general: emotional exhaustion which leads to a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment and devaluation of one’s own work, which can then lead to lowered quality teaching performance (Pines, 1993; Tomic & Tomic, 2008); depersonalization, that is, the distancing of one’s self from others (Maslach, 1993); feeling unappreciated (Gold & Roth, 1993); and loss of enthusiasm for work (Lambert & McCarthy, 2006; Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Many teachers who experience burnout expect less from their students and themselves, and feel that there is no way “out” from all the stressors (Farber, 1984).

Maslach (1982), a prominent burnout researcher, found a relationship between age and burnout, and age and years in career. The younger a person, the higher the risk for burnout. She speculates this is because younger persons are typically in the beginnings of their career and have less-developed coping strategies compared with their older colleagues. Because of their possible limited coping skills, this may increase the risk for burnout, resulting in a greater likelihood of leaving the profession in the first few years of their career (pp. 57-61). Maslach considered emotional exhaustion to be at the heart of burnout. She described this as emotional overload and is due to an individual
becoming overly involved emotionally and/or overextending oneself, and feeling overwhelmed by emotional demands placed upon them by others. This results in feeling drained and “used up” (p. 3), and leads to a depletion of energy. The consequence is feeling one is no longer able to give.

Two teachers participating in this study candidly answered when asked if they ever felt symptoms of burnout and what that was like. Ricardo, who currently works in a suburban middle school in northeast Ohio, explained:

I have felt burnout and various symptoms of it . . . I just didn’t want to go [to work] in the morning, I didn’t feel like talking, at times it felt like I would just give a busywork assignment [to my students] . . . Avoidance of colleagues is one I see often and have experienced myself.

Patricia, a high school art teacher, now teaches in a suburban setting. She described her experience while working in a large New Jersey inner-city school district.

Yes, I experienced it after only two years of teaching 450 underprivileged kids per week. I felt like my nervous system had been shot, and I just couldn’t go on. I felt overwhelmed and desperate. I was exhausted all the time. I lost my temper often. Even when I rested I just couldn’t quite bounce back. I began to feel hopeless.

It must be noted that burnout is not an either-or situation—either you are experiencing it or you are not. Enthusiasm for and commitment to one’s profession can wax and wane, and feelings of frustration, anger, anxiety, emotional fatigue, helplessness, and depression are considered a normal part of life and work. It is when the cycle of
negative emotions becomes chronic that burnout can occur, as it is a cumulative process (Potter, 1998). Adverse psychological and physical conditions can arise as a result of, or even be viewed as the beginnings of, burnout. In addition to anxiety, fear, and depression, migraine headaches, ulcers, hypertension, and insomnia may also be present (Block, as cited in Cunningham, 1983). An increase of colds can also result (Cunningham, 1983; Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980), which can then result in increased sick leave and absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism has been found to have a direct, negative effect on student learning and achievement (R. Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2007).

One aspect of burnout that can contribute to emotional exhaustion and development of negative attitudes towards students, colleagues, and one’s work environment, is that of burnout contagion. Bakker and Schaufeli (2000) suggested that some individuals who work with colleagues who are experiencing high degrees of burnout begin to evidence higher levels of emotional exhaustion themselves. It is possible that this increase of negative attitudes towards students, coworkers, and teaching itself due to burnout contagion may lead to increased attrition.

As for teachers who do suffer from burnout, many stay in the teaching profession not out of commitment to their students or the profession in general, but because they feel entrapped; that is, they stay in order to protect their livelihood as they have no other desirable job alternatives (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). This sense of entrapment can add to personal frustration, lowered performance for both students and teachers, and potential breakdown of school cohesiveness.
Rationale for the Study

An abundance of research exists on factors that contribute to teacher attrition, particularly within the first five years of teaching; one of the oft-stated factors is that of burnout with its attendant symptom of hopelessness (Day, 2004; Farber, 1984; Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2007; Tye & O’Brien, 2002; Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Yet, quite surprisingly, knowing that even just the beginnings of teacher burnout, if not addressed, can over time lead to serious ramifications for the individual teacher, colleagues, public schools in general and students in particular, there is limited research on what teachers, particularly those who have been teaching for six-plus years, perceive as sustaining them in their commitment to remain in the teaching profession despite its many stressors that can lead to burnout.

Moreover, despite the recognition that hope provides emotional, psychological, and spiritual support when individuals face life’s many challenges (Day, 2004; Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Fromm, 1968), it is again surprising that little educational research exists that focuses on teachers’ perspectives on hope, particularly from the aspect of coping with stress. The research that does exist specifically regarding teachers and hope tends to spotlight either preservice teachers (Estola, 2003) or novice teachers (Hammerness, 2003). This seems to mirror the general body of research on teacher retention and attrition which concentrates on teachers within their first few years of employment, the time period in which teacher burnout and attrition are at their highest (Ingersoll, 2001).
After an extensive literature search regarding teachers and hope, I found only two studies that targeted experienced teachers who chose to remain in the profession. One was Trautwein’s (2006) dissertation on teacher commitment, cynicism, and hope. His research, situated within an organizational leadership and development framework, explored the perspectives of 10 elementary school teachers who had been teaching for seven-plus years, regarding mandated organizational change and its influence on hope and cynicism (p. 6).

Trautwein (2006) approached hope solely from a cognitive-behavioral paradigm (i.e., thoughts influence behavior) by defining it in terms of optimism. This was despite the fact that he briefly spoke of hope as also being existential in nature: Hope is a perception of one’s “mission in life” that “provides impetus to seek ideal outcomes despite various challenging life situations” (p. 2). This nod to hope as something more than a form of optimism was in reference to Victor Frankl’s 1959 treatise on Holocaust survivors and the relationship between hope and feeling that one has purpose and meaning in life. Trautwein utilized the word “hope” in a loose, generalized way throughout his research, such as teachers “maintain[ing] a sense of hope” (p. 94). No further exploration into his participants’ perspectives on hope was approached from any other angle other than the cognitive-behavioral, despite his very brief mention of hope from the existential perspective regarding one’s search for meaning in life.

The other study was Nieto’s (2003) inquiry of Boston public school teachers’ perspectives on what keeps them in the profession. This was based on her one-year narrative inquiry project, “What Keeps Teachers Going in Spite of Everything?” she held
with a group of eight urban high school veteran teachers (teaching 20+ years each) and several novice teachers (less than five years of teaching experience). One of the themes Nieto discerned from the inquiry project was what she called “hope and possibility.” Through interviews and stories shared among some of the participants, hope was described as being “a catalyst for courage,” something that can endure despite loss of optimism, having faith in one’s abilities, confidence in colleagues, and having a vision of how things could be otherwise (pp. 53-62). Nieto stated that “hope is the very essence of teaching” and that hope is “perhaps the one quality that all good teachers share” (p. 53). However, hope was not the specific focus of Nieto’s project; it emerged as just one factor from her widely cast net regarding what keeps teachers going. Consequently, the phenomenon of hope as experienced by teachers was not explored any further beyond statements made by some of her participants.

Excepting Trautwein’s (2006) dissertation research and Nieto’s (2003) narrative inquiry project, educational research predominately focuses on novice teachers. As a result, there is a lack of educational research that focuses on mid-career K-12 public school teachers who have been teaching in that range between novice and veteran, that is, roughly between 6 to 15 years, and their perspectives on the ways in which hope sustains them in their decision to continue teaching despite its many stressors, as well as coping strategies utilized to nurture hope. This study seeks to fill this gap in the educational literature.
Research Questions and Methodology

The focus of this research was to explore the perspectives of mid-career K-12 public school educators in the ways hope sustains them to keep working in the teaching profession, and strategies they employ to build hope. Utilizing Q methodology, this study attempts to fill a perceived need for deepened exploration into the phenomenon of hope as a potential sustaining influence that can offset burnout with teachers, and potentially increase teacher retention. Q methodology, a mixed methodological research approach, was deemed uniquely suited for exploring the perspectives of the participants, as it “provides a way to investigate empirically how an individual, separately or as part of a group, thinks about a topic or issue of interest” (Durning, 2008, p. 1678) while maintaining the individual’s point of view (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). A detailed explanation of Q methodology is provided in Chapter 3.

The two research questions that guided this exploratory study were:

1. What are mid-career public school teachers’ perspectives on the role that hope plays in sustaining them to continue teaching?

2. What strategies do mid-career teachers use to build hope?

Significance of This Study

This exploratory study sought to fill a gap in the literature on what sustains mid-career public school teachers in their decision to remain in the profession by focusing on the role that hope may play in that decision, through the lens of a multidimensional hope framework. Gaining an understanding of the ways in which teachers conceive of and perceive hope as a sustaining influence and their perceived
sources of hope may enable teachers, administrators, and teacher educators to proactively develop and utilize hope-sustaining strategies that can nurture teachers and off-set the potential of burnout. These hope-sustaining strategies might be instrumental in assisting teachers in their decision to stay in the profession, thereby minimizing teacher attrition. This may help to maintain not only a positive sense of school community but also potentially improve staff and student performance.

Assumptions and Limitations of This Study

Several assumptions guide this study. One is that the teachers who chose to participate in this study experience hope in a way that sustains them in their commitment to remain in the profession and continue teaching. Another is that the participants were not staying in the profession due to feelings of entrapment (see LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). One possible limitation is that the teachers who chose to participate were a purposively-drawn sample rather than a random sample. However, the goal of the study was neither to seek causal relationships nor generalize any findings to the larger population. The focus was solely to explore the participants’ subjective perspectives about hope in terms of the ways it sustains them when faced with the various challenges encountered in the profession. Their perspectives may give insight into what strategies can be taken to help support teachers coping with stress and possibly experiencing the onset of burnout.

Another potential limitation regards the possibility that a number of the participants may have been experiencing some aspect of burnout at the time of the study. I do not feel this impeded the study in any way, as the focus was not on burnout but on
hope. Also, the participants self-identified that hope served as a sustaining influence in their choosing to remain in the teaching profession during the time of participation in this study.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 offers a critical review of the literature concerning theories of hope. Chapter 3 examines the research methodology and design utilized for exploring and analyzing the participants’ perspectives of hope. Results of data analyses are examined in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, as well as limitations and implications, and lines of inquiry for future research.

Definitions of Terms

Note: Some of these terms appear in Chapters 2 and 3.

**Attrition:** the departure of teachers from their job. Also called “leavers” (Ingersoll, 2003).

**Burnout:** the chronic perception of one’s unsuccessful attempts to address unrelenting stressors and the inability to cope with life’s demands; can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982).

**Commitment:** a multidimensional quality comprised of values, belief in an ideal or vision, emotional and intellectual engagement, sense of responsibility—to students and professional development, reflective practice, and maintaining confidence in one’s self-efficacy to have a positive effect on student success (Day, 2004).
Coping: the thoughts and behaviors people use to manage the demands of stressful events; it is directly related to one’s emotions and sense of well-being (Folkman, 2010; Lazarus, 1990).

Hope:

an essential experience of the human condition [that] functions as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way of relating to oneself and one’s world. Hope has the ability to be fluid in its expectations, and in the event that the desired object or outcome does not occur, hope can still be present.

(Farran et al., 1995, p. 6)

Hopemonger: those who can imagine the world in which they live with new possibilities and teach their students to do the same (Kohl, 1994).

Mid-career teachers: those who have been teaching for approximately 6-15 years.

Q methodology: a research methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to systematically study the subjectivity of human beings.

Stress: “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19).

Subjectivity: an individual’s point of view on any topic.

Sustain: that which provides nourishment or support so one can continue doing something regardless of challenges (Webster, 1965).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“When the world says, ‘Give up,’ Hope whispers, ‘Try it one more time.’”
Author Unknown

The purpose of this study was to explore two questions: (a) What are mid-career public school teachers’ perspectives on the role that hope plays in sustaining them to continue teaching, and (b) What strategies do teachers use to build hope? As discussed in Chapter 1, burnout is of major concern for public schools as it can feed teacher attrition. One of the symptoms of burnout many teachers report experiencing is a sense of frustration which can lead to hopelessness (D. N. Harris & Adams, 2005). Despite the recognition that hope is necessary for healthy functioning, the research on teacher burnout and attrition rarely explores hope except in general, non-specific terms, and predominately focuses on why teachers leave the profession, not why they stay. The few studies that have been conducted on teachers who stay in the profession found that the word hope kept arising from the participants during interviews as something that helps them “keep going” (Nieto, 2003).

Books and articles written about teaching and teachers express the conviction that having hope is a core part of what it means to be an effective teacher (Day, 2004; Prosser, 2006), and that the role of educators is to be a “hopemonger,” one who can imagine the world to be differently than it is and teach their students to do the same (Kohl, 1994, p. 38). As previously discussed, no research to date has been systematically conducted on
teachers in terms of the ways in which hope sustains them in their decision to stay in the profession.

To address the research question regarding the role that hope may play in sustaining teachers to stay in the teaching profession, this chapter examines the use of a specific hope conceptual framework developed by clinical nurse researchers Farran et al. (1995)—henceforth designated as the FHP hope model. This model was chosen as a theoretical template for this exploratory research as the FHP model is grounded in the disciplines of theology, philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry, each of which have explored in-depth the phenomenon of hope. The FHP model provides a comprehensive synthesis of hope theories from the aforementioned disciplines, as well as a working language by which to describe the ways in which hope is augmented or diminished, in contrast to hope models grounded solely in the discipline of psychology. It must be stressed that this study on teachers and hope did not seek to prove or disprove the FHP hope model, nor any a priori theory regarding hope. The study was simply to explore hope themes that arose based on the participants’ perspectives.

To best understand the FHP hope model, its underlying theory, and how it informs this study, the organization of this chapter is divided into the following sections with its attendant subsections: (a) the rationale for utilizing the FHP hope model; (b) an examination of several key theorists and their views on hope from the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology, and theology and philosophy that informed the FHP model; (c) an examination of how the key terms spirituality and transcendental are tacitly interpreted in the FHP model; (d) an in-depth discussion of the FHP model, which
includes explanation of two types of hope (generalized and particularized), and the FHP hope processes; (e) a discussion of my modification of the FHP hope model regarding the addition of the Temporality hope process; and (f) the interaction of the five hope processes and the two types of hope.

Why a Model From Nursing Research

In the field of education, no model exists with which to systematically investigate the phenomenon of hope; therefore educational researchers who explore hope in students and teachers must utilize hope models developed by psychologists or nurse researchers. In psychology, the hope models are predominately designed for counseling purposes (Gottschalk, 1985; Korner, 1970; Snyder, 1994, 1995; Stotland, 1969), whereas in nursing the models have focused not only on counseling but also wellness intervention and palliative care for the elderly, the critically ill, cancer patients and their caregivers, the exploration of hopefulness in adolescents, quality of life studies, and psychiatric care (Dufault, 1981; Herth, 1990, 2005; Hind et al., 1999; Nowotny, 1989; Pipe et al., 2008).

The dominant psychological hope model most commonly utilized today by educational researchers thus far is that of psychologist C. R. Snyder (for examples, see Hodge & Ozag, 2008, on teachers, hope, trust, and organizational commitment; and Sears’ 2007 dissertation on behavior, emotions, and school functioning with fifth and sixth grade students). Snyder’s model (1994) is bi-dimensional, whereby hope is conceived as a cognitive function of self-efficacy or agency, and goal attainment, and utilizes hope scales—Adult Hope Scale and Child Hope Scale—as the main means for data collection and analysis (Snyder, 1995).
Snyder (2002) posited hope as a cognitive process and defined it as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (p. 250). According to Snyder, “pathways” are the “workable” routes we plan to use to meet our desired goals, and “agency,” “agency thinking,” or “agentic thinking” is defined as “the perceived capacity to use one’s pathways to reach desired goals” (p. 251). Hope is the drive to actualize one’s goals “along imagined pathways” (Snyder, 2000, p. 10). Emotions are byproducts of the perception of success or failure of goal pursuits; however, these emotions can influence the thought processes and subsequent behavior of the person who is pursuing a goal. The more success at achieving desired goals, the more that positive emotions will occur, which give the individual motivational support for seeking the attainment of other goals. If one pathway to a desired goal is blocked, then alternative routes will be sought. Hope from an existential perspective as a force that gives meaning in life despite obstacles is not considered in his model.

In contrast, nursing models are multidimensional and examine hope as a complex phenomenon that is not solely a cognitive process focused on goal attainment, but also that which serves an existential need and gives meaning to one’s life (J. F. Miller, 1985). Nursing models take into account the influences of spirituality (Pipe et al., 2008), the dynamic effects of relationships, life context and experiences, the influence of time, and types of hope (Benzein & Saveman, 1998; Nekolaichuk, Jevne, & Maguire, 1999).

Alongside quantitative methods, such as the use of hope scales to measure participants’ perceived types and levels of hope (Herth, 1989, 1992; J. F. Miller &
Powers, 1988; Nowotny, 1989), nurse researchers also utilize qualitative methods to explore hope, such as grounded theory (Holtslander & Duggleby, 2009), phenomenology (Benzein, Saveman, & Norberg, 2000), discourse analysis (Elliott & Olver, 2007), and even unique methods such as participant photography as a means for patients to describe their views on hope (G. Miller & Happell, 2006).

The fundamental differences between the hope models from the two disciplines lay in their theoretical roots. Hope models within psychology are grounded almost exclusively within psychological and psychiatric literature, with their focus on goal expectations, motivation, and attainment (Bandura, 1977; Snyder, 1994; Stotland, 1969), whereas nursing models incorporate psychological and psychiatric literature as well as theological and philosophical literature (Benzein & Saveman, 1998; Delgado, 2005; C. Stephenson, 1991).

This is not to say that psychologists and psychiatrists do not touch on theology and philosophy in their understanding of hope. Psychiatrist Karl Menninger, in his 1959 academic lecture to the American Psychiatric Association on the necessity of researching hope in patients, as well as in his subsequent writings (1963), repeatedly referenced philosopher Gabriel Marcel’s existentialist views on hope and how hope was an intangible yet essential part of being human. Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl (1970) conceived of hope as transcendent—that which provides a sense of meaning and purpose in life. And psychologist Moadel et al. (1999) studied cancer patients’ spiritual beliefs and existential needs in relationship to coping with their illness. However, from what I have found thus far, no hope models within the psychological/psychiatric disciplines have been
developed that integrate literature from theology and/or philosophy alongside the psychological literature in order to systematically explore both the construct and lived experiences of hope; the hope model predominately utilized today is the pathways model developed by Snyder as discussed above.

The rationale for employing a nursing hope model for this study on mid-career public school teachers and their perspectives on hope as opposed to one from the psychology field is due to its multidimensional nature. Hope is conceived as something more than a cognitive-based response related to goal attainment. Research into teacher burnout and teacher attrition repeatedly reports that teachers who leave or think of leaving the profession, in addition to anger and frustration, often experience feelings of meaninglessness (Tomic & Tomic, 2008), feeling disconnected from their colleagues (Betoret, 2006), and that they have lost faith in their vision of what they had imagined/hoped to achieve (Hammerness, 2003). The nursing hope model developed by nurse researchers Farran et al. (1995) addresses these facets of hope by exploring the dialectic of hope and hopelessness through integration of theoretical literature from theology, philosophy, psychiatry, and psychology. The following is a discussion of key theories on hope from these four fields.

**Hope: Theoretical Bases**

**Psychiatry and Psychology**

*Karl Menninger*. Karl Menninger first brought “hope” to the attention of the psychiatric world in 1959 with his academic lecture on hope to the American Psychiatric Association, by decrying its absence in the psychiatric research literature. “Our shelves
hold many books now on the place of *faith* in science and psychiatry, and . . . *love* and to be loved. But when it comes to hope our shelves are bare. The journals are silent’ (p. 481, author’s italics). Within a decade after that lament, the psychological and psychiatric, medical, and health care shelves exploded with research on hope and its role in physical and mental health, depression, sense of well-being, quality of life, and even spirituality (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999; Watts, Dutton, & Gulliford, 2006), along with the development of various hope scales (Herth, 1991; Snyder, 1995).

Menninger believed hope to be an integral part of the human life instinct for survival, growth, creativity, and well-being, and that it was part of the very essence of being human (Menninger, 1959, 1963). Hope is neither illusion nor delusion, but what he termed an “intangible” that, alongside its sisters, love and faith, is necessary for health and healing—psychological, emotional, and physical. For Menninger (1963), an intangible is that which is difficult to define, an “ancient mystery,” but is nonetheless an “indisputable” factor that has direct influence on the healing process and “determine(s) the effectiveness of one individual upon another, teacher upon student or doctor upon patient” (p. 380). Menninger explained that his use of the word hope is not describing an aspect of religious faith, but rather is a description of a “mental” or cognitive way of being.

Menninger (1959) agreed with philosopher Gabriel Marcel (whose views on hope are addressed) that hope is not the same as optimism, as optimism implies distance from reality and always expects positive outcomes. Of importance is one’s recognition that hope must be based on reality, rather than wishful thinking for a desired outcome.
Reality is the concrete conditions in which we are immersed. By grounding ourselves in our current conditions, we can visualize alternatives and take an active role in our healing process and, from the perspective of a physician or counselor, the healing processes of others such as their patients (Menninger, 1963, pp. 384-387). Hope implies a process of “going forward” and being engaged in a “confident search” for an alternate, desired future based on an understanding of one’s current reality and one’s imagination. To be unimaginative is to be “hope-lacking” (Menninger, 1959, p. 489). This mirrors theologian William Lynch’s (1965) views on the primacy of the imagination and the role it plays in hope.

Nor can hope be equated with expectations per se; that is, expectations as conclusions based on observed facts (Menninger, 1963). We cannot hope for something that already exists or is already seen. Rather, with hope one holds positive expectations for a desired outcome that does not rely on observed facts. We cannot be absolutely sure that what we hope for will occur. Menninger (1959), again referring to Marcel, asserted that hope is not a self-centered yearning for an outcome focused on gratification for oneself, that is, being concerned solely with one’s own desires. Realistic hope is “beyond self” and exists in relationship and in community with others, such as the patient with the physician, or the teacher with the student. At its core, hope is a relationship of mutuality between oneself and others.

Ezra Stotland. Ezra Stotland (1969), in his research on the psychological underpinnings of hope, utilized the goal theory definition of motivation: Hope is a subjective form of motivation. It is a function of the “perceived probability of goal
attainment and of the importance of the goal” (p. 14). Its antithesis is hopelessness—the movement towards anxiety or pessimism, which is the result of a low expectation of the probability of goal attainment. Hopelessness can lead to an increase of anxiety, which can then lead to inaction, apathy, and depression. If we see another who we perceive as being similar to ourselves, such as a colleague who is in a similar circumstance and is experiencing anxiety, a decrease of hopefulness occurs. This is reminiscent of burnout contagion (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000), as discussed in Chapter 1. Conversely, one way for an individual to reduce anxiety and increase a sense of hopefulness, that is, motivation, is to be with others who are perceived as friendly and caring, particularly if they are perceived as being successful in goal attainment (Stotland, 1969, pp. 113-118). According to Stotland, hope is needed for changing and improving difficult life situations, and for reaching the attainment of a desired goal. Hope “refers to the future, which is not yet a reality . . . Hope is a subjective state that can strongly influence the realities-to-come” (p. 151).

**Ija Korner.** Clinical psychologist Ija Korner (1970) explored hope from the perspective of its being a coping mechanism, whose purpose is to offset doubt and disappointment and avoid despair. Hope provides a sense that a future gratification will give relief for the current discomfort and thereby help the individual cope with the present moment. It acts as a cushion against fears and/or anxieties, serves to activate “the individual’s coping ability” (p. 139), and thus is energizing. Hopes and wishes are interconnected in that the desire to fulfill an unmet need begins as a wish.
However, a hope is not the same as a wish. We wish for something specific which might happen, such as winning the lottery or passing a test, and may be optimistic about the end result. We also realize that the desired object or situation may not occur, that the probability for goal actualization is limited. To give up the wish may be unpleasant but will not cause despair. Wishing therefore has limited effect on one’s ability to work for and reach a desired goal. This relationship between wish, hope, and goals is addressed in greater detail and from a different angle by theologian William Lynch (1965), as discussed later.

According to Korner (1970), wishing is viewed as a passive activity in which people engage in few behavioral, cognitive, and emotional strategies to manifest their goal, because the wish focuses only on a positive outcome. Wishing avoids acknowledgment of pain, disappointment, or despair. It also avoids seriously considering a negative potential outcome, which might include despair. Wishing does not ground itself in reality as it does not take into account that a negative outcome might occur. This echoes both Menninger’s (1959) and Lynch’s (1965) view on the importance of staying grounded in reality. Moreover, the goals of wishing are not considered necessary or even vital for one’s personal well-being. In contrast to wishes and wishing, with hope we feel that that which is hoped for is fundamentally important to our life and thus we become committed to and even may cling to our hope. “In hope, however, it is exactly this quality of personal dependence on outcome which is its central characteristic . . . The individual feels that hoped-for events must occur for the sake of his well-being” (p. 135,
author’s italics). For this reason, hope is considered to be energizing: It motivates or mobilizes individuals to pursue what began as a wish.

Korner (1970) viewed hope solely as a psychological coping mechanism. However, as is seen later, this relationship between the striving for hope’s goal and its fundamental importance to one’s life and inner well-being is one aspect of hope in terms of spirituality.

**Albert Bandura.** Integral to the concept of hope as motivation is that of agency, that is, acts done intentionally. According to psychologist Albert Bandura (1977, 2001), an intention is a “proactive commitment” to a “plan of action” that is future-oriented. (Note: Bandura [2001] used the terms “agency” and “self-efficacy” interchangeably.) Agency is a cognitive process wherein individuals expect they can successfully achieve a situation-specific desired goal, which then has a direct influence on their behavior. The stronger the conviction in their effectiveness to achieve a desired outcome, regardless whether near or far in the future, the stronger the likelihood of persistence in their goal pursuit. Although the future has no actual existence, it can be a cause for current motivation and action. “By being represented cognitively in the present, foreseeable future events are converted into current motivators and regulators of behavior” (Bandura, 2001, p. 7). As a type of causal feedback loop, it is through our imagining of a desired outcome that we propel ourselves towards that desired goal. This relationship between the imagination and the future hearkens to theologian William Lynch’s (1965) thesis regarding the primacy of the imagination and its direct influence on hope and the future. This is discussed later.
Agency is directly linked to the need for control in two areas: personal control over outcomes and control over “the social systems that prescribe what the outcomes will be” (Bandura, 1982, p. 141). The assessment that one has personal control over effecting change and realizing a desired outcome is also experienced as a coping strategy when faced with obstacles (p. 142). That said, despite people’s belief or conviction they can do what is required to produce a result, if they believe that through their efforts a desired result will not occur, there is a greater likelihood of the individuals giving up or not persisting in their goal pursuit. As Bandura (2001) stated, “Unless people believe they can produce desired results . . . they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties” (p. 10). This stands in contradistinction to Menninger’s concept of hope and, as shall be seen, with Marcel’s (1978), Lynch’s (1965), and Godfrey’s (1987) views within the theological and philosophical literature that belief in personally producing a result is often not a reason for having hope.

**Erik Erikson.** The FHP hope model draws on psychologist Erik Erikson’s (1982) psychosocial developmental model regarding the genesis of hope in an individual in terms of trust. Erikson defined hope as “expectant desire” (p. 59) and is assumed to be the root of all ego development, that is, one’s sense of self, which includes one’s sense of capabilities. Hope is considered an instinctual drive that arises from our earliest experiences as an infant with our mother or primary caregiver—our “primal other,” when we learn to count on consistent, responsive care of our needs, and struggle to resolve what Erikson called the first developmental “antithesis between ‘basic trust and basic mistrust’” (pp. 49, 54, 88). An example of what can prompt an infant’s struggle to
resolve trust and mistrust with the mother or primary caregiver is with her presence and absences, over which the infant generally has no control. This sets the stage for our relationships with others, which extends to that of an Ultimate Other—that which is perceived as a presence, a divine being, or God, and which influences our spiritual and/or religious beliefs.

It must be noted that in his writings Erikson normally uses the designation of “vs.” when contrasting the two aspects of trust: basic trust vs. basic mistrust. Although “versus” can be used in its typical definition of “in opposition to,” Erikson explained that “versus” can also be used as “vice versa” due to what he calls the “complementarity” of the terms (p. 55). As Godfrey (1987) pointed out, basic trust and basic mistrust are two “polar attitudes” that create conflict. Trust and mistrust do not negate each other but stand in contrast in a type of dynamic tension that must be negotiated and resolved by the infant.

Hope emerges as our “first basic strength” through this struggle and resolution and becomes an “enduring pattern” when basic trust outweighs basic distrust (Erikson, 1982). How an infant learns to resolve this conflict of basic trust and basic mistrust results in an “attitude of the infant to the whole world” (Godfrey, 1987, p. 41), including the infant trusting his or her own self, notably in terms of control and capability. As Godfrey elaborated, “hope is the developmental turning point that characterizes the infant stage but is found as well in different forms at every stage of human development” (p. 41, author’s italics). On a broader level, basic trust and basic distrust are also influenced by social forces in terms of social support systems for the child and mother; this can have an
effect on the child’s developing sense of trust and belonging within the larger, societal context, that is, the community (Erikson, 1982; Godfrey, 1987). This can include one’s workplace and colleagues as being a form of community.

**Philosophy and Theology**

**Joseph Godfrey.** American philosopher Joseph Godfrey, in his 1987 book *A Philosophy of Human Hope*, discussed that which makes “hope-talk” uniquely challenging is that the word is used as a noun, adjective, and verb (p. 7). Its noun form—”a hope” or “the hope”—indicates a target, objective, or aim that is desired, such as “There’s hope for my students understanding the material.” This suggests the possibility or chance for a favorable outcome, with its actualization based either on one’s own resources to make it happen or the resources of others. Hope is most commonly used in the verb form (hoping) in which the goal or aim is clearly defined and indicates action of some sort, such as “They are hoping to pass the exam.” Another verb usage is placing hope in another, such as “I hope in the parents.” Here the object or goal is not specifically defined, but hope is situated within another person or, for some, in a higher power or divine being—“I hope in God.” The action lies in the hoping process, rather than being a targeted goal. In the parental example, they are seen as being a hope, perhaps for the student and/or for the teacher. A relationship of some sort is expressed in this type of hope. There is an implicit understanding of uncertainty that the desired outcome will occur.

Being “hopeful” is the adjective form of hope, such as “Although some of my students refuse to talk to each other, I am still hopeful they will learn to respect each
other.” As with the verb form, there is recognition of uncertainty—that what is hoped for may not occur, but the teacher still expresses hope. In this case hope is more an attitude, an existential state of being. This adjectival usage of hope seems to contrast with Bandura’s motivation thesis, where he posited that people persist in their goals only when they believe that attainment of the goal is likely to happen.

Godfrey (1987) pointed out that what is hoped for is not necessarily an object or target but an objective. What is desired is a state of affairs or even condition of being that will be fulfilled in the future, whether near or far (pp. 11-12, 25). Hope also implies that there is a possibility, albeit uncertain, that this desired goal may not occur, and that there may be some difficulty or obstacle that prevents its fulfillment. “Hope is more properly found where the future is veiled, and where the present contains elements set to thwart movement toward the goal” (p. 29).

With both the verb and adjectival usage lies an intrinsic tension which the individual must negotiate—the balance between hope and hopelessness, yearning and despair, as we cannot know for certain that our goal will be attained. As Lynch (1965) said, hopelessness is part of life and the individual must not only accept that this dialectic exists, but must not allow the despair to “contaminate” one’s hope.

**William Lynch.** American Jesuit theologian William Lynch (1908-1987) is best known for his work on hope in his *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (1965) where he focused on the mentally ill. His insights on the relationships between hope, hopelessness, and the significance of the imagination resulted directly from his own mental breakdown and recovery in 1956 (Bednar, 1996, p. xiii). His work
has been hailed by psychiatrists as the first major contribution to the study of a psychology of hope and hopelessness from a psychiatric perspective (see Forward by Farber in Lynch, 1965).

For Lynch (1965), hope is at the very center of being a human being, and has these key attributes: (a) Hope is equated with the life of the “realistic imagination,” that is, imagining the full contextual image of that which we hope for but do not yet have or see. “Hope imagines, and that it refuses to stop imagining (or hypothesizing), and it is always imagining what is not yet seen, or a way out of difficulty, or a wider perspective for life or thought” (p. 23); (b) Hope is an act of mutuality, of community, that is, of wishing with, with its goal of enlarging the perceived boundaries of what is possible. This includes recognition that hope is not solely a private, interior process, but requires us to seek outside help in order to realize our hope and to imagine another world of possibility; and (c) There is a strong relationship between hoping and wishing, as wishing is deeply bound up with the imagination and relationships. Lynch’s view on wishing stands in contrast to psychologist Korner (1970) as earlier discussed. Although Korner recognized that hopes and wishes are interconnected, he diminished the role that wishing plays in one’s hope.

According to Lynch (1965), where there is no wishing there is no imagining, and where there is no imagining there is no hoping. The imagination is critical because it enables one to envision “what cannot be seen” and is “the gift that constantly proposes to itself that the boundaries of the possible are wider than they seem” (p. 35). Wishing is a movement toward something that is desired, and contextually imagines the possibilities.
In this manner, wishing and hope reciprocally sustain and energize each other through the imagination.

Lynch (1965) elaborated that the imagination is “the sum total of all the forces and faculties in man [sic] that are brought to bear upon our concrete world to form proper images of it” (p. 243). Its tasks are twofold: to find a way through fantasy into fact, that is, one’s current reality; and create contextual perspectives for the facts it has found. Lynch called this the “realistic imagination” due to this grounding in one’s contextual reality concrete world. The realistic imagination recognizes that not all possibilities have yet been seen and must stay open for new possibilities. It draws on one’s cognitive abilities, feelings, and life experiences: “For our images are not formed by the eye alone, but by the heart and mind and wishing” (p. 247). Part of the function of the realistic imagination is to assist us in engaging in transcendence.

For Lynch (1965), transcendence means “getting beyond” whatever is perceived as a difficult or challenging situation in the current time frame and provides the sense that there is a “way out” (p. 35). In this way transcendence is intimately linked with hope, as we take the next step from our present moment into the next through our imagination by pushing wider our perceived boundaries of what is and is not possible. This description is reminiscent of Snyder’s (1994) pathways, the routes one imagines to a desired goal. Unlike Snyder, however, hope is centered in a relationship of mutuality, a reaching out to others. Hope “imagines with” (Lynch, 1965, p. 23, author’s italics) and is grounded in mutuality and a concern for another. This relational quality of hope was earlier articulated by psychiatrist Menninger (1959), who asserted that “realistic hope” exists in
relationships with others; it is through relationships that hope emerges and is sustained. It is this kind of relationship that aids in the reimaging and transcending of one’s current reality.

In addition to wishing, mutuality, imagining, and taking of help from others, hope involves waiting. This is not a passive kind of waiting, but one that is positive and creative. It entails having the ability to focus upon a goal, cope with obstacles, adjust plans in the face of obstacles, and take alternate steps required to attain the goal. “It also means the ability to handle other wishes so that they do not impede the realization of the central wish” (Lynch, 1965, p. 179); in other words, to not get unduly distracted and thrown off course. This practice of positive waiting requires an “enlarging one’s perspective beyond a present moment, without quite seeing the reason for doing so. Fortitude and endurance are there, to an extent, beyond the merely rational” (p. 179; italics mine).

Even in the face of obstacles and the perceived likelihood that one’s efforts may not result in attainment of the desired goal, one can still have hope for all the possibilities may not be “seen” or imaged in the present moment. One facet of positive waiting is that it requires acknowledgment, acceptance of, and the ability to handle hopelessness. “Hopelessness . . . is going to be there permanently to the end of life, to be used creatively and positively, or to be allowed to take over a negative and total perspective” (Lynch, 1965, p. 53). For Lynch, hope and hopelessness exist in dialectic tension and are not contradictories, as that would necessitate the canceling out of the other. Rather, they are what he called “contraries,” that is, coexisting polar opposites “that contribute to the
making of the thing. Those opposites are always found together in the thing. They are never separated, or found alone” (Bednar, 1996, p. 46). We cannot have one without the other, for part of reality is hopelessness. Our task is to keep each in its place and not let hopelessness, as Lynch (1965) said, “contaminate” hope. This perspective is echoed in current psychological research by some family therapists who view hope and hopelessness as powerful, coexisting lived experiences, and suggest that strong hope and strong hopelessness can exist side by side within the same individual (Flaskas, 2007).

Lynch (1965) considered hopelessness to be “a constriction of the private imagination” (p. 23), a sense of entrapment, a loss of future. This sense of entrapment is later echoed in Marcel’s (1978) discussion of the trial. Hopelessness cannot imagine beyond what it perceives are its limits in the present moment, and closes in on itself. Hopelessness represents the limits or boundaries of what is currently possible. Recognizing boundaries is an important part of the process of reality checking for personal limitations, areas of helplessness and things we cannot do, as everything that is hoped for is not always possible. The challenge is to not allow the imagination to close down or constrict but to face these boundaries of hopelessness, acknowledge them, and keep them from negatively influencing all areas of sensed possibility. “Hope adapts itself to the limits of reality” (Dufault, 1981, p. 49).

**Gabriel Marcel.** Gabriel Marcel was a French Christian existentialist philosopher (1889-1973) and is well-known for his influential book on hope: *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (1978), first published in 1951. The book is a collection of lectures given in the early 1940s, of which his second essay, “Sketch of
a Phenomenology and a Metaphysic of Hope,” provides his detailed treatise on hope.

“Homo viator” stands for “man” the traveler; man on the way. (Note: “Man” is used in a
generic sense meaning human beings.) The term represents we are all on a journey in
life, and hope is an intrinsic part of this journey.

Marcel (1978) viewed hope as a special kind of human experience, “an active
process that takes place within the individual and is vital to the human spirit” (Dufault,
1981). Marcel preferred that we use the verb form of hope, that is, hoping, to accentuate
that it is a process. Hoping is an existential condition, a matter of being, not a matter of
having. Hoping is not the same as wishing, although our hopes often begin as wishes.
Wishes tend to focus on specific objects or desired things. Hoping, instead, does not deal
with objects at all but with a condition of being: to be healed when sick; to have a better
relationship with a colleague; to make a difference in our students’ lives.

Likewise, hoping is not the same as optimism. Optimism suggests that the person
takes a step back from reality to minimize the obstacles that are perceived as being in the
way of achieving a goal; the individual believes or even just has “a vague feeling, that
things tend to ‘turn out for the best’” (Marcel, 1978, p. 33). Moreover, the optimist
remains a passive spectator and is not engaged in the same inward process as one who
hopes. An optimist is focused primarily on the gratification of his or her personal desires,
whereas one who engages in the process of hoping is situated in an act of relationship
between oneself and others. As such, hope looks outside the individual for help.

“Everything goes to show that hope does not bear upon what is in me” (p. 41). This
mirrors Lynch’s (1965) view that hope is not solely a private matter but requires us to seek help outside ourselves to reach our hope’s objective.

For Marcel (1978), hoping occurs when one feels trapped, a captive with no way out, and experiencing distress or even despair; he called this sense of entrapment the “trial.” The trial is when we feel that external conditions constrain us “to a compulsory mode of existence involving restrictions of every kind touching [our] personal actions” (p. 31). It is from this trial that we long for resolution. According to Marcel, the trial is “the general condition of man [sic], even when his life appears to be quite normal . . . by reason of the enslavements of all kinds which he is called upon to endure” (p. 58). Examples can be someone enduring an illness, someone fighting “writer’s block” where creative thoughts seem to have hit a roadblock, or, in the world of many teachers, the frustration that arises by having to focus class time on preparation for mandatory high-stakes tests, using an externally imposed curriculum, or lacking administrative support.

In short, a trial which brings on a sense of captivity can be anything over which we perceive we have little to no control or decision making power, and may even challenge our beliefs in our life’s purpose. Viktor Frankl (1970) addressed this phenomenon of the trial in its extreme form while in the Nazi concentration camps. He observed that when prisoners succumbed to their captivity, they lost hold of their meaning and purpose for life and allowed themselves to die. They gave up hope.

Marcel claimed that hope arises from despair. Just as Lynch (1965) theorized that hope and hopelessness cannot exist without the other and that hopelessness is the
constriction of the imagination, Marcel stated that hope cannot exist without despair and that despair is a sense of time being closed, time as a prison. “The truth is that there can strictly speaking be no hope except when the temptation to despair exists. Hope is the act by which this temptation is actively or victoriously overcome” (p. 36). Hope appears as “piercing through time” (p. 53); that what is occurring now is not what will necessarily be in the future. Hope cannot see what will happen, but it can affirm “as if it saw” (p. 53, author’s italics). It visualizes that which might be and thereby opens time in the now to the creative possibility of alternate experiences and situations that can contradict the currently held experience from which the sense of captivity arises. This hearkens back to psychologist Stotland (1969), where he claimed that hope “refers to the future, which is not yet a reality . . . Hope is a subjective state that can strongly influence the realities-to-come” (p. 151).

Akin to Lynch’s (1965) view on the role of active waiting, for Marcel hope requires patience. This does not mean a simple rejection of the situation or trial in which one is in, but relaxing into and embracing one’s non-acceptance of the trial. Patience rejects the tendency to slide into despair and feel that time is closed to options. Through the act of patience, hope accepts the trial’s existence as integral to oneself while simultaneously acknowledging that the trial will be both “absorbed and transmuted by the inner workings of a certain creative process” (p. 39).

This creative process entails being open to reimagining time in the present and time in the future. The opening of time in the present to possibility reconnects us with our relationship with that which we desire changed and what we desire for the future. Our
initial temptation in the face of a trial is to shut the door to possibility and thereby close
down time, asserting that the present will always be the same, even into the future. There
is no tomorrow except a repeat of today. Marcel claimed this stance de-energizes the
future. This de-energization is similar to that described by Korner (1970) in his
discussion of hopelessness and the sense of loss of that which we feel is vital for our
well-being.

**Spirituality and Transcendent**

The FHP hope model combines the constructs of “spiritual” and “transcendent”
into one category—the “Spiritual or Transcendent process” (what I refer to hereafter as
the Spiritual/Transcendent process)—as one component of hope. The FHP usage of these
two constructs is grounded primarily in the philosophical and theological literature as
previously discussed. The authors of the FHP model do not explain what these terms
mean, but use them as if their meanings were tacitly understood by the reader. Although
these constructs are intrinsically related to each other, they each have somewhat different
meanings. The purpose for this brief section is simply to provide an understanding of
these two constructs which are intertwined into one process.

**Spirituality**

The following descriptions and attributes of spirituality are derived from a
synthesis of three separate literature reviews conducted on the meaning of spirituality
(Delgado, 2005; Dyson, Cobb, & Forman, 1997; Tanyi, 2002). The word *spiritual* comes
from the Latin root *spiritus* or spirit, meaning “breath” and is considered to be an
animating force or vital principle that gives life to living organisms. It is an inherent
component of what it means to be human and is multidimensional, subjective, and intangible. Spirituality is a personal search for meaning, involves faith or the willingness to believe, encompasses connectedness with others such as friends, family, and work colleagues, and/or a higher power, and is deeply associated with transcendence.

Tanyi (2002) noted that belief or even faith does not have to be in a higher power, God, or a formal religion, as seen with agnostics or atheists, but can involve believing in significant relationships, self-chosen goals, and/or values. Often used as synonyms, the words spirituality and religion are not interchangeable. One may belong to a religious group but that does not mean he or she is spiritual. “Although not everyone has a religion, everyone who searches for ultimate or transcendent meaning can be said to have a spirituality” (Sulmasy, 2002). Due to its multidimensional and subjective nature, there is no consensus as to a single definition (Tanyi, 2002).

Some of the consequences of spirituality that were found in the literature reviews include a feeling of increased inner strength, an increased ability to live with uncertainty, a sense of hope, increased well-being which can affect one’s quality of life, a heightened ability to cope with stress, and a feeling of inner peace.

Transcendent

The FHP hope model uses the terms transcendent, transcendence, and transcending interchangeably. These terms all derive from the same Latin root: *transcendere*, meaning “to climb across.” Definitions of transcendent (as well as transcendence, etc.) include exceeding the usual limits of ordinary experience and knowledge; that which is beyond comprehension; and rising above (i.e., transcending)
material existence or the universe (Webster, 1965). For Lynch (1965), transcendence means “getting beyond” whatever is perceived as difficult or challenging in the present moment by pushing ever wider and transforming limitations through the realistic imagination.

The ability to transcend is also defined as a “fundamental capacity of the individual, a source of intrinsic motivation that drives, directs, and selects behaviors” and represents a broad domain of motivations that underlie strivings in both secular and religious contexts” (Piedmont, 1999, pp. 988-989). This striving by an individual to transcend current limitations is often described as self-transcendence—“reaching beyond personal boundaries and attaining a wider perspective, which facilitates finding meaning in life’s experiences” (Tanyi, 2002, p. 503). When combined with connectedness with others, a higher power or purpose greater than oneself, and having meaning and purpose in life (Frankl, 1970), self-transcendence broadens the overall meaning of spirituality. Just as spirituality can enhance one’s quality of life, transcendence is related to positive mental health and well-being (Ellermann & Reed, 2001).

In summation, the constructs of spirituality and transcendent/transcendence share these interweaving themes: the possible belief in a Higher Power, connectedness with others, reaching beyond one’s perceived boundaries; to stand outside one’s immediate sense of time and place in order to view life from a larger perspective; to rise above one’s current situation towards a desired future; having or seeking purpose and meaning in life; and enhancement of one’s well-being and quality of life.
Farran, Herth, and Popovich Multidimensional Hope Model

The FHP model defines hope as a multidimensional, dynamic construct that is essential to the human experience.

It functions as a way of thinking, a way of feeling, a way of behaving, and a way of relating to oneself and one’s world. Hope has the ability to be fluid in its expectations, and in the event that the desired object or outcome does not occur, hope can still be present. (Farran et al., 1995, p. 6)

The FHP model is comprised of four processes, which altogether are called the Hope Process Framework (Herth, 2005). These are termed the Rational, Relational, Experiential, and Spiritual/Transcendent. Each of these processes is grounded in and represents a synthesis of key psychological, psychiatric, theological, and philosophical theories previously discussed.

In general, the Rational process or the “mind” of hope is the cognitive-behavioral-affective dimension, which includes personal agency. Time or temporality is located in the Rational process. The Relational process, the “heart” of hope, focuses on the importance of relationships for hope to flourish, as hope develops within an individual, between individuals, and among individuals in a community or society. The Experiential or the “pain” of hope addresses what are considered to be trials in life (see Marcel, 1978) and the reasons for developing one’s imaginative capacities. The Spiritual/Transcendent process, the “soul” of hope, explores the ability to rise above one’s present reality as a coping mechanism. The terms “mind,” “heart,” “pain,” and “soul” are designations used by Farran et al. to describe the essence of each hope process (1995, pp. 6-10).
The FHP model also distinguishes between two types of hope and the ways in which they interact: a basic, fundamental or unchallenged hope, and a challenged or ultimate hope. The terms fundamental and ultimate are taken from philosopher Joseph Godfrey (1987). Fundamental hope can be a specific goal or aim and that which is believed possible of attainment, whereas ultimate hope is considered representative of a deeper, more heartfelt hope, where its manifestation into reality is uncertain (Farran et al., 1995; Godfrey, 1987). However, when discussing the two types of hope, rather than use the designations of fundamental and ultimate, I use the terms particularized hope and generalized hope as developed by nurse researcher Karin Dufault (1981), on whose work the FHP model also draws.

Particularized hope represents an aimed, personally significant goal, a valued outcome or state of being in which we have an emotional investment, attachment, or commitment to see manifest at some near or distant future time (e.g., “I hope my students pass their mathematics test”). This valued outcome—that which is hoped for—is considered the object of hope and may be abstract or concrete, implied or explicitly stated. It holds within itself the expectation that “what exists in the present can be improved or achieved” (Farran et al., 1995, p. 182) and provides impetus for positive coping with obstacles and developing pathways to realize the hope object, that is, the valued outcome. “Particularized hope clarifies, prioritizes, and affirms what a hoping person perceives is most important in life. It preserves and restores the meaning in life” (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, pp. 380-381).
In contrast, generalized hope represents something broad in scope, somewhat intangible, indeterminate, future-oriented, and impossible to know if it will manifest (e.g., “I am hopeful that my students will benefit from this later in life;” or even, “hope keeps me going”), and may or may not be linked to a specific object of hope. This type of hope can serve as a kind of “umbrella” that can protect against despair (Dufault, 1981) by extending itself “beyond some of the limitations of time and matter” to which particularized hopes are bound (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p. 380). Generalized hope can be viewed as an outlook on life that enables individuals to be open to changing events and provide motivation to carry on, regardless of difficulties, and protect against despair.

The reason for choosing the terms particularized and generalized as opposed to fundamental and ultimate is twofold. Excepting the authors of the FHP model, virtually all the hope studies I have read to date that are grounded in a multidimensional model utilize Dufault’s terms (for example, see G. Harris & Larsen, 2008; Lohne & Severinsson, 2004; Nekolaichuk et al., 1999). Secondly, Dr. Kaye Herth, one of the developers of the FHP model, encouraged me to utilize Dufault’s terminology in contrast to those used by the FHP model when examining the multidimensional aspects of hope (private communication, September 21, 2009). For this study I use the terminology preferred by current hope researchers to avoid any potential and/or unintended confusion.

The following examines each of the four FHP hope processes. This is followed by my rationale for adding the fifth hope process of Temporality, then finally the ways in which the two types of hope (generalized and particularized) are expressed within these processes.
FHP Hope Processes

The Rational Process

Based on the psychological and psychiatric literature, rather than separating affect (emotions), cognition, and behavior into discrete groups, the FHP hope model combines all three into one unit or process, which is called the “mind” of hope (Farran et al., 1995, p. 8). This is considered the base from which realistic hopes spring (see Menninger, 1963). “Hope is reality-based from the perspective of the hoping person. It depends upon the hoping person’s perception of the situation” (Dufault, 1981, p. 291).

In the FHP model, the acronym GRACT was developed to identify the components of the Rational attributes with which hope is associated (Farran et al., 1995, p. 9). \(G\) stands for Goals that motivate the individual to achieve that which is hoped for and desired. These goals must be deemed realistically and objectively possible, for it is this grounding in reality that separates wishes from hopes. \(R\) represents one’s Resources, whether physical, emotional, or social, that provides the needed energy and assists one in reaching towards the attainment of the hoped for goal. \(A\) stands for Active Process. The hoping person plays an active role in the hoping process, and takes the necessary steps, beginning with small ones, towards addressing current challenges to attain one’s goals. \(C\) represents the control needed over one’s situation, which provides the sense of control over one’s destiny. “It is loss of control that is often associated with feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness” (Farran et al., 1995, p. 9). Both the Active Process and Control call upon one’s sense of personal agency to serve as a motivational force. \(T\)
represents *Time*, which includes one’s past and present experiences and future
anticipations regarding the working towards and potential realization of one’s goals.

Herth explained the linkage between hope and the Rational process: “Hope is an
active process in which persons continue to take steps, even tiny ones toward attaining
their goals . . . [this] requires fortitude . . . and is a process that is learned” (personal
communication, September 21, 2009).

**The Relational Process**

This is the “heart” of hope, the realm of relationships, as they are considered
integral to the process of hope and hoping. For Marcel (1978), hope is a relational
process that occurs between people and is inspired by love. One can influence another’s
hope by expressing confidence in the person’s ability to overcome adversity. Lynch
(1965) stated that we cannot talk about hope without talking about its relationship to help.
“Hope is an interior sense that there is help on the outside of us” (p. 32).

Individual hope is strengthened through the mutuality of interactions, which
includes the sharing of goals, visions, and yearnings. That said, hope does not
necessarily flourish under all relational interactions; the hope that seeks help must be
mutual. The person who gives must be willing to enter into the relationship with the one
who hopes, and receives. The value and integrity of those who mutually come together
must be affirmed and each individual must be heard at some level, not shut out. As
Lynch (1965) wrote:

I must not be in such a relationship to objects [i.e., people] that I vanish out of the
picture. I am destroyed. And the reverse is also true: ideally the object in coming
to me must find itself. It is the hope for this mutuality that is the secret of all our
hopes: it is its absence in substance that makes us hopeless. (p. 44)

When there is a lack of genuine mutuality in the relational process, individuals may
experience either “an absence of supportive relationships or a lack of trust in others or a
belief that others cannot provide any support” (Farran et al., 1995, p. 110), which can
promote a feeling of hopelessness.

The sense of interrelatedness and connectedness to someone or something outside
ourselves that can be a source of hope is somewhat similar to the spiritual/transcendent
process. However, the focus in the relational process tends more towards the
relationships between people, such as friends and family, teachers with students, and
teachers with their colleagues or administrators.

**The Experiential Process**

The experiential process is described as the “pain” of hope (Farran et al., 1995, p.
6). It is grounded in existentialist philosophy regarding both the concept of life’s trials as
described by Marcel (1978) and the enlarging of one’s boundaries through the use of the
imagination as discussed by Lynch (1965).

A trial is any situation in which we feel trapped on some level and produces
feelings of anger, frustration, distress, and helplessness, all the way to despair and
hopelessness if we feel we are unable to change our external circumstances. It is within
the trial that hope emerges; it is also within the trial that our hope is challenged when we
are tempted to despair. The trial can affect an individual on the physical, psychological,
social, and spiritual levels, and can result in symptoms such as illness, withdrawal from
friends and colleagues, questioning the worth of continuing to struggle in the face of obstacles, even questioning one’s purpose in life. These responses to one’s trial are the same as those experienced by teachers who suffer from burnout (Maslach, 1982).

It is also within the Experiential process where we encounter and must address the dialectic of hope and hopelessness. Both Lynch (1965) and Flaskas (2007) explained that we cannot have one without the other, as the very nature of hope contains its opposite. These opposites or contraries (Lynch, 1965) coexist within each individual. It is our task to keep each in its place, so to speak, so we do not allow hopelessness to contaminate our hope itself and our ability to hope. As such, the hoping process requires our accepting life’s challenges as part of the human condition, while allowing ourselves to expand our imagination regarding what we conceive are the boundaries of the possible. According to Lynch, boundaries serve as a reality check. They show us what our limitations are in the context of the situation, of what is and is not currently possible. We must remember that our boundaries are not absolutes; for if we do, we close down our imagination to potential alternatives.

The Spiritual/Transcendent Process

This process is considered the “soul” of hope (Farran et al., 1995, p. 8). Spirituality and transcendence, as previously discussed, assist individuals to rise above their present challenging circumstances—that is, the trial. This can be accomplished through faith in a religious and/or spiritual structure or even in significant relationships; having meaning and purpose in one’s life; having a “sense of certainty about that which
is uncertain” (Farran et al., 1995, p. 8); and being able to live contextually and imagine the possibility that help outside oneself does exist.

When individuals feel they have no meaning or purpose, hopelessness often sets in (Vaillot, 1970). The ability to imagine help is diminished, with the effect being reluctance to reach out to others, one’s spiritual practices or even one’s religious faith, for help or support. On another front within the spiritual/transcendent process, when too much emphasis is placed on an external source having the power to effect change, such as “God will provide,” personal responsibility for taking action to problem solve is deferred (Farran et al., 1995).

Key to the spiritual/transcendent process is the ability to rise above and transcend the trial via the following possible strategies: finding ways to build inner fortitude in order to continue working with the challenge, making peace with the challenge by accepting the limitations of the situation, beginning the process of adjusting expectations, and/or searching for alternative solutions.

**Temporality as Its Own Hope Process**

As was seen, the FHP model places the concept of time or temporality in the Rational process, which contains the constructs of cognition, affect, and behavior. The premise for this placement is that one’s past and present experiences and the anticipation of the future in terms of goals influences one’s actions. This is grounded in Bandura’s (2001) view that time, particularly the focus on potential future events, can be a cognitive motivator for behavior. However, despite time’s influence as a potential motivational force, my concern was that its importance, notably its relationship to the “future
orientedness” of the hope object (Dufault, 1981, p. 341), would be masked by leaving it subsumed within the Rational process. I felt this would not allow for exploring the potentially dynamic relationship that time may play in teachers’ hopes regarding their workaday world and their perceived role in their students’ lives. For these reasons, I modified the FHP hope model and placed temporality into its own category for this exploratory study. The following provides the theoretical rationale for the linkage between temporality and hope.

Time and hope are intimately linked, as hope represents the desire for a future event, such as the actualization of a goal, which has not yet happened yet known to be uncertain (Marcel, 1978). Along with acknowledgment of uncertainty is the recognition that contingencies could arise that may possibly prevent the event from occurring or occurring in the desired time frame (Rycroft, 1979).

Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997) described the linkage between time and hope as a “transtemporal understanding” (p. 1039), for when people hope they make a “triangulation” between the past, present, and future, enabling them to make judgments about life which can influence their decision making and actions. As Dufault (1981) found in her research, when individuals remembered hopes that were fulfilled in the past, this gave them reason to be hopeful about new hopes, whether generalized or particularized, for the future, even if a present hope was not fulfilled in exactly the time frame or manner that was desired. Conversely, in some individuals the memory of previously hoped-for unfulfilled hopes that were abandoned led to a renewed sense of disappointment in the present moment regarding similar hopes. That said, it was the
present that provided the context in which individuals hoped, and “gave the future an
opportunity to emerge” (p. 303). For Rycroft (1979), “hope is generated at the interface
between the past and the future” (p. 7).

One important point that Farran et al. (1995) made is that every individual has his
or her own definition of time. Time may be counted in clock hours or
days/weeks/months, in relation to activities or goals—anticipated, planned, or completed,
one that is nature-based such as the blossoming of flowers, and even a nebulous
timeframe expressed by some as an “eternal future” which many persons view as part of
their spiritual or religious beliefs. Time may also include short-range and long-range
goals, be they implied, non-specific, or explicit, and goals which are time limited
compared to those which transcend time (p. 301).

Marcel (1978) spoke of time in terms of the “trial.” If we fall prey to the
temptation of shutting doors of possibilities, alternate solutions or, as Snyder (1994)
would say, pathways towards our goals, we close down time and make it our reality that
the present will always remain the same, even into the future. Tomorrow becomes
nothing but a repeat of today. This strips the future of any energy, any possibility of
coming into being. However, if we resist the temptation of shutting down what Lynch
(1965) described as the “realistic imagination” in the face of adversity, we then are able
to reimage time in both present and future, thus opening time to possibility. This opening
of time in the present and envisioning the future as a potential reality that can come into
being reconnects us to our desire for that which we desired changed, influencing our
hopes for the future. This may then galvanize us into taking whatever steps may be
required to work towards that desired future which is different from the present moment’s situation.

The Interaction of the Five Hope Processes

Hope then, constitutes a delicate balance of experiencing the pain of difficult life experiences, drawing upon one’s soul, spiritual, or transcendent nature, and at the same time maintaining a rational or mindful approach for responding to these life experiences. (Farran et al., 1995, p. 9)

The hope processes do not work independently but rather synergistically, interactively influencing the other. When an individual is faced with a stress-producing challenge or, as Marcel (1978) would say, the trial, this sets into motion the fluid interplay between the processes and the two types of hope: generalized and particularized. Depending upon the individual’s innate nature, coping strategies learned over the course of a lifetime, contextual circumstances, and the challenge itself, different hope process interactions emerge between each other, affecting one’s hopes, whether particularized, generalized, or both, and one’s perceived ability to actualize the hope object, that is, the hoped-for goal (Farran et al., 1995).

To review, generalized hope represents a valued outcome that is not distinctly specific but broad in scope, intangible, future-oriented, and impossible to know if it will happen. It can also be an outlook on life that influences how an individual will react to and tackle challenges. In contrast, particularized hope represents a personally significant goal or even state of being and is generally time-bound. The desire for the manifestation of the particularized valued outcome—whether in the near or distant future, provides the
incentive for learning ways to cope with the current challenges and developing strategies in order to realize the desired goal.

Generalized and particularized hopes exist in dynamic relationship to each other. The desired goal or hope object can begin as a generalized hope, that is, an object of wishing, imagining, even wondering, and can morph into a particularized hope when it is perceived or believed that its reality can become possible. As Lynch (1965) described, where there is no wishing there is no imagining, and where there is no imagining there is no hoping. Some particularized hopes, in light of contextual considerations, may be revised, set aside, or possibly even abandoned when they cannot be grounded in reality, and may then shift into generalized hopes. Likewise, while waiting for evidence that the boundaries of the possible are wider than first perceived for some particularized hopes, other hopes can be focused on, whether specific or generalized (Dufault, 1981). The reaching for generalized and particularized hopes and expectation of their manifestation are influenced by the hope processes themselves when an individual is faced with a trial that challenges their hope.

It must be stressed that just as hope and hopelessness are not linear in their relationship, the same holds for the hope process interactions. They are not one of cause-and-effect but rather one of dynamic fluidity, with each process playing off and supporting or even diminishing the other, while likewise influencing and being influenced by the types of hope. There is no set pattern by which the interaction of the hope processes follow. This depends on the individual, one’s life experiences, the context in which the trial occurs, available support structures, the nature of the trial, the
belief in one’s ability to effect a change, and the like (Bandura, 1977; Dufault, 1981; Farran et al., 1995). The following describes the interactive nature of the hope processes, drawn from Farran et al.’s clinical research. Note that these are just a few examples and do not represent all the possible combinations, although some general themes have been seen (Farran et al., 1995).

When faced with a trial, how one has learned to cope in the past when hopes, particularized or generalized, are challenged, generally influences the ways in which the individual will seek resolution (experiential and temporal processes). The individual may reach out to friends or colleagues for support and guidance (relational process). This support has often shown to strengthen the individual’s internal sense of fortitude, enabling him or her to face and work on the challenge, explore boundaries, investigate alternate routes, in short, to engage in the process of reality checking.

Assessment and possible revision of perspective may follow in terms of when the hoped-for resolution, or some form of change regarding the challenge, may occur (temporal process). If the individual is able to revise his or her perspective, this has been seen to assist in transcending the feelings of frustration (spiritual/transcendent), resulting in increasing the sense of hope regarding the potential attainment of one’s goals. This may strengthen the focus on a particularized hope object or shift a generalized hope to a particularized hope. These “adaptive coping strategies can lead to expanded functioning, in which the person feels more positive, his or her expressed thoughts and behaviors are more adaptive, and his or her relationships with others and the world culminate in a
greater aliveness” (Farran et al., 1995, p. 19; authors’ italics), thus building hope and combating the sense of hopelessness when faced with perceived hopeless situations.

Likewise, it has been shown that where there is difficulty in mobilizing multiple hope-building resources, such as rational approaches to address the challenge, reaching out to others, pulling upon one’s spiritual support system, reimagining goals and contextual boundaries, and even reassessment of time, the chances of frustration are likely to be greater in many individuals, which can tip the balance towards feelings of hopelessness regarding their goals, be they particularized or generalized. Particularized hopes may shift into generalized, or even be abandoned (Farran et al., 1995).

As previously discussed, there is no set pattern regarding the interaction of the hope processes, or the shifting back and forth between generalized and particularized hopes. That said, general patterns have been observed regarding the hope process interactions, as in the clinically-supported examples above, which indicate some hope processes and combination thereof are relied upon more heavily than others by individuals. Intervention strategies to foster hope-building in clients have been suggested for health care providers (in the broadest sense) to use in the clinical setting based on these patterns (Farran et al., 1995). It is these patterns that this research seeks to explore through the perspectives of mid-career teachers on what sustains them and their hopes.

**Summary**

Through the review of the literature, hope is more than simply a cognitive-based motivational system to reach for goals. It has been shown to be a multidimensional complex of feeling, acting, and thinking, influencing and influenced by one’s life
experiences, spiritual beliefs, relationships with others, and the ability to reimagine one’s possibilities. It is deemed part of the human spirit and is integral to the sense of one’s purpose and meaning in life. It nurtures our dreams and aspirations, and is linked to spirituality and transcendence in terms of reaching out to that which we believe can aid us in rising above the present difficulties that weigh us down.

Some of the key concepts to hope are a sense of control and agency; the ability to assess and adjust goals in light of current realities; orientation to time; connectedness, reaching out to and having trust in others for help; creative use of the imagination; and balancing the inherent tension between the dialectic of hope and hopelessness. Our types of hopes are twofold: particularized—personally specific aims in which we have an emotional investment, which provide the impetus for developing coping strategies and pathways to manifest the valued aim; and generalized—those goals broad in scope, impossible to know if they will ever manifest, and a kind of outlook on life that can serve as an umbrella that can protect against despair. As our hopes are challenged, the hope processes are variously engaged, which can influence the two types of hope in terms of remaining focused on a specific goal, shifting that goal to one more generalized, or even revisioning a generalized goal to one that is particularized.

Overarching patterns regarding the theorized hope processes and their interactions have been seen in health care clinical settings (Farran et al., 1995). These patterns have provided insight into patients’ perceptions on their hope, as well as strategies employed to sustain and increase hope in the face of hope-depleting challenges. It is these patterns that this research seeks to explore through the perspectives of mid-career teachers on the
sustaining influence of hope in their lives. The potential value of this research is that the patterns that arise may provide insight into types of teachers and what they may need to sustain themselves and their commitment to the teaching profession, despite all its stressors that can lead to burnout. This could suggest particular hope-building strategies that mid-career teachers use to “keep themselves going” and remain in the teaching profession. These strategies may provide concrete ways to mitigate against burnout, which may potentially aid in overall teacher retention in the public schools.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

“Hope is not a dream but a way of making dreams become reality.”
Author Unknown

Overview

Educational research that specifically explores the role of hope in sustaining teachers’ commitment to stay in the profession is limited, as the preponderance of research focuses on factors that influence teachers to leave (Nieto, 2003). To address this perceived gap in current educational research, this study sought to gain insight into two questions: What are mid-career public school K-12 teachers’ subjective perspectives on hope as a sustaining influence in their commitment to remain in the teaching profession, and what hope-building strategies were employed that enabled them to cope with the stressors of the profession?

Q methodology, a robust, systematic mixed-methods research approach used for exploring subjective, self-referential points of view on any issue (Kitzinger, 1999), was chosen to explore the participants’ subjective views. Because of its focus on human subjectivity in which multiple interpretations can be held for any given topic, Q methodology was deemed ideally suited for exploration into the multidimensional nature of hope. Q methodology was invented in 1935 by physicist and psychologist William Stephenson as a way of gaining an understanding of individuals’ intrapersonal and interpersonal subjectivities, and exploring thematic relationships that emerge between these points of view. Unlike traditional quantitative research or R methodology (“R”
references Pearson’s product-moment correlation, or \( r \), which focuses on measurement and “objective” prediction of theorized relationships between traits (Kitzinger, 1986), Q methodology focuses on the participants’ determination of what is meaningful to them (S. Brown, 1980).

The designation “Q,” first suggested by British factor analyst Sir Godfrey Thomson in 1935 (S. Brown, 1980, p. 9), was adopted by Stephenson to represent the statistical procedures which correlates persons, not traits as is standard with R methodology (W. Stephenson, 1935). Subjectivity is studied through analysis of arrangements (the Q sort) made by the participants of a set of statements that are representative of the wide range of opinions around a topic (the communication concourse). These arrangements or configurations of statements are factor analyzed, from which patterns of viewpoints—called “factors”—emerge within and across persons (S. Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; W. Stephenson, 1967). Interpretive analysis is then conducted by the researcher to explore the emergent factors’ possible meanings. Post-sort interviews, for the purpose of triangulation and reducing interpretive bias by the researcher, are held after each Q sort to add depth to the analysis and allow the participants’ voices to be heard. Participants whose factor loadings are the highest are considered most representative of the resulting factors; therefore an additional interview is conducted with these “key informants” after data analysis to gain deepened understanding of their statement choices. This further aids in the understanding of the factors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).
Few Q methodological studies exist that focus on teachers, and those that do primarily investigate beginning teachers, preservice teachers, and/or teacher attitudes. One early study explored teacher attitudes towards education and perceived traits of effective teachers (Kerlinger, 1966). Another study examined teachers’ perceptions regarding the role of theory in their teacher training program (Reid, 1999), while a more recent study focused on new teachers’ perceptions of their concerns and needs (Wong, 2003). After conducting an extensive search, I found no Q methodological studies to date that focus on mid-career teachers and their perspectives on hope. This lack of research on this particular population of teachers runs in tandem with the paucity of research—regardless of methodology used—specifically dedicated to exploring non-novice teachers’ perspectives on hope.

Participants

The participant group in Q methodology is referred to as the person-sample, or P set. For this study participant selection was guided by theoretical concerns in that their selection was based on their relevance to the specific aims of the research (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Therefore the P set for this study was chosen through purposive sampling. The following demographic parameters were used for choosing participants: mid-career public school teachers currently teaching between 6 to 15 years (inclusive) at the time of the study; both genders; any race/ethnicity; any subject at any grade level; and from rural, urban, or suburban school districts. See Table 1 for participant characteristics. It must be noted, however, that in terms of the factors that emerge, “demographics in Q have practically no meaning; i.e., that the importance of the factor is
Table 1

*Descriptive Characteristics of Participants (N = 25)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Location:</th>
<th>Teaching Experience:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural (n = 10)</td>
<td>6-8 years (n = 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban (n = 12)</td>
<td>9-11 years (n = 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban (n = 3)</td>
<td>12-15 (n = 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level:</th>
<th>Race:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/K-4th (n = 10)</td>
<td>African American (n = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School/5th-9th (n = 5)</td>
<td>European American (n = 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School/10th-12th (n = 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (n = 6)</td>
<td>24-29 (n = 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (n = 19)</td>
<td>30-39 (n = 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49 (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-59 (n = 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in the perspective that it represents and not in the social traits of the persons who entertain that perspective” (S. Brown, personal communication, November 4, 2010).

The rationale for choosing these participant characteristics was as follows. Research has shown the drop-out rate of teachers from the teaching profession between the first three to five years of employment is upwards of 50% (NCTAF, 2007). Those who remain past the five-year mark tend to stay in the profession. Age is also a predictor of departure from the teaching profession: Teachers under the age of 30 and over 50 are least likely to remain compared to those in their middle-aged years (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005). Research has likewise found that more females than males leave the profession, more White teachers as compared with minority teachers, and more special education teachers than regular education teachers (Johnson et al., 2005). Higher attrition rates also occur in high-need urban and rural schools, at both the high school and
elementary levels, and in the mathematics and science disciplines (Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2007).

Years in service also play a role in attrition, following a U-shaped curve. The highest attrition rate occurs within the first 5 years of teaching, with the least between 6 through 15 or so years of service. Afterwards, attrition rates begin to rise as teachers start to approach retirement (Arnold et al., 1993). The purpose for obtaining this information was to explore if any of these participant characteristics were associated in any way with the factors that emerged regarding the participants’ perspectives on hope.

In Q methodology, there is no required number of participants for a study, although it is preferred to have two or more persons define a factor (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 81). What is sought is diversity of participants so whatever factors that do emerge will be sufficiently well-defined. Moreover, a small participant sample size is appropriate for two main reasons. First, prediction is not the aim as in R methodology, negating the need for a large sample pool. The goal is to gain insight into the diverse viewpoints held by a particular group of people on a topic (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Secondly, because there is no way of knowing in advance how many factors or viewpoints on the topic will emerge, or how many participants will be associated with which factor, what is needed “are just enough subjects [participants] to establish the existence of a factor for purposes of comparing one factor with another” (S. Brown, 1980, p. 192). The minimum number of subjects defining a factor can range from one to four individuals (Reid, 1999, p. 244). For this study, 25 teachers chose to participate. Confidentiality was maintained by both an alphanumeric coding system and either
researcher or participant-chosen pseudonyms. These were all destroyed upon completion of the research study.

Invitations to participate in the study were sent to prospective participants in Ohio, New Jersey, and Maine, through three avenues: teachers personally known to the researcher; announcements in curriculum and teacher education graduate classes in one northeast Ohio university with which this researcher is familiar; and announcements in urban, suburban, and rural northeast Ohio school districts in which permission to conduct research was granted by the school superintendents and/or principals. The participants who chose to participate were informed of the purpose of the study and assured that confidentiality would be maintained, as explained in the Letter of Consent (see Appendix A). They also signed a post-sort audiotape interview consent form (see Appendix B), and completed a demographic questionnaire to gain information about their background (see Appendix C). Many of the participants chose to do the online Q-sorting version in lieu of a face-to-face meeting, due to convenience. The first page of instructions on the online version explained the purpose of the study, maintenance of confidentiality, and request of agreement to a post-sort interview. By clicking “Agree,” the participants gave their consent. For a complete breakdown of the participants in terms of demographics, age, subject matter, locale, and so forth, see Appendix D.

Communication Concourse and Q Sample

In Q methodology, subjectivity is defined as “a person’s communication of his or her point of view” and is always “self-referent,” that is, from the individual’s own perspective (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 12). A communication, therefore, is any
expression of an opinion or belief held by an individual on any topic. These communications can take many forms, such as textual print (popular literature, academic research, newspapers, blogs), verbal (music, interviews, everyday discourse), and even pictorial (photos and drawn images). The term *concourse* was adopted by Stephenson to represent the image of the running together or flow of ideas in thought (W. Stephenson, 1978). Thus, a *communication concourse* is a range of diverse opinions representing the “flow of communicability surrounding any given topic” (S. Brown, 1993, p. 94). It is from this concourse that representative statements on hope were drawn.

The collection of statements drawn from this concourse is called a Q sample (Watts & Stenner, 2005). For the purposes of this exploratory research, the Q sample was a hybrid design whereby the statements were derived from a mix of naturalistic and quasi-naturalistic sources (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). *Naturalistic* sources are the participants themselves, in which opinions about the topic being explored are taken directly from their oral and/or written statements. *Quasi-naturalistic* sources are those other than the participants themselves. These can be statements drawn from interviews from a related study, from appropriate rating scales, and from books, articles, and so forth. A *hybrid* design refers to the utilization of items taken from both naturalistic and quasi-naturalistic sources. For this study, naturalistic statements regarding hope as a sustaining influence for teachers were acquired through a focus group interview, and quasi-naturalistic statements from a variety of hope-related literature—both scholarly and popular, such as Studs Terkel’s (2003) *Hope Dies Last*, Jennifer Nias’ (1989) *Primary

The number of statements used for the Q sample was based on R. A. Fisher’s factorial design structure (W. Stephenson, 1953), and utilized the following elements: main effects, levels, and replications. A main effect is a term that refers to an independent variable and levels are components of that variable. For this study the main effects were the two types of hope—particularized hope and generalized hope, and the five hope components. The components were as follows: rational, relational, experiential, spiritual, and temporal. These five levels were conceptually grounded in my adaptation of the FHP hope model. Replication refers to multiple measurements (i.e., multiple statements in each category), so that variation can be maximized. In order to generate a Q sample that is broadly representative of the diverse opinions held on the topic, a sufficient number of statements for each of the levels must be obtained.

In accordance with R. A. Fisher’s experimental design structure utilized for this study (see Table 2), the formula for determining the total number of statements to be used for the Q sample is as follows: Q sample size \( N = (m = 10 \text{ levels}) \times (r = 4 \text{ replications per level}) \). For this study, each level was repeated four times, with two for generalized hope and two for particularized hope. Therefore, four different statements that were representative of that level were required. A total of 40 statements were assembled for the Q sample for this study (see Appendix E for the Q sample).

Examples of statements that reflected the two types of hopes and the hope components were as follows: “I get really frustrated with I am not in control”
Table 2

Structure for Q Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Effects</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Types of Hope</td>
<td>(a) Particularized (b) Generalized</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Hope Processes</td>
<td>(c) Rational (d) Relational (e) Experiential (f) Spiritual/Transcendent (g) Temporal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q sample \((N) = (5)(2)(4) = 40\) statements

*Note:* The structure of the Q sample reflects the adapted components of the Farran et al. (1995) hope model.

- ac (Statements #1, 9, 30, 33)
- ad (Statements #17, 22, 34, 35)
- ae (Statements #2, 11, 32, 38)
- af (Statements #12, 19, 23, 28)
- ag (Statements #16, 20, 21, 40)
- bc (Statements #10, 24, 26, 36)
- bd (Statements #6, 14, 29, 31)
- be (Statements #3, 7, 27, 39)
- bf (Statements #4, 8, 15, 37)
- bg (Statements #5, 13, 18, 25)

(Generalized Rational); “I can sustain my hope by connecting with my students through meaningful conversations to show them that I care” (Particularized Relational); “When faced with all sorts of challenges in this profession, what helps is just being patient while I rethink strategies to address them” (Particularized Experiential); “My spiritual convictions are at the heart of why I am motivated to teach and stay in the profession” (Generalized Spiritual/Transcendent); and “I believe that I am forever planting seeds when it comes to my students’ future” (Generalized Temporal).
The 40 statements were first reviewed by Dr. Kaye Herth, one of the developers of the FHP hope model, to ensure they were representative of the Farran et al. (1995) hope model utilized for this study. The statements were then reviewed by the focus group participants to make sure the final wording was in the form of “teacher talk.” The following is an example. “When results do not show the hard work my students and I have put into their learning, I start to lose hope” was changed to “It can become very disheartening when results do not show the hard work my students and I have put into their learning” (statement #36).

The factorial design used for this study was important as it aided in the selection of representative statements from the concourse, but was not used as the basis for analyzing the results. Factor analysis was utilized for that purpose, as it is “the statistical means by which subjects [participants] are grouped—or, more accurately, group themselves” (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 49) based on their arrangements of the Q statements in their individual Q sorts. The teachers were not guided by me in any way on how to interpret each Q statement, which would have influenced their statement placement. In Q methodology, participants’ interpretations of the statements are always from a self-referential perspective rather than according to a researcher-imposed definition (S. Brown, 1980).

**Q Sort Procedure**

Two methods were used for data collection: face-to-face sorting of the Q sample statements, and an online sorting format which utilized the FlashQ program (www.hackert.biz/flashq; see http://saturn.phpwebhosting.com/~abel/levine for the online
sorting site used for this study). The online sorting format allowed participation for those teachers who were unable to meet in person. For the face-to-face sorting process, the 40 Q sample statements were placed on index cards—one per card—which were used by each participant for the Q sorting portion of the study. Each card had a number randomly assigned to it, from 1 to 40. Participants sorted the statements according to the condition of instruction Most Like My Perspective to Most Unlike My Perspective For What Sustains Me as a Teacher, along a continuum from +5 to –5. The +5 rank represented statements participants most agreed with in terms of what sustains their hope as a teacher, and the –5 rank represented statements participants most disagreed with, and those in the neutral range (–1 through +1) represented statements participants felt were of lesser importance in comparison to the other statements, and/or had no opinion.

This ranking of each statement in a fixed distribution forced the participants to rate the relative worth of each statement based on their self-referential opinion, which consequently affected the placement of the other statements. This allowed the participants to express their personal point of view on the topic (S. Brown, 1980). The participants placed the required number of statement cards or items under each rank as shown in Figure 1.

Participants were free to change their statement card order at any time until they felt satisfied with their arrangement. Interviews, recorded with the participants’ permission, were conducted immediately after each Q sort session so they could elaborate on choices made for their sorting arrangement, particularly the high and low rankings in their Q sort. Open-ended questions were also posed, such as if any statements were
Figure 1. Items of the Q sample in a near-normal forced distribution (40 items)

found to be confusing, any in particular on which they would like to comment, what other statements they would have included in their own Q set, and if there were anything they wished I had asked that I did not. The post-sort responses allowed the participants to explain their interpretation of the statements as well as their reasoning for their placement choices; this further aided me in the interpretation of the emergent factors (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

The online Q-sorting procedure was essentially the same as the face-to-face. The one difference was that the participants typed in their rationale for their statement choices in the +5 and -5 columns in the FlashQ program (the program allows for a limited number of typed entries, hence the +5/-5 columns only). Once the online Q-sort was completed, the FlashQ webhosting site automatically emailed me their arrangement, along with their demographic information and rationale for statement choices. After receiving the participants’ online Q-sort, I contacted the participants for a post-sort
telephone interview to gain further insight into their perspectives on their statement choices, and anything else they wished to share.

Unlike in R methodology, validity and reliability are not of concern in Q methodology. The Q sorts are arranged entirely according to the participants’ point of view, not to some external criterion. Any interpretation made by the researcher is “subservient” to the participants’ understanding of the statements as evidenced through their Q sorting arrangement (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Likewise, statistical reliability that requires generalization of the sample findings to the larger population is of little concern. Thomas and Baas (1992/1993) explained that there are two kinds of generalization: generalizing to and generalizing about. In R methodology, the focus is on generalizing to a larger population based on “statistical inference: random samples are drawn and generalizations made to a larger population” (p. 22, authors’ italics). In contrast, Q methodology’s concern is with “substantive inference ‘about’ a phenomenon” (Thomas & Baas, 1992/1993, p. 22, authors’ italics) and is thus more qualitative in nature. In this study, the phenomena are the factors or themes that are representative of the participants’ perspectives on hope. It is these perspectives that can be generalized according to types of persons who share similar beliefs or points of view on the topic, given that the statements are representative of the universe of thought on the topic (S. Brown, 1980).

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis of the Q sorts proceeded with factor analysis, factor rotation, and factor interpretation. The following provides an explanation of each step.
Factor Analysis

The purpose of factor analysis is to discover the patterns, that is, the intercorrelations among variables held in high commonality, with the intent of discovering something about the nature of these patterns. In Q methodology, the variables are the participants and their Q sorts. Factor analysis reveals shared points of views, which are called factors. How many factors that emerge cannot be predicted in advance. The resultant number of factors is determined by how the participants group themselves based on the similarities and dissimilarities of their Q sort statement arrangements. These groupings ultimately represent dimensions of shared subjectivity on a topic. “Statements are mere artifacts. What stands behind each statement, and what is created in the juxtaposition or alignment of two statements, is a whole of lived subjectivity” (Wolf, 2004, p. 158).

PQMethod 2.11 (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002), a free computer software program designed specifically for Q methodology, offers two methods of factor extraction. These are principal components analysis method (PCA) and centroid analysis method. Centroid factor extraction uses an average inter-sort correlation, which provides an approximation of the interrelationships between the sorts (Kramer & Gravina, 2004). That is, it offers an infinite number of factor solutions rather than mathematically fixed solutions (S. Brown, 1980). In contrast, PCA provides a statistically perfect inter-sort calculation. This means it provides factor solutions determined by statistical considerations which account for as much variance as possible among the correlations of all the Q sorts. This in turn
produces the greatest number of sorts on the fewest factors. It was for this reason I chose to use PCA.

To calculate significant correlations between all the sorts, the following formula is used: \( SE = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} \), where \( N \) is the number of statements used in the Q-sample (S. Brown, 1980). Thus, the value is \( \frac{1}{\sqrt{40}} = \frac{1}{6.32} = 0.16 \). Correlations are considered significant \( (p < .01) \) if they are above \( \pm 2.58 \) times the standard error, and significant \( (p < .05) \) if they are above \( \pm 1.96 \) times the standard error. For this study, factor loadings exceeding \( (0.16)(2.56) = 0.41 \) were considered significant at the .01 level, and those exceeding \( (0.16)(1.96) = 0.31 \) were significant at the .05 level. Table 3 (in Chapter 4) displays the participants’ factor loadings provided by factor analysis.

**Factor Rotation**

The next step is factor rotation, the purpose of which is to maximize as many high loading sorts on a factor as possible (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). There are several ways to rotate the factors; PQMethod 2.11 offers two options. One is varimax; the other is judgmental, also called theoretical rotation. Judgmental rotation is utilized when the researcher is following a particular sort that holds special interest in relationship to the others due to the nature of the study in order to compare their attitudes (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In contrast, varimax or “atheoretical rotation” is based solely on statistical criteria. It “maximizes the amount of variance explained by the extracted factors” and seeks a “mathematically superior solution” (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 81). Since this was an exploratory study, I utilized varimax as I wanted to see the range of
viewpoints that emerged from all the participants’ sorts. No one person out of the group of participants held any special theoretical interest in comparison to the others.

**Factor Interpretation**

Participants’ Q sorts that are statistically most closely associated with a common perspective are then merged to create a composite, model Q sort, termed a *factor array*, one for each factor. This factor array is a mathematically determined “best estimate” model that allows for identification of Q-sorts closely related in terms of shared point of view (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Before merging the Q sorts to generate this model factor array, factor weights must be calculated using the factor loadings. Factor weights take into account that some sorts are closer statistically to one factor than another, and receive a higher score. These scores are first calculated as *z-scores* and then converted to whole numbers (+5 to –5) to aid in factor array comparison (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 53). For example, the participants who shared a common belief about advocacy and hope were highly intercorrelated and defined a factor together, with some statements weighted more or less heavily than others. It is these weighted statements that are used for factor interpretation.

My interpretation of these model factors was guided not only by theoretical considerations of the FHP hope model, but also by the participants’ post-sorting comments. After initial analysis and interpretation, I then conducted follow-up interviews with key informants (those whose loadings were statistically the highest and thus considered representative of the composite factor) to gain added insight into each factor’s possible meaning. This entire process allowed for the participants’ voices to be
heard, aided in triangulation of data, and provided greater depth to the analysis. Participant quotes from the interviews were used for clarification of observed patterns during factor interpretation.

Assumptions of the Study

This exploratory study assumed that all the participants have experienced varying degrees of frustration, despair, anger, or any comparable emotion that could potentially lead to feelings of burnout or thoughts of leaving the profession. Another assumption was that all participants likewise experience hope—however personally defined, and that their sense of hope sustains them in their decision to remain in the teaching profession, at least during the timeframe in which they participated in the study. I could not assume that any of the participants would not make changes in their professional career after the study was completed.

Limitations of the Study

The public school teachers who participated in this study hailed from a small region of Maine, New Jersey, and northeastern Ohio. At the time this study was conducted the participants had been teaching between 6 and 15 years, inclusive. The participants were purposively chosen in that, regardless the subject or grade level, they were currently teaching in a K-12 public school system, either rural, urban, or suburban, met the years-in-service criterion, and were willing to participate in the study. Because the participants were chosen through purposive sampling, the findings of this exploratory study apply to those who participated in the research, although the factor themes can potentially be generalized to the larger population of teachers.
Limitations for this study must be addressed. One potential limitation concerns the possibility that some of the participants were already experiencing varying degrees of burnout or the beginnings of burnout. As research has shown, many teachers remain in the profession despite burnout (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). However, as this was one area over which I had no control, I had to accept that at the time of the study some of the participants may have been experiencing burnout symptoms, or even held undisclosed thoughts of leaving the profession.

Another possible limitation regarded participant demographics in terms of equal distribution of race/ethnicity, gender, and type of school district. The only two groups represented in this study were European American (White) and African American, and the majority of the participants were women. Out of 25 teachers, 23 were European American, and of these 18 were female and 5 were male. Of the African American teachers who participated, one was male and the other female. This lopsidedness of participant demographics may reflect the fact that in America teachers are predominately White, middle class females (Sadker & Zittleman, 2008). Likewise, great care was given to recruit teachers from rural, urban, and suburban districts. That said, urban districts were underrepresented. Twelve participants came from suburban districts (Ohio and New Jersey), 10 from rural areas (Ohio and Maine), but only 3 were working in urban districts (Ohio).

Poor representation in terms of gender, race, and type of district could have resulted from any number of reasons, such as lack of interest and/or time on the part of the individual teacher. Ultimately, I had no control over who chose to participate, despite
all efforts to be as inclusive as possible. This underrepresentation of minority teachers’ as well as urban teachers’ voices is something that can be addressed in a future study.

A final potential limitation concerned researcher bias (Cross, 2005) during two phases of the study: the Q set selection (when statements are chosen from the concourse) and when interpreting the factors. Two strategies were employed to reduce researcher bias. As previously discussed, Dr. Kaye Herth, one of the developers of the hope model, reviewed the statements chosen for this study to minimize the potential that statements may not have adequately represented the theoretical components of the FHP hope model. Secondly, member checking was employed in the post-sorting interviews and interviews with key informants. These interviews offered insight into factor interpretations that I may have potentially overlooked.

Despite the above potential limitations, the findings of this exploratory study may provide understanding into educators’ subjective perspectives on hope—an area that has been little explored by educational researchers. The findings may also guide future research in examining the role that hope may play in offsetting the potential of burnout, coping with occupational stress, teachers’ decisions to remain in the teaching profession, and in the development of teacher hope-sustaining strategies.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

“Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence.” Lin Yutang

This chapter discusses the results of a Q methodological approach that explored mid-career public school teachers’ perspectives on hope. The 25 Q sorts in this study were factor analyzed using the PQMethod 2.11 software (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002). Factor analysis is the statistical means that reveals how participants group themselves through the Q-sorting process and aids in the interpretive process. “All that the factor analysis does is lend statistical clarity to the behavioral order . . . by virtue of similarly (or dissimilarly) performed Qsorts” (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 50).

As discussed in Chapter 3, factor analysis reveals those sorts that are statistically correlated with each other as reflected in their factor loadings (factor loadings are correlation coefficients that represent the degree of agreement between individual Q sorts and the factor). What is important to remember is that each Q sort reflects one’s “operant subjectivity”—one’s mind in operation, which is a person’s way of “thinking, evaluating, and interpreting” (S. Brown, 1980, p. 44). The participants interpret and thus determine what each statement means to them, and arrange the statements accordingly from, in the case of this study, most like my perspective to most unlike my perspective. These correlated Q sorts create a composite factor array, or factor, which represents an overall shared perspective. “The people in a given cluster may be characterized as resembling the profile of item scores that define that cluster or factor” (Khare, 1972, p. 231). It is
this representative type of mid-career teacher that the analysis of each factor’s themes sought to uncover. It must also be noted that “demographics in Q have practically no meaning; i.e., that the importance of the factor is in the perspective that it represents and not in the social traits of the persons who entertain that perspective” (S. Brown, personal communication, November 5, 2010).

Some of the participants’ sorts for this study were either mixed or bipolar. *Mixed* means that participants’ sorts loaded significantly (either at $p < .05$ or $p < .01$) on two or more factors. This indicates they partially favored each of the factor viewpoints their sort loaded on, with emphasis on the factor where the loading was statistically higher (S. Brown, 1980). *Bipolar* means that some participants’ loadings were inverse to the others who also loaded on the same factor. For example, if everyone’s loading is positive (+), the bipolar person’s loading is negative (-). This particular sort represents a diametrically opposed viewpoint to that expressed by the participants on that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2005). If positive sorters ranked a statement at +3, the negative loaders ranked it at –3, and so forth. This requires two distinct interpretations of the item rankings of the same factor statement configuration, one being the positive interpretation, the other the opposing viewpoint.

In this study, three distinct factors emerged, with Factor 3 having one statistically significant bipolar sort (participant #22) loaded on it. For ease of analysis and interpretation, this factor is discussed as Factor 4 (see Appendix F for the four factor arrays). Table 4 shows the four factors with their participant loadings. Sorts that are
Table 3

*Factor Loadings With (X) Indicating a Defining Sort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QSort</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0309MN</td>
<td>0.0259</td>
<td>0.7330X</td>
<td>−0.1881</td>
<td>0.1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0319JP</td>
<td>0.8997X</td>
<td>0.0160</td>
<td>−0.0763</td>
<td>0.0763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0322DC</td>
<td>0.5416X</td>
<td>0.0160</td>
<td>−0.2519</td>
<td>0.2519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0323TE</td>
<td>0.5317X</td>
<td>0.1151</td>
<td>0.1781</td>
<td>−0.1781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0325LB</td>
<td>0.0754</td>
<td>0.1636</td>
<td>0.7136X</td>
<td>−0.7136X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0326JW</td>
<td>−0.0527</td>
<td>0.5217X</td>
<td>0.3758</td>
<td>−0.3758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0327SN</td>
<td>0.4811X</td>
<td>0.4782</td>
<td>0.0147</td>
<td>−0.0147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0328DK</td>
<td>0.4518X</td>
<td>−0.1676</td>
<td>0.4015</td>
<td>−0.4015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0330CD</td>
<td>0.6663X</td>
<td>0.0225</td>
<td>0.2547</td>
<td>−0.2547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0331KM</td>
<td>0.1191</td>
<td>0.7825X</td>
<td>−0.0075</td>
<td>0.0075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0331TS</td>
<td>0.7473X</td>
<td>0.1647</td>
<td>−0.1179</td>
<td>0.1179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0331CP</td>
<td>−0.0690</td>
<td>0.7189X</td>
<td>0.1305</td>
<td>−0.1305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0401BD</td>
<td>0.7720X</td>
<td>−0.0668</td>
<td>0.0551</td>
<td>−0.0551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0401 LW</td>
<td>0.6922X</td>
<td>−0.2952</td>
<td>−0.1461</td>
<td>0.1461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0402 SW</td>
<td>0.3654</td>
<td>0.6249X</td>
<td>−0.0227</td>
<td>0.0227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0416 WN</td>
<td>0.3312</td>
<td>0.3633</td>
<td>0.4688X</td>
<td>−0.4688X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0416 TC</td>
<td>0.8206X</td>
<td>0.0194</td>
<td>0.1337</td>
<td>−0.1337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0416 MR</td>
<td>0.7116X</td>
<td>0.2117</td>
<td>0.1244</td>
<td>−0.1244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0418 SI</td>
<td>0.4071X</td>
<td>0.3194</td>
<td>−0.1877</td>
<td>0.1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0420 JM</td>
<td>0.5657X</td>
<td>0.1877</td>
<td>0.5272</td>
<td>−0.5272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0420 VD</td>
<td>−0.0247</td>
<td>0.5746X</td>
<td>−0.4958</td>
<td>0.4958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0504 DW</td>
<td>0.0582</td>
<td>0.1930</td>
<td>−0.6673X</td>
<td>0.6673X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0411 LG</td>
<td>0.6932X</td>
<td>0.1431</td>
<td>0.1673</td>
<td>−0.1673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0429 CH</td>
<td>0.0203</td>
<td>0.7401X</td>
<td>0.0776</td>
<td>−0.0776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0503 JC</td>
<td>0.7729X</td>
<td>0.1208</td>
<td>0.2302</td>
<td>−0.2302</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % expl.Var | 28 | 16 | 10 | 10 |

marked with an X represent a defining sort. For this study these are sorts that have factor loadings exceeding ±0.41 and are significant at $p < 0.01$.

Analysis proceeded in the following fashion. Statements in the composite factor arrays that statistically ranked the strongest in relation to the other composite factors were first examined to gain an initial understanding of each factor’s perspectives. These are statements ranked +5, +4, and +3, as well as −5, −4, and −3. Likewise, “distinguishing
statements” were also scrutinized. “Distinguishing statements are those statements that have received a score in one factor (factor X) that is significantly different from the scores in factors Y and Z” (S. Brown, 2010, electronic mailing list). For example, a statement may be ranked +5 by one factor, yet ranked –2 by another, thus indicating these statements were treated quite differently.

Exploration of these statements offered deepened insight into each factor’s distinctiveness. I also have addressed some of the lower ranked statements in the factor arrays, as they supported the overall dynamics of each factor’s themes. Quotes, particularly those from key informants, were used to clarify interpretation. To serve as a reminder, the 40 statements utilized were representative of the modified Farran et al. (1995) FHP hope model (see Chapter 3), which served as the conceptual framework for this study. Each was coded with its associated hope process and type of hope. For example, if a statement represented the Relational process and Generalized type of hope, the abbreviation was written as (Rel-G). The abbreviation key is found in Table 4.

Table 4

*FHP Hope Process and Type of Hope Abbreviation Key*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHP Hope Process</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Type of Hope</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Rat</td>
<td>Generalized</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Rel</td>
<td>Particularized</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual/Transcendent</td>
<td>S/T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Tem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four factors are analyzed in the next section. Each factor has been given a name that, although not comprehensive in expressing the full picture or all the nuances of the factor, attempts to portray its core theme. This label was determined by separating out shared statements between the factors, then conducting in-depth examination of the highly ranked and distinguishing statements, buttressed by explanatory comments from the participant interviews. Key informants of each factor were asked their opinion regarding the label to see if it “rang true” for them. Following this section is an examination of two statements held in common agreement by Factors 1, 2, and 3: statements #14 (It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress) and #39 (It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope). As Factor 4 was bipolar of Factor 3, it did not share in common these particular statements with the other factors, and thus is not included in that section of the discussion.

**The Four Factors**

**Factor 1: Making a Difference Through Advocacy**

Fifteen out of 25 teachers had statistically significant loadings on Factor 1 ($f > .41, p < .01$). The high number of teachers representative of this factor indicates that most of the participants in the study shared similar perspectives on hope. Four of the sorts were mixed. All Factor 1 participants were European American. Ten participants were female; five were male. Note that five out of the six male participants for this study loaded on Factor 1. Eight participants have been teaching 6–8 years (three in age range
from 24–29; two age 30–39, one age 40–49, and two age 50–59); three have been teaching 9–11 years (all between the ages of 30–39); and four have been teaching 12–15 years (two age 40–49 and two age 50–59). Five participants teach in rural school districts, two in urban, and eight in suburban. Six participants teach at the elementary school level, three at the middle school, and six at the high school level.

Figure 2 is provided to visually show the hope processes which are most representative of Factor 1, based on the high-positive statements in the composite factor array. The rationale for focusing on the high-positive statements is that these are statistically most valued by the factor participants as that which sustains hope when faced with professional challenges. This rationale applies to the use of figures for Factors 2, 3, and 4. The hope processes that emerged as representative of Factor 1 are the Rational,

![Figure 2](image)

*Figure 2. Hope processes associated with Factor 1 based on high-positive statements. The Temporal hope process consists of statements #5, #13, and #40. The Rational hope process is statement #5. The Relational hope process includes statements #34 and #6. The Experiential hope process is statement #39.*
Relational, Experiential, and Temporal. The Experiential statement (#39) is shared in common with Factors 1 and 2, and is discussed in the Consensus Statements section following Factor 4 analysis.

**High-positive statements of Factor 1.** Factor 1 ranked the following statements as +5, *most like my perspective* (Note: the * indicates distinguishing statements):

+5  *05. Being an advocate for my students motivates me to continue teaching, even though I may not see the results right away. (Tem-G)

+5  *34. I can sustain my hope by connecting with my students through meaningful conversations to show them that I care. (Rel-P)

The following were ranked at +4, *most like my perspective*:

+4  24. The successes, no matter how small or large, inspire me to keep trying. (Rat-G)

+4  39. It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G)

These top four statements suggest that what deeply sustains Factor 1 participants’ hopes are relationships with students, coupled with the need to feel successful. Relationships manifested in a number of ways: advocacy, with recognition that the desired results of one’s efforts have a future-directed temporal orientation; caring interactions through specific kinds of conversations; and experiencing heart-warming interactions with their students. These types of relationships renewed Factor 1 participants’ commitment to teaching. One example was offered by Phil (participant #4), an urban high school mathematics teacher. He discussed how he was ready to turn in his transfer papers this past year to work elsewhere in the district, as “the daily apathy of the
kids really wears me down.” Yet, when about to graduate, one of his students did something so unexpected that it altered his decision.

I mean, I walked in ready to stick it [the transfer papers] in the box, and I found out I got this Golden Apple Award from a student I had befriended when she was a 9th grader. Only 7 of them are given in our district. So it kept me from putting in the papers.

Statement #34 is addressed further in the section on distinguishing statements, as well as statement #5 on advocacy, as five different interpretations of advocacy emerged.

Seeing successes (statement #24) was interpreted by the participants as a manifestation of personal efficacy and directly linked to student-oriented relationships. Some spoke about success in general terms, such as with Rachel (participant #11), a special education teacher: “When I see a student be successful in any fashion it reinforces that I am making a difference.” Others gave a more relatively concrete example of how student success directly affected the teachers’ sense of making a difference, which in turn strengthened their commitment to stay in the profession. Patricia (participant #7), a high school art teacher, explained:

Sometimes a student “gets” the entire lesson, and their [sic] success is exciting to them and very encouraging to me. . . . Sometimes a small success is that a student begins trying. That’s as important in keeping me going as a student who wins awards for their [sic] excellent work.

The following statements for Factor 1 were ranked as +3, most like my perspective:
When I help a student reimagine his or her possibilities, I know I’ve made a difference. (Rel-G)

I believe that I am forever planting seeds when it comes to my students’ future. (Tem-P)

My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P)

Reimagining possibilities (statement #6) is a keynote for hope. At its heart lies the stretching of one’s capacity to assess one’s current reality and envision alternate realities—that one’s future can be influenced by what one conceives as possible, and then take action. Patricia focuses on this aspect of hope when working with her students in her art classes. In one lesson regarding public officials and the decision to commission pieces of public art, she challenged her students to imagine themselves as a public official in their future and the potential influence they may have regarding the arts and the community in which they might live.

I say to them, “One day some of you may be public officials and you may be in the position to decide to have art in your town or county. And I’m gonna tell you right now that it’s really important to have art. . . . And I hope that when you’re in that position you’re gonna approve the bill to have a public art piece.”

This concern for stretching students’ capacity to reimagine is intertwined with the notion that one is planting seeds to transform students’ lives in a positive way, as indicated with statement #13. This notion of transformation through planting seeds is discussed further in the distinguishing statements section. The time orientation of desiring to influence students’ lives is also seen with statement #40, where hope for
student understanding of and making connections with classroom material is valued. Factor 1 teachers recognize that the results of actions taken with students may not be seen until some indeterminate time in the future, whether near, distant, or if ever. Despite this unknown, they are not dissuaded in their efforts nor are their hopes diminished.

**High-negative statements of Factor 1.** The following statements ranked as –5, *most unlike my perspective:*

-5 12. I never feel alone in this difficult profession because I have faith that I am being guided. (S/T-P)

-5 *23. Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (S/T-P)

This anti-spirituality theme is followed by statements ranked –4, *most unlike my perspective:*

-4 *04. I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G)

-4 *19. When I feel taken for granted and not respected in my workplace, prayer helps me get through the day. (S/T-P)

Overwhelmingly, the idea of anything related to spirituality, faith, or prayer is negated by Factor 1 as being that which sustains their hopes in the context of working in the teaching profession. This negation is due to a number of reasons having to do with interpretation of the terms, personally not being religious, separation of church and state, and a unique perspective on being “guided.”

During the interviews the teachers expressed that the words spirituality, prayer, and particularly faith were indicative of organized religion. Aside from the teachers who stated they were non-religious, the majority of the participants described themselves as
either religious or simply believing in a higher power. But because of the legal
requirements of separation of church and state when working in the public school system,
the teachers kept their religious beliefs separate from their workaday world. They did not
want their beliefs to spill over into their work setting, but to keep them private.

There was one interesting twist to statement #12’s interpretation. Susanne
(participant #14) construed “faith in being guided” in terms of receiving guidance of a
professional, not religious or spiritual, nature. She explained that she has no faith in her
administrators, such as the principal and curriculum director. This is due to the
seemingly ever-changing curriculum standards and assessment requirements mandated by
the State Department of Education that her administrators want her to implement. She
feels she receives no guidance from them in how to enact these new standards and
assessments effectively.

There are times when I feel that we are just handed things to do or implement and
never given any real direction. . . . They want you to do all these things and
sometimes that’s fine but we’re at a loss at how they want us to do this. It’s like,
“Okay, here you go.” And we’re left to sink or swim.

The following statements were ranked at –3, most unlike my perspective:

–3 07. Over time I have learned that I have to accept my feelings of frustration
and despair in order for me to hope. (Exp-G)

–3 17. When my principal does not acknowledge me for my efforts at excellence,
I want to give less of myself. (Rel-P)

–3 37. My spiritual convictions are at the heart of why I am motivated to teach
and stay in the profession. (S/T-G)
Factor 1 participants explained how the frustrations of the profession are always going to be present, and disagreed with the notion of “accepting” feelings of frustrations or despair (statement #7). Discussed was the recognition that frustrations are part of the profession, but that did not mean that one had to accept these feelings in order to hope. Ricardo expressed that he can “be frustrated and be hopeful in the same breath.” Participants also spoke of the need to take proactive steps to change whatever is creating the difficulty. Anne explained:

I think that if you keep feeling that you’re despairing and you feel down on things, you can kinda change those, see what’s making you feel that way, and try to do something about it than just accepting that you feel despair and down on things.

Receiving the principal’s recognition for their teaching efforts (statement #17) is also deemed unimportant to the sustaining of hope. Rather, appreciation by the students and seeing student success is considered most valuable, as was evidenced in statements #24 and #39, both in the +4 ranking. And statement #37 (–3) reiterates the consensus regarding the non-influence of spirituality, faith, and so forth, as a sustaining force for hope in the context of the participants’ teaching life.

**Factor 1 distinguishing statements.** Distinguishing statements are those that rank highly for a given factor in comparison with the other factors, and allow for deepened understanding of a factor’s nature. There were 13 distinguishing statements for Factor 1, with 11 significant at $p < .01$) and 2 at $p < .05$. These statements are presented in Table 5. Listed in the table are the comparative rankings of the other factors for these
Table 5

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>34* I can sustain my hope by connecting with my students through meaningful conversations to show them that I care. (Rel-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>05* Being an advocate for my students motivates me to continue teaching, even though I may not see the results right away. (Tem-G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−5</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>40* My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>13* I believe that I am forever planting seeds when it comes to my students’ future. (Tem-G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>−5</td>
<td>22* Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Rel-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>32* When faced with all sorts of challenges in this profession, what helps is just being patient while I rethink strategies to address them. (Exp-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>31* Sometimes just being with someone who “gets” me, listens, and says “you’ll get through this,” is enough to give me the strength to continue. (Rel-G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−1</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>38* I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me. (Exp-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−1</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>−5</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>15* The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (S/T-G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>04* I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>19* When I feel taken for granted and not respected in my workplace, prayer helps me get through the day. (S/T-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−5</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−3</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>23* Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (S/T-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−5</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12* I never feel alone in this difficult profession because I have faith that I am being guided. (S/T-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at $p < .01$; others significant at $p < .05$
statements. Statements addressed are those at the $p < .01$ level and have a difference of two or more ranking scores between all four factors. Teacher comments are included in this section to aid in deepened understanding of these statements.

Connection with students through meaningful conversations (#34) is one core feature of Factor 1 teachers. Meaningful conversations ultimately center on teachers caring about their students and making a difference in their lives. For the participants, this means expressing respect and building rapport with students by acknowledging them as persons, not bodies in a classroom. Meaningful conversations can also help develop trust and loyalty on the part of the student to the teacher. This can translate into students doing what the teacher asks of them, such as course work, as a result of feeling respected and cared for. Rose (participant #2), a special education high school teacher who is also a key informant for Factor 1, addressed the issues of trust and how the building of trust through caring would encourage students to “try their best” in the classroom. “I understand how hard life can be and want my students to know that I really do care about them.”

Engaging in meaningful conversations with students is also personally rewarding for Factor 1 participants and serves as a personal motivator. These conversations with a trusted teacher are seen as providing a safety net for students who have no one else to talk to. Rose also addressed how a number of her students come from home environments that aren’t real inviting for conversation, particularly about little personal problems or issues they might be having that typical teenagers have that don’t
have someone to talk to. Those talks that we can have are really rewarding to me as well.

Sandy described meaningful conversation in terms of rapport, which she found influenced her students’ behavior.

I feel that meaningful conversations with the kids is good because they get to understand me and I get to understand them. . . . It’s having rapport with the kids and them having rapport with me. . . . We listen and respect what we have to say to each other. They need to know you care. Because once they know you care, they’re gonna do it [the assigned work] for you . . . they’ll do it for you, because you care about them enough they know that it’s important for them to learn.

Denise (participant #20), a suburban high school teacher, explained how meaningful conversations with students directly affect her desire to keep teaching.

What continues to engage me and makes me look forward to my day and going to teach is looking forward to talking to those students and being involved . . . and helping them gain new perspectives or new connections to something. . . . That’s what sustains me as I go, having those conversations and one-on-one interactions and opportunities to really, you know, be involved in the student’s life.

On the flipside, Gunner (participant #18), a special education teacher who works with emotionally disturbed (ED) students at a suburban high school, discussed his frustration regarding some teachers’ communication styles with students. He feels many teachers disrespect their students by not acknowledging them as people.
The one thing I did notice about teachers [I’ve worked with] is they sometimes talk to students like they’re idiots. You know, they’re just people. Just talk to them. “What’cha do this weekend?” “What’cha have for dinner last night?” It’s something that simple. You know, they [the students] like talking just like anybody else. It brings loyalty. . . . It’s about communication. I think some teachers have forgotten that.

Being advocates is likewise a core element for Factor 1, contrary to the other factors. Five different interpretations emerged regarding statement #5. “Advocacy” in general was defined by the participants as a teacher’s responsibility to stand up for and support students when it is perceived that they are unable to do so for themselves. The element of time was included in the definition as the participants recognized that results of advocacy may not manifest immediately. The first perspective regarding advocacy is through the lens of special education: assisting special education students to develop skills for independence and successful interaction in the world outside of school. The second is protection of students’ rights by being their “voice” when students are unable to do so for themselves. The third is in the context of curriculum. Curriculum was discussed in two ways. The first was regarding instructional pacing, that is, how much content to teach in a given period of time when the pacing was perceived as unsuitable for some students based on their comprehension ability level. The second was being responsive to the needs of one’s students regarding learning goals when they are struggling to grasp a concept, and to adjust one’s teaching methods based on their needs. The next perspective regarding advocacy centers on assisting students to achieve a goal.
when students are unable to do so for themselves. The last addresses transforming people’s opinions about urban students. This drive for student advocacy has at its core the innate desire to serve students’ needs and, for many, the community at large.

The following quotes highlight each of these five distinct interpretations of advocacy.

Rachel teaches middle school special education students in a rural school district: I’m not a big believer in, you know, kinda feeding into that they can’t do something or coddling them. I’m more a believer in teaching them how to become independent and how to have a voice for themselves, because a lot of times they don’t. So when I’m able to show them ways and to teach them to not rely on me, and teach them independence, I feel that I’ve accomplished something.

Gunner shared a similar view. Note: Gunner chose teaching as a mid-life career change. He owned and ran a fast-food business for 22 years, employing more than 1,600 teenagers.

I try to give them some type of life once they leave high school. It’s teach them behavior more than whether they pass a test. . . . It’s to teach them practical strategies and survival skills, how to deal with people, how to be out in society, stay out of jail, things like that.

Advocacy as protecting students’ rights of a disciplinary nature was explained by Ricardo (participant #13), a middle school foreign language teacher. He cited an example of one openly lesbian student who wrote graffiti on a bench out of anger because
the school officials decided to ban a particular song at a school-wide event, as its lyrics supposedly intimated homosexuality.

There’s sometimes where I think, “Yeah, the kid made a bad decision,” but I don’t think the punishment is necessarily appropriate. . . . Well nobody wanted to stand by for that kid and advocate for her in her suspension. I said [to the other teachers], “I don’t agree with what she did, but she still needs an advocate” [to speak up for her rights and be her voice]. To me that’s being an advocate for kids.

Ricardo also addressed being a curriculum advocate for his students. This was in two respects. The first centers on being sensitive to his students’ expressed needs regarding learning goals, as these are directly related to the prescribed curriculum the teachers are required to teach and that which the students must learn. An example he gave was when his students expressed it would be helpful if they received more support on how to use shortened sentences in the target language. Ricardo subsequently modified his lessons for the next week to meet those needs. He described this adjustment as being a curriculum advocate for his students, and acknowledged that this centered more in the present and relatively near moment, not a distant future.

The second is when working with his foreign language department colleagues. Ricardo discussed his frustration regarding the instructional pacing of certain units as determined by the department, as it was often inappropriate for some students because of their abilities.
When I am in those curriculum planning meetings I’m thinking of specific kids when I am saying one thing or another, such as how to pace a unit. At least in my particular district we have this mentality that when we write the curriculum it’s going to be good for the next 10 years . . . but when we look at the actual individuals we get on a year-to-year basis it’s a totally different ballgame.

In this regard Ricardo acknowledges that the results of this kind of advocacy may take time to see, as changes are dependent upon others. “Some decisions can be made instantaneously while some require negotiation with others and may take a significantly longer time, like months or years, to accomplish.”

Sandy addressed the need to educate people and change their opinions regarding urban schools and students.

I’m totally an advocate for urbans [urban students and schools]. Hope is for other people to look at our urban districts and our urban kids differently, to change the attitude of people about our urban kids. Because it’s a negative. To know that we have all this intelligence, we have so much to offer, but nobody ever sees that outside of the urban district.

And Patricia viewed advocacy as standing up for students’ rights in terms of paving their way for opportunity. She discussed how she actively intervened for one of her disabled students because she recognized his potential for excelling in a particular program.

I was able to identify his strengths [problem solving with spatial relationships] and then I advocated for him to join the robotics team at school because I knew he
had the skills to be successful at it, but he would never think of joining himself.

. . . Nobody else would recommend him. So I pushed, I introduced him to the robotics teacher, I emailed his counselor and convinced him to [recommend the student]. . . . I called the mother. . . . She came in and we talked about it. So he’s now going in that direction.

Distinguishing statements #40 (one day the students will see how the course material connects to their lives) and #13 (forever planting seeds with my students’ future) highlight Factor 1 teachers’ hope that they are making a difference in their students’ lives, and that their efforts may influence their students’ life chances after they leave school. This is seen through the lens of instilling ideas that may potentially transform their lives and, more specifically, that students will eventually make connections later in life with course material taught in the present moment.

Sandy gave the example of “planting seeds” as changing her students’ attitude of “I can’t” to “I can” regarding what they can do.

As long as I keep telling them that “can’ts” don’t mean “you can’t” but that you don’t want to, then maybe that will push them to do better and attempt to do things. . . . Quit giving up.

This is to help them both in the present while in school and for their life in general, particularly when they enter their adult years.

Anne (participant #9), a 3rd grade rural teacher, described how challenging it is for her students to relate course material, such as mathematics, with their daily life since they are so young. However, this does not dissuade her. “I think it’s important that we try to
show them how it’s going to affect them . . . in their lives down the road. I don’t know if it’s going to happen, but I hope it will.” The same sentiment holds for high school special education teacher Rose.

I’m hoping that what the students learn in the classroom, what we [she and her teaching partners] facilitate in the classroom is something that the students can transfer to their everyday life. . . . Everything we do is really based towards the future. So I absolutely hope that what the kids learn in class can be transferred and remembered later.

Statements #4, #19, #23, and #12 were all dismissed by Factor 1 participants because of their perceived connection to religion. Denise explained she interpreted “spiritual” as having a religious connotation “in the sense that there’s some outside force or some guiding principle to help or navigate life in some way.” She believes that she is responsible for effecting change based on hard work and the effort she puts into her teaching. This was reiterated by Sandy: “I don’t have any religious convictions. I don’t need those to give me hope to get me through the day.”

Some Factor 1 participants said that although they are not religious, they are spiritual. Patricia discussed how “spirituality does lie at the core of my sense of self and sense of worth and value.” When asked to explain what she meant by the term spirituality, she replied: “Spirituality is living from the essence of self, and being true to that essence. It is a quality that is non-physical that emanates from the inner beingness of any life form.”
What sustains Patricia and gives her hope when working with students is that she has a positive influence on their lives, even if she does not know specifically who those students may be: “I can’t know which student I’m having an impact on but I have an ongoing [non-religious] faith through my life experience that I’m having an impact on somebody because of the positive feedback I’ve had in the past.” It is this innate desire to have a positive impact on the lives of even just one student that Patricia deems an aspect of spirituality, and is not to be confused with operating from religious convictions. This is why she, as well as those who also considered themselves spiritual but not religious, dismissed these particular statements. Regarding prayer, Phil pointed out that one does not have to be religious to utilize it in times of stress: “I do say the Serenity Prayer when I’m about to explode. It’s one way I know I can avoid dropping the ‘F’-bomb. That’s the truth.”

In summary, several themes emerged for Factor 1. These are being proactive in the face of frustrations, teacher advocacy, caring relationships with students, the need for success and efficacy, acknowledgment of the role of time—both present and future—and rejection of spirituality and/or religion as a sustaining influence.

**Factor 2: Faith-Based Calling to Teach**

Seven teachers loaded significantly on Factor 2, with three mixed sorts. All but one were European American, with the other being African American, and all were female. Three teach in a suburban district, three in a rural district, and the African American participant in an urban district. Four teach at the elementary level, one at the middle school, and two at high school. One participant has been teaching 6–8 years (age
range 24–29); three have been teaching 9–11 years (two age 30–39, and one age 50–59); and three have been teaching 12–15 years (two age 30–39, and one age 40–49). Figure 3 shows the hope processes that emerged for Factor 2. Figure 2 shows the hope processes that emerged as being most representative of Factor 2. These are Spiritual/Transcendent, Relational, and Experiential, and are based on the high-positive statements. The Experiential hope process statement (#39) associated with Factor 2 is shared in common with Factors 1 and 3.

**Figure 3.** Hope processes associated with Factor 2 based on high-positive statements. Statements indicative of the Spiritual/Transcendent are #15, #19, and #23. The Relational hope process is indicated by statements #22, #31, and #14. The one statement representing the Experiential hope process is #39. Statements #15 and #23 are shared in common with Factor 4 based on factor loadings.

Factor 2’s composite Q sort indicates its focus on relationship with people—students, colleagues, friends, and family; faith in God; and the belief that everything happens for a reason. For these teachers, faith, prayer, and spirituality (all interpreted as religious in nature) are important to maintaining their hope. Moreover, the concept of
teaching as a “calling” emerged through the post-sorting interviews as a defining hope theme, and was grounded in and emanated from their spiritual and religious beliefs. Being “called” as an aspect of hope was not in any of the Q statements.

It will be seen that Factor 2 and Factor 4 share an identical belief system in respects to trust and faith in God as a hope-sustaining and stress-coping strategy. However, that is the only point of commonality between the two factors. Factor 2 participants lean nearly equally on their spiritual/religious beliefs and relationships with others to sustain and build their hope, whereas Factor 4 relies solely on belief in God.

**High-positive statements of Factor 2.** The following statements were ranked at +5, *most like my perspective:*

15. The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (S/T-G)

39. It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G)

Important to the maintenance of hope for Factor 2 participants is an underlying belief that everything happens for a reason. The interviews revealed that this “reason for everything” (statement #15) was interpreted in two different ways: personal growth for the sake of the students’ learning, and strengthening religious/spiritual beliefs in the face of adversity. Carey (participant #10), a self-defined highly religious person and also a key informant, linked the idea that everything happens for a reason to her classroom practices for pragmatic purposes rather than from a transcendent perspective. It is for the betterment of herself for her students.
There’s a reason for everything helps me kinda see beyond it. Maybe it’s rough now, maybe I’m learning something, maybe I need this experience for kids down the road. . . . Sometimes you have to have a bad experience so that later on you know how to handle the situation for another kid.

Becky, on the other hand, saw this statement in religious terms, which include being personally drawn closer to God and being of service to others.

I truly believe everything happens for a reason. God’s timing is perfect! The trials and stressors we face make us stronger and bring us closer to Him. Certain children are placed in my care for a reason. It’s my job to meet their needs, whatever they may be.

As with Factors 1 and 3, Factor 2 teachers value uplifting moments they have with students (statement #39, a distinguishing statement), be it with classroom teaching or with unexpected thoughtful acts by students. These are viewed as personally motivating and necessary for support, and can be anything from seeing students’ eyes light up when understanding course material, to receiving thank you notes from students. Faith (participant #12) described how, “I love to see their faces when they ‘get it.’ Those moments make my day . . . It’s kinda like, ‘Okay, I can do this.’” And Maxine (participant #1), a key informant, created what she calls a thank you board on her classroom wall by her desk where she posts notes that students have sent her throughout the year. “When feeling down, I read them to cheer me up. This keeps me going.”

Factor 2 teachers ranked the following at +4, most like my perspective:
Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Rel-P)

Sometimes just being with someone who “gets” me, listens, and says “you’ll get through this,” is enough to give me the strength to continue. (Rel-G)

As with Factor 1, relationships with fellow teachers are deeply valued by Factor 2 participants. The idea of colleagues as a support system in times of stress is expressed in two different ways, as became evident through the interviews. These are leaning on colleagues for professional and emotional support, and leaning on colleagues in times of stress who share similar religious views. Denise (participant #10), a key informant, recalled her need for colleagues during her first year.

It was like all the time. I was running to a teacher across the hall, my mentor teacher, my friends who are teaching in other situations. . . . It’s not so much now that I’ve been teaching for a few years, but my relationships with them are really important to me.

In contrast, Faith values her collegial relationships with those who share her religious views as a form of support.

Some days can be a little overwhelming and you just have to [pray]. One of my friends sometimes says “I just go in my room, close the door, and open my Bible.” So it’s nice to have people I work with that are in the same frame of mind that we can talk and stuff, and that helps.
Statement #31 reiterates how relationships with caring persons are essential for sustaining Factor 2 participants’ hopes. Faith leans on friends to reassure her that what she does as a teacher is important.

The state and [federal] government make me feel like I am never doing enough, even though I am constantly trying to reach every student in my classroom of 30. We as teachers are not respected as a whole—look at the way we are funded—and it is nice to hear that what I chose to do is worthwhile and beneficial. The reassurance is very helpful for my mental well-being.

The following statements are all ranked +3, most like my perspective:

14. It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress. (Rel-G)
19. When I feel taken for granted and not respected in my workplace, prayer helps me get through the day. (S/T-P)
23. Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (S/T-P)

Just as collegial relationships as well as a “listening ear” are valued as hope sustainers, so is the need for a supportive network of family and friends (statement #14). A number of Factor 2 participants articulated the necessity of such interpersonal relationships. Becky (participant #25) explained, “My friends and family are extremely important to me. They encourage and listen and help put things in perspective.” Greer (participant #6) is a single mother and values her relationship with her daughters as a stress-reducer and coping strategy: “If I didn’t have the opportunity to come home and be silly with my girls then, you know, paint nails and do shopping, do hair, I wouldn’t be able to make it.”
All Factor 2 teachers interpreted the terms faith, prayer, and spirituality as having a religious orientation. Their religious beliefs, as well as prayer, are deemed vital to maintaining their hopes in the face of adversity and, for some, are the foundation for why they chose to enter the teaching profession. Those participants framed the reason for teaching as a God-driven calling. Alexis (participant #21) explained:

Teaching high school English is so time-consuming, and so demanding. But certainly what keeps me in the profession is that feeling like it’s a call on my life for it, and I definitely feel like it’s my mission field. . . . How can I not obey what He’s telling me to do. . . . I just want to love the students.

Prayer is considered an important component of sustaining hope in times of frustration (statement #19, +3) for Factor 2 teachers, whether these frustrations are related to general or specific circumstances. Faith explained that she prays daily, and even has her mother and children pray for her because “sometimes I don’t think I’d make it through the day. . . . You have life challenges in general, and then at work you have to deal with the stresses of, like right now we have testing going on.”

Maxine is one of only three African American teachers in an urban high school that has a student body of 60% African American students. In response to statement #23 (+3), she expressed, quite bitterly at times during the interview, how her 12+ years of teaching Language Arts have been fraught with racism, sexism, discrimination, exclusion, and isolation. She described how she was “called a Nigger [by students] on several occasions, and hit in the eye while teaching.” Maxine also discussed some of the difficulties she has had with colleagues and the new building principal. She explained
that many of her European American teaching colleagues walk past her in the hallways without acknowledging her presence. These include teachers whose rooms are right next to hers. She stated she has “tried relentlessly to work with staff members, but I am ignored. Most of my day is spent in isolation.”

The new principal has added to Maxine’s feelings of isolation and discrimination. “He’s been undermining me by scheduling other teachers to use my room during my planning time and time with my students. It’s noisy. There are interruptions.”

Throughout the last several years Maxine wrote and received grants totaling more than $40,000 for various student programs at her school. This past year she wrote a grant for $10,000, but, unlike her experiences with her prior principals, both of whom were female, was not supported by the new principal in her endeavors. Maxine found that this lack of support for the grant discouraged potential collegial involvement by those who expressed interest in the program. “When there is no support for a vision, no team comes together. Nothing happens. I’m disappointed but not surprised. It’s because of the new principal.”

Maxine continued, “I do feel unappreciated. I do a lot at this school,” and uses prayer and faith in God as her support.

I believe that prayer is the essential force that has helped me to keep going in a school that continues to ignore the voices of African American teachers. . . . I pray all the time. I release my frustration to God who hears everything. I feel better, have strength and hope . . . Sometimes I take a walk outside the building to reconnect with the Lord.
When I asked her why she stays in the profession, Maxine gave two reasons. One is that she always wanted to be a teacher. “I am called to teach. It’s based on my faith. I am passionate about it. And my spiritual relationship with God is my anchor.” The other is due to her frustrations that the voices of African American teachers are not heard. “I continue this plight [working under adverse circumstances] in hopes that one day my contribution will transform the way principals treat their staff.”

**High-negative statements of Factor 2.** On the opposite end of the composite array, Factor 2 participants ranked the following statements as –5, *most unlike my perspective:*

-5  *20.* It is frustrating when I do not see results fairly quickly, such as when I do a new lesson with my students. (Tem-P)

-5  *27.* What helps sustain me is simply accepting the ongoing struggle that occurs in the teaching profession. (Exp-G)

Factor 2 teachers dismiss the notion of seeing quick results, as they recognize student learning takes time to unfold, be it with regular or special education students. Maxine explained that, based on her life experiences, learning is a process and that one has to “wait until the process unfolds.” However, an inherent tension may exist regarding this concept of time and manifestation, for statement #18 (–3 ranking) suggests teachers prefer to keep their energies focused in the present. This is discussed further when looking at the –3 ranked statements.

Equally dismissed is the notion of accepting the ongoing struggles in the teaching profession (statement #27). This was seen by the teachers as an excuse to remain
passive, not take proactive steps to problem solve in the here-and-now, and engage in blame. As Greer (participant #6), a special needs teacher, explained,

I don’t think the teaching profession has to be a struggle, even though the state of education is not good right now. I think that people use that as an excuse a lot of times for why students aren’t learning or why they can’t do their jobs right and things like that. But as professionals we’ve had to deal with that forever. . . . It’s always a struggle, but that’s part of being a teacher . . . We have to come up with creative ways and new ways to teach our kids.

The following statements were ranked −4, most unlike my perspective:

32. When faced with all sorts of challenges in this profession, what helps is just being patient while I rethink strategies to address them. (Exp-P)

38. I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me. (Exp-P)

Factor 2 participants acknowledge the need for patience, but in terms of seeing results such as student learning (statement #20, −5 ranking). In contrast, the teachers rejected the notion of patience while addressing challenges (statement #32). Patience was interpreted in four different ways: a kind of passivity that represents inaction, a personality trait, a waiting process that should be coupled with action, and something that can be emotionally overwhelming.

Denise claimed she is not a patient person, but clarified her statement by indicating this means being impatient in the moment. She waits until later to reflect on the situation and re-strategize.
I saw this [statement] as sitting around and kind of waiting for it to get better rather than face it. That’s not me. I just don’t want to figure out the solution then. I want to go home and write down the pros and cons of the situation.

As a personality trait, Faith stated, “I just have a hard time being patient.”

Maxine, who likewise rejected statement #32, stated that the only way she can be patient is through taking action.

Addressing challenges takes more than patience. It takes prayer. Action. You have to keep going until things change. I have to activate my faith [that change will occur] by actions—conferences, writing, etc., while I’m waiting for the change to happen.

Involvement in school or district-based activities outside of one’s classroom responsibilities (statement #38), such as curriculum planning or the teachers’ union, figures low with Factor 2 teachers in terms of sustaining hope, but was seen as that which could lead an individual to burnout. One reason cited is feeling overwhelmed. Becky explained how “additional things beyond the classroom are huge stressors for me. Teaching is a fulltime job plus some. Adding more to an already busy schedule is not helpful. Sometimes it even puts me over the edge.”

Factor 2 teachers ranked the following statements as –3, unlike my perspective:

-3 17. When my principal does not acknowledge me for my efforts at excellence, I want to give less of myself. (Rel-P)

-3 *18. Although there may be nothing I can do right now to bring about the changes I want, my energy is still oriented toward the future. (Tem-G)

-3 *29. It is important to me that I am contributing to the larger community in my work with my students. (Rel-G)
As with Factor 1, the need for acknowledgment by the building principal as a motivating force for doing one’s best and building hope is disregarded by Factor 2 participants (statement #17). Motivation comes from self-assessment, based on work with the students. Faith expressed this eloquently.

I don’t work to please my principal. Granted, yes, we know we are doing a job, but truthfully I am not going to change my self-perception just because she doesn’t acknowledge me. I know I do my best and am proud of myself without her praise.

Another perspective was offered for this placement. It may very well be that teachers do want acknowledgement, but have learned they will not receive it from their building principal. Denise said, “I would be thrilled if a principal realized how hard I work for my kids, but I’ve come to accept that it won’t happen [with my principal], so it’s not that important to me.”

As expressed earlier, there appears to be an inherent tension regarding the concept of time and the manifestation of results due to one’s efforts. This can be seen in statement #20 (–5 ranking) and statement #18 (–3 ranking) regarding bringing about change. On the one hand, Factor 2 teachers acknowledge the need for patience regarding student learning and realize that there will be no quick results, as student understanding of subject material takes time to manifest. However, statement #18 suggests that although this future-orientation is understood, it may not totally be embraced. One’s energies should be focused on taking action in the present and not think overly much about the future, as this can be a time waster. As Faith pointed out, everything is always
changing in education. “I can do what I can do now for my kids this year and the best job possible instead of worrying about next year and the year after . . . . You just don’t know what’s going to happen.”

Contributing to the larger community (statement #29) through one’s teaching efforts is viewed as having a weak influence on nurturing hope. Rather, the focus remains spotlighted on the students. Denise thinks societal contributions by teachers are important, but “it’s not as important to me as working with those 28 kids that are in my class for an hour. That should be my focus, those kids. That is where I can make the biggest difference.”

Factor 2 distinguishing statements. As shown in Table 6, eight statements were distinguishing for Factor 2, with 6 at significance level $p < .01$, and 2 at $p < .05$. Statements addressed are those at the $p < .01$ level and have a difference of two or more ranking scores between all four factors.

As discussed earlier, Factor 2 strongly rejected the notion of “accepting the ongoing struggle” that exists within the teaching profession (#27, –5 ranking). The participants acknowledged that struggles, whatever they may be, do exist, but that one must take action. “Simply accepting” was viewed as passivity, much the same as the way in which statement #18 (–3 ranking) was interpreted, as earlier discussed. Waiting for results to manifest is accepted; however, action is still required to begin the process of change. This proactive stance is taken by Greer through action in the present: “My [teaching] partners and I are always looking towards the future, but I think there’s always something I can do to bring about the changes I want [more immediately]. I don’t think
Table 6

_Distinguishing Statements for Factor 2_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+4 +5 +3 –3</td>
<td>It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3 0 –5 +5</td>
<td>My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–4 0 –3 +3</td>
<td>I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–4 0 –3 +3</td>
<td>When I help a student reimagine his or her possibilities, I know I’ve made a difference. (Rel-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–1 –3 0 0</td>
<td>Although there may be nothing I can do right now to bring about the changes I want, my energy is still oriented toward the future. (Tem-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 –3 +1 –1</td>
<td>It is important to me that I am contributing to the larger community in my work with my students. (Rel-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–1 –5 0 0</td>
<td>It is frustrating when I do not see results fairly quickly, such as when I do a new lesson with my students. (Tem-P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–2 –5 +2 –2</td>
<td>What helps sustain me is simply accepting the ongoing struggle that occurs in the teaching profession. (Exp-G)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at \( p < .01 \); others significant at \( p < .05 \)

there’s ever _nothing_ I can do.” Maxine, later in her interview, gave more specifics regarding actions she takes. “While I’m waiting I do things that energize me. These include talking with others, attending conferences, giving presentations, writing grants, researching effective teaching strategies. I’m always looking for something new to try in the classroom.”
Focusing on quick results (statement #20, –5) is likewise rejected as a hope-sustaining influence. Factor 2 teachers understand that seeing results takes time. When results are not forthcoming in a desired timeframe, Carey views this as a challenge.

I mean, it is frustrating, but I see it more as a challenge. It’s my job to figure out when they don’t get it [the lesson] and how to change it around. I have to see how I can go back and look at it differently and rework it so they do understand. I can’t be frustrated every time that happens.

Greer teaches low functioning students with multiple disabilities and knows that she will never see quick results (statement #20).

So that [quick results] doesn’t sustain hope for me. If I saw it, I probably would not like to teach that student because that would mean that that student has this amazing ability to learn and those aren’t the kinds of kids I’m drawn to.

In summary, the overall themes for Factor 2 teachers were their spiritual and religious convictions, and that teaching was their “calling;” needing supportive relationships with colleagues, friends, and family; having emotionally uplifting experiences with students; and the recognition of the importance of time in the student learning process.

**Factor 3: Professional Autonomy and Respect**

Three individuals comprised Factor 3. Two were European American females and one was an African American male. The African American participant’s sort (#22) was bipolar with a loading that was significant at the $p < .01$ level; this bipolar sort represents a rejection of Factor 3’s perspective and is discussed in detail as Factor 4. Both European American females were age 40–49, and both have been teaching at the
high school level between 12–15 years—one in a suburban district, the other in a rural district. Figure 4 shows the hope processes that emerged for Factor 3, based on the high-positive statements. These are the Rational, Relational, Experiential, and Temporal.

![Diagram showing hope processes associated with Factor 3](image)

**Figure 4.** Hope processes associated with Factor 3 based on high-positive statements. Statements indicative of the Rational are #10 and #9. The Relational are statements #22 and #17. The Spiritual/Transcendent is statement #28, and the Experiential is #39.

**High-positive statements of Factor 3.** The composite Q sort representing Factor 3 ranked the following statements at +5, *most like my perspective:*

+5  *10. I get really frustrated when I am not in control. (Rat-G)*

+5  *22. Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Rel-P)*

and +4, *most like my perspective:*

+4  *09. Doing things outside of work, such as being with friends, taking a walk, exercising, or going on trips, gives me the break that I need to come back recharged. (Rat-P)*
When my principal does not acknowledge me for my efforts at excellence, I want to give less of myself. (Rel-P)

Positive relationships, along with the strong need for control, are highly valued by Factor 3. Relationships valued were those with colleagues, supportive administrators, and a caring network of family and friends. Statements #10 (need for control) and #17 (principal’s acknowledgment) are discussed in detail in the distinguishing statements section. Factor 3 shares the same view with Factor 2 regarding the need for like-minded colleagues. Laura (participant #5), a high school science teacher who works in a small, rural district, discussed the vital importance of having an effective working relationship with a fellow science teacher for maintaining her hopes as a teacher.

She allows me to bounce ideas off of her and she in turn bounces ideas off of me. We try to maintain a consistency in the way that we teach biology and offer similar projects and labs for our students. It helps me not lose hope in knowing that I can talk to this fellow teacher when I need to.

Laura also discussed the importance of taking rejuvenating breaks from the work environment—whether alone or with others (statement #9) to relieve stress. Time away also provides her the mental space she needs to address frustrating problems she encounters, both in general and more specifically those regarding teaching.

Stepping away from difficult situations helps me work through things. Many people continue to work and work and I think that is counterproductive. Doing something else allows me to find the answer to a problem or in the case of teaching, helps me to find hope in hopeless situations when I take a break and do something else.
Summer breaks as a form of rejuvenation are likewise vital for garnering new ideas when thinking about one’s course for the upcoming school year. Laura discussed how this past summer she read a young adult literature book on Charles Darwin and decided to purchase copies of it for her honors biology students to read as a class requirement.

The following statements were ranked +3, *most like my perspective*:

+3 14. It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress. (Rel-G)

+3 *28. Because I believe that my life has value and worth, I have the strength to continue teaching in the face of adversity. (S/T-P)

+3 39. It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G)

The need for relational support in times of stress is again echoed in statement #14. Laura relies predominately on her spouse. “I find my husband to be the greatest source of support for me in all areas of my life. He listens, provides helpful input and sometimes reminds me about things that I have forgotten about.” In addition to her husband, friends include those at work who are willing to listen and offer feedback. “Even just the friends I have at work are often times very supportive and listen and provide input needed.”

For Factor 3, the idea that one’s life has value and worth (statement #28) is taken as a given and seen as an intrinsic part of one’s inner self. For Laura, this belief in self-worth provides strength when struggling with adversity, and is linked to coping strategies that enables her to find solutions, rise above her challenges, and nurture hope. “I think I
can always think of things to do when I am having a rough time in teaching that are fulfilling and make me feel hopeful.” One strategy she uses is to contextualize the current challenges in the broader arc of her life, linked to having some sort of purpose, be it as a teacher or otherwise.

I always tend to look at the bigger picture when faced with adversity in teaching. I guess all of that is just one part of my existence. I hope to make a difference in my teaching but that may not always happen so I have to consider my worth for other tasks as well.

This belief that one’s life has value and worth, particularly within the arena of public school teaching, is nurtured by experiencing uplifting moments with students, as seen with statement #39. These are viewed as particularly hope-renewing. Jen eloquently articulates this emotion, echoing the convictions of Factors 1 and 2 teachers. “Even though teaching can be thankless, those few times that something positive happens with a student are powerful and help me remember why I wanted to become a teacher in the first place.” Statement #39 is discussed in more detail in the statement consensus section.

**High-negative statements of Factor 3.** Factor 3 ranked the following statements at –5, *most unlike my perspective:*

-5 *15. The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (S/T-G)

-5 *40 My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem- P)\`

and statements ranked –4, *most unlike my perspective:***
37. My spiritual convictions are at the heart of why I am motivated to teach and stay in the profession. (S/T-G)

38. I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me. (Exp-P)

Mirroring the views of Factor 1, Factor 3 participants dismissed the notion that anything related to spirituality or religion is a primary hope-sustaining source. The notion that there is a reason for everything (statement #15) was strongly rejected. Jen acknowledges her religious faith but, unlike Factor 2 teachers, does not believe that God places trials in our path for any divine reason.

I don’t believe that a reason for everything exists. I do believe that God offers us ‘good’ opportunities in every situation. In education lots of things don’t make sense, and I don’t waste my energy anymore trying to find reasons to what is often bureaucratic or political bullshit.

Sustaining one’s hope based on whether or not students make connections at some point in time with course material learned in the present (statement #40) is dismissed by Factor 3. Laura was quite forceful when rejecting this statement. “Who cares! Really. They’re not even going to remember that content. I don’t actually teach content, I teach kids. So that’s why that’s not going to give me hope. The relationship stuff does.”

In agreement with Factor 2, the notion of involvement in things beyond one’s classroom (statement #38) as being hope-sustaining is rejected as this is deemed as falling within the purview of one’s professional responsibilities.

The following statements were ranked –3, unlike my perspective:
I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G)

I believe that my teaching efforts and work in the school can make a difference and bring about a better future. (Tem-P)

Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (S/T-P)

In consonance with Factor 1, the ranking of statements #4 and #23 reiterates how anything related to spirituality or that perceived as religiously centered is discounted as a hope-sustainer, even if one is religiously inclined. Factor 3 teachers lean on their support network instead, and prefer to be proactive in addressing that which frustrates them. As Laura explained,

Gimme a break! I am a religious person but it does not give me hope for the future, especially in teaching. I suppose I would not be much of a human without my religion but it is not something I think much about in teaching. I try to turn to logic and reflective problem-solving to deal with frustrations in teaching.

Due to the placement of statement #21, at first blush it would seem that Factor 3 participants question whether or not their efforts really do have a positive effect in the school, particularly with students. Laura’s interpretation casts this statement in a different light, one I would describe as cynical realism.

I really do not know if this is true [regarding one’s teaching efforts] . . . I often believe this is just a cliché cited by people who really want to believe they are making a difference in the lives of young people. I can reach many of my students but some of them are totally unreachable and I cannot make a difference in their lives.
**Factor 3 distinguishing statements.** Factor 3 has 16 distinguishing statements, with 12 at the $p < .01$ significance level and 4 at $p < .05$, as seen in Table 7. Statements addressed are those at the $p < .01$ level and have a difference of two or more ranking scores between the other three factors.

Examined in this section are distinguishing statements #10, #17, and #2 in the +5 through +1 rankings, as these speak to the themes of the need for control and being respected. These statements accentuate the interplay of causal forces that can enhance as well as erode Factor 3 teachers’ sense of hope, as well as what sustains them in their choice to remain in the teaching profession.

Having control is crucial for Factor 3 teachers (statement #10). Issues discussed in the interviews regarding control revolved around regarding their professional lives in terms of classroom autonomy such as teaching practices based on knowing what is best for their students, a teacher’s effectiveness as well as a school district being judged solely on standardized test scores, and simple events such as school assemblies that interfere with the rhythm of daily classroom life. Feelings of frustration when not in control or when actions teachers wish to take or the changes they wish to make are denied is supported by distinguishing statement #2 (When I am faced with a situation I try to stand up to but can’t change, I begin to feel frustrated and sometimes even helpless; +1 ranking). Laura addressed a number of different areas over which she feels lack of control and remarked how intensely frustrating this is for her.

Not being in control makes me crazy! This is probably one of the main reasons why I will not be able to complete a 30 year career in public school teaching.
Table 7

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−3</td>
<td>−3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−2</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−4</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>−1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−5</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 7 (continued)

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 +5 -5 +5</td>
<td>15* The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (S/T-G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3 0 -5 +5</td>
<td>40* My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at $p < .01$; others significant at $p < .05$

There is so much in a teacher’s life that they are not in control of, such as something as simple as assembly schedules to standardized testing that makes or breaks a district [that is, low test scores] . . . There are many variables that contribute to this lack of test success. One thing for sure, I have no control over many of these things and this is seriously troublesome for me.

Jen focused on administration, and discussed the importance of the role of the principal in terms of acknowledgement (statement #17).

Teaching, as I’ve discovered over 14 years, is often a thankless, conflict wrought job. Sure, there are positives, but the daily grind of butting heads is difficult. It means a lot to me to have a “someone” recognize my efforts. It’s also frustrating when the administration isn’t supportive or even combative. I work very hard and I just appreciate a pat on the back occasionally. Every now and then such thanks
come from a student or parent, but administration recognition, if it’s meaningful, makes me feel good about my job.

Laura offers a glimpse into the negative impact an unsupportive principal can have on staff, undermining morale. In the post-sorting interview, she discussed at length how her principal is dismissive of any of her accomplishments, be it with students or with her academic studies. One example Laura gave occurred just a few months prior to her participation in this study. She had received an award for work she did while in her doctoral education program and wanted to attend the awards ceremony. This meant leaving during her last period of the day, which was an inclusion class. A special education teacher who regularly works with Laura’s students is always in her class for that class period, thereby negating the need for a substitute teacher if Laura were not present. However, the principal resisted her leaving to attend the ceremony.

He never said, “Congratulations,” never said, “Way to go,” or “What’s this award for?” You know, like, “Why are they honoring you?” I was like, “Why couldn’t you have asked me that instead of getting all uptight about it?” “Well, if I let you go it’s going to set a precedent that all teachers could leave early for this, that, or the other thing.” I’m thinking, this is an award, a major award.

After much discussion, the principal reluctantly gave Laura permission to leave school early so she could attend the ceremony and receive her award, but he did give her this caveat as she was leaving his office:
“Let’s just keep this between me and you and the Special Ed. teacher. Don’t tell everybody.” And I’m like, “Whatever. Let’s keep the fact that I got this major award and you’re sitting here thinking, “Let’s just keep this between us.”

When I asked Laura why she continues working in the teaching profession after such negative experiences with her principal, she replied,

Yeah, I thought for a week after this happened like, why even bother. Why do I care? Why do I even come in here and put in this effort? Why even bother trying to be excellent? But then it’s the kids, you know. They deserve my attention and they deserve my effort.

However, this persistent lack of administrative support and dismissiveness of staff has taken its toll. Laura continued that this last experience with her principal has solidified her decision to leave the K–12 environment. She discussed that as she gets close to completing her dissertation, she shall be actively seeking a full-time professorship at a university, where her skills will be valued.

I think that there is more for me to do than teaching in my present position and this gives me hope. The hope that I will someday have a job in higher education where my talents will be better appreciated gives me hope.

In summary, Factor 3’s highlights are the need for control over one’s professional life; recognition and support by colleagues and administrators, with principals in particular; taking time away from work to rejuvenate as well as problem solve; taking action to address problems; and focusing on working towards results in the here-and-now rather than a distant future.
**Factor 4: Total Reliance on God**

Factor 4 has one sort (participant #22, Dwayne) and represents the bipolar or opposing viewpoint of Factor 3. This means that whichever statements were ranked high-positive by Factor 3 are ranked high-negative by Factor 4, and vice versa. Although only one sort comprised this factor, it nonetheless represents a type of teacher whose unique point of view on hope as a sustaining influence does exist and is therefore important to explore. Dwayne is an African American male, age 30–39, who has been teaching 11 years. At the time of this study he has been teaching 3rd grade in a suburban district for six years and previously taught in an inner-city urban district. Note: Factor 4 appears nearly identical to Factor 2; however, as is seen, the only dimension shared in common is their spiritual/religious beliefs.

Figure 5 shows the hope processes that emerged for Factor 4 based on the high-positive statements. These are the Spiritual/Transcendent, Experiential, and Temporal.

*Figure 5.* Hope processes associated with Factor 4 based on high-positive statements. Statements comprising the Spiritual/Transcendent hope process are #15, #23, #37, and #4. Those of the Temporal hope process are statements #40 and #21. The Experiential hope process statement is #38. Statements #15 and #23 are shared in common with Factor 2.
High-positive statements of Factor 4. The composite Q sort for Factor 3 had the following statements ranked at +5, most like my perspective:

+5 *15. The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (S/T-G)

+5 40. My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P)

and +4, most like my perspective:

+4 37. My spiritual convictions are at the heart of why I am motivated to teach and stay in the profession. (S/T-G)

+4 38. I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me. (Exp-P)

As with Factor 2 participants, Dwayne believes it is his calling to teach, and that his spiritual convictions are at the core of why he stays in the profession (statement #37). Dwayne shared how he had felt this call in his later teenage years, but got side-tracked. It was only after he “found God and He became an integral part of my life,” that Dwayne became focused, enrolled in a teacher education program, and graduated eight years later with his teaching certification. “I really believed it was because God had a hand, had a part in me getting it together to get here [as a professional educator].”

An example Dwayne gave exemplifies his belief that everything happens for a reason (statement #15), and reinforced his deep trust in God. He had been working for a number of years in an urban school district and soon after the birth of his second child discovered his contract was not being renewed. This was in August. After hearing the news, that same day he called a principal he knew who worked in a suburban district and
asked if there were any teaching vacancies. The principal replied, “You know what Dwayne? Today must be your lucky day. I’m sitting here with a principal now who has an opening. Can you get here about 2:30 for an interview?” Dwayne continued.

I was like, “Are you kidding me? I will be right over!” I rushed home and told my wife what was going on and, so that’s why you can see why my spiritual convictions are so strong because I know I didn’t have anything to do with that, and how that all worked out. I went in there and interviewed, got hired, and have been there [at the elementary school] for six years now.

Tied to Dwayne’s belief that everything happens for a reason is the belief that his efforts with his students is time-oriented; one day, no matter how near or distant, these efforts will come to fruition (statement #40). This was of both an academic nature as well as student transformation on an intrapersonal level. “I do believe that my students will see connections [of the class material] later on in their lives and it will click.” However, what drives Dwayne on a deeper level is having a positive impact on his students’ lives that will flower at some later point in time. This belief that students will make the connection between course material learned in the present later in life is likewise shared by Factor 1 participants.

It’s about hope for the kids that you are able to touch. I see kids I had just a few years ago and they’ll tell me, the parents [tell me] the influence I had on their child. And that’s what it’s all about when it’s all said and done.

Despite the wording of statement #38, involvement with school activities was interpreted by Dwayne in terms of interacting with students in the context of athletics.
He had coached high school basketball for several years and reminisced on the enjoyment he derived from that experience. Dwayne felt this kind of participation of a non-academic nature was a meaningful and fun way of giving to the students, as he was able to be part of their lives through the role of a coach. However, he did not extend involvement in activities beyond the classroom to anything related to policy, curriculum planning, or making changes in the school or district. As he explained, “I’m a mover and a shaker in my own beliefs, I guess, within my own classroom walls, but I won’t go out and stir the pot, you know.” The personal renewal experienced through his coaching was expressed in terms of his commitment to his students, but not necessarily as its being an essential hope-sustainer.

The following statements were ranked +3, *most like my perspective:*

+3 04. I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G)

+3 21. I believe that my teaching efforts and work in the school can made a difference and bring about a better future. (Tem-P)

+3 23. Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (S/T-P)

Factor 4’s desire to believe that efforts in the present can make a difference and influence a future outcome (statement #21) is consonant with statement #40 (+5), the hope that students will one day make connections to what they are learning in the classroom. This belief regarding the role of time is shared with Factor 1. Statements #4 and #23 reiterate the core theme for Factor 4 of the reliance upon religious faith, spiritual beliefs, and a deep, abiding trust in God for when coping with challenges in the profession. As Dwayne stated, “Basically, I found God and that became an integral part
of my life.” Moreover, these beliefs stand at the center of his raison d’être for teaching.

“I trust in the Lord and He has given me a heart to serve children. I know this because of my relationship with Him.”

**High-negative statements of Factor 4.** Factor 4 ranked the following statements at –5, *most unlike my perspective:*

-5  *10. I get really frustrated when I am not in control.* (Rat-G)

-5  22. Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Rel-P)

and –4, *most unlike my perspective:*

-4  09. Doing things outside of work, such as being with friends, taking a walk, exercising, or going on trips, gives me the break that I need to come back recharged. (Rat-P)

-4  17. When my principal does not acknowledge me for my efforts at excellence, I want to give less of myself. (Rel-P)

Dwayne reiterated that what sustains his hopes is his relationship with God and is the well from which he draws his hope. Since God is in control, there is no reason to get overly frustrated at the ups and downs that occur in either the classroom or the profession in general. In the interview, Dwayne’s response to the low ranking of statement #22 about building relationships with colleagues was based on how he interpreted sections of the statement.

I’m not discounting people at all. I don’t mean that at all. I’m just disagreeing with it as far as “helping me cope with the stressors of school,” put it that way.

That was a key part of that statement. Good relationships, okay. Share my hopes and beliefs, okay, that’s good. The willingness to problem solve. But then it said,
“that helps me cope with the stressors of school;” that’s when I said, “Oh no. That doesn’t.” Because if I put my faith in people and man and stuff, that doesn’t help me.

As for statement #14, Dwayne explained that despite his love for his family and appreciation for his friends, he relies on God as his unwavering source of strength for what sustains and nourishes him when faced with the stressors of the profession. This premise held as well for statement #17. Dwayne explained he values having a supportive principal who “listens actively to teachers in the trenches and understands and respects their perspectives,” but being acknowledged by the principal ultimately does not nourish his hope or helps him cope with stress. Dwayne relies on a “higher source.” This was seen earlier with statement #22. And, although Dwayne shared he enjoys spending time doing fun things outside of work (statement #9), the deeply felt sense of being reenergized to cope with professional challenges and stress comes from his relationship with God.

The following statements were ranked–3, most unlike my perspective:

–3  *14. It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress. (Rel-G)

–3  *28. Because I believe that my life has value and worth, I have the strength to continue teaching in the face of adversity. (S/T-P)

–3  *39. It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G)

In our interview, Dwayne remained very centered on what did and did not sustain his hope when faced with the various stressors of the profession, not any other aspect of
his life. The abiding faith in God as that which replenishes hope extends to the overall rejection of emotional help from others, hence the low ranking of statement #14. Throughout the interview Dwayne did not indicate reliance on anyone or anything other than God when coping with job-related stress and the sustaining of hope. In similar fashion, this applies to statement #39. As previously discussed, Dwayne greatly appreciates knowing that he has been a positive influence on his students, but this does not renew his hope. His hope is centered in his relationship with and faith in God, and does not rise or fall based on his students. As he expressed earlier regarding colleagues, “People come and go, but God does not.”

The negative placement of statement #28 reinforces the theme of reliance on God. It is not that Dwayne does not believe his life has worth per se, but this value and worth is grounded in his relationship with and abiding belief in God and doing God’s will, not any self-imposed criterion. As such, the “strength to continue teaching” is derived from God, not his self-evaluation regarding his personal worth as a human being.

**Factor 4 distinguishing statements.** Factor 4 has 14 distinguishing statements, with 11 at the $p < .01$ significance level and 3 at $p < .05$, as seen in Table 8.

Distinguishing statements #40, #38, and #4 in the positive ranking, as well as statements #22, #10, #9, #39, and #14 (ranked –5 through –2), have previously been discussed. Instead, I shall focus on statements #32 and #7, despite their lower ranking (+2), for their ranked placement stand in direct contrast to the other factors (see Table 6).

To remind, Factor 2 and Factor 4 share strong similarities regarding faith, spirituality, and religious beliefs, and are distinctly different when it comes to reliance on
Table 8

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| +3 | 0  | -5 | +5 | 40 | My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them. This keeps me going. (Tem-P) |
| -1 | -4 | -4 | +4 | 38*| I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me. (Exp-P) |
| -4 | 0  | -3 | +3 | 04*| I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (S/T-G) |
| -3 | -2 | -2 | +2 | 07*| Over time I have learned that I have to accept my feelings of frustration and despair in order for me to hope. (Exp-G) |
| 0  | -4 | -2 | +2 | 32*| When faced with all sorts of challenges in this profession, what helps is just being patient while I rethink strategies to address them. (Exp-P) |
| +1 | +2 | +1 | -1 | 03 | Having worked through prior difficult challenges has given me the ability to face challenges I encounter today. (Exp-G) |
| 0  | +1 | +2 | -2 | 35 | I have found that the times my “voice” was recognized and respected by my colleagues or administrators, my hope and resolve were strengthened. (Rel-P) |
| -1 | +4 | +3 | -3 | 31*| Sometimes just being with someone who “gets” me, listens, and says “you’ll get through this,” is enough to give me the strength to continue. (Rel-G) |
| +2 | +3 | +3 | -3 | 14*| It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress. (Rel-G) |
| +1 | 0  | +3 | -3 | 28*| Because I believe that my life has value and worth, I have the strength to continue teaching in the face of adversity. (S/T-P) |
| +4 | +5 | +3 | -3 | 39*| It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope. (Exp-G) |
| +3 | +1 | +5 | -5 | 09*| Doing things outside of work, such as being with friends, taking a walk, exercising, or going on trips, gives me the break that I need to come back recharged. (Rat-P) |

*(table continues)*
Table 8 (continued)

*Distinguishing Statements for Factor 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors and Scores</th>
<th>Distinguishing Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10* I get really frustrated when I am not in control. (Rat-G)

22* Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Rel-P)

* Significant at \( p < .01 \); others significant at \( p < .05 \)

people for hope-sustenance and stress-coping. During the interview Dwayne expressed a faith-based perspective regarding the notion of accepting feelings of frustration and despair as a means for hope (statement #7). He explained that although he generally does not accept feelings of frustration, as he prefers to address the daily challenges and work towards making needed changes in his classroom, he sees frustration as part of these challenges and therefore turns over these feelings to God. This provides him with comfort and fortifies his faith that there is a reason for everything, including frustrations, and all is in God’s hands.

This act of turning over to and trusting in God is the same strategy utilized when needing patience for rethinking strategies to address challenges (statement #32). This can be seen, as previously discussed (see statement #15, +5), in Dwayne’s experience when finding out just a few weeks before the new school season began he had been laid off from his teaching position.
So what I did was say, “Okay. Just relax, just figure out how you’re going to do, what you’re going to do.” And so, because of my connection with [such and such district], I said, “Let me just call [name of person] just to see” . . . You know, it was a shot in the dark totally, because you know by then most people already have their [teaching] position.

To cope with the uncertainty of whether or not he would get a teaching position, Dwayne explained he centered himself within his deep and abiding trust in God, and the belief that all happens for a reason.

In summary, Factor 4 represents a type of teacher for whom religious faith is the penultimate source for the sustaining of hope when faced with the stressors of the profession, to the exclusion of hope-building relationships with others. It is this profound relationship with God which assists the teacher to cope with the frustrations and challenges of the teaching profession.

**Consensus Statements**

Two statements held in agreement between Factors 1, 2, and 3 are worthy of discussion. As previously mentioned, Factor 4 is inverse, that is, bipolar of Factor 3, and therefore does not share these statements in common. These are statements #14 (It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress; Rel-G) and #39 (It is those few uplifting experience I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope; Exp-G). Statement #14 was ranked on the composite factor arrays as +2 for Factor 1, and +3 for
Factors 2 and 3. Statement #39 was ranked on the composite factor arrays as +4 (Factor 1), +5 (Factor 2), and +3 (Factor 3).

The importance of relationships by a supportive network of caring friends and/or family members as well as experiencing personally meaningful interactions with students, regardless of their frequency, cannot be overstated for the sustaining of hope for Factors 1, 2, and 3 participants. Support was seen in a variety of ways. One was in the form of having individuals who understood that the participants were more than their occupation; they were accepted for who they were as a multifaceted individual and that being a teacher was just one aspect of their identity. Denise explained: “Having people who understand and ‘get me’ as me, not as a teacher, is refreshing and important to maintain the idea of still be ‘me’, even though I have the stresses of work.”

Another form of support was having someone to whom the participants could go and share their experiences of the day. Sandy relies on her family members, such as her husband, son, or mother, and her friends. “With my friends I get on the phone with them. ‘Oh my gosh, you won’t believe what happened!’ And it’s always nice and refreshing to talk with them.” With friends at school, they help to “calm me down on occasion when I’m upset and frustrated.”

As previously seen with all three factors, uplifting experiences with students were a key part of the renewal of hope for the participants. These experiences helped reinforce the teachers’ sense that they truly played an important role in the lives of their students. This revitalized their commitment to the profession, particularly when coping with stress. Susanne gave this example of how her experiences with one student kept her going.
This one student, he really struggles. But he’s been doing so much better. I can see that because instead of him coming and asking me how to do this, he comes and says, “Here’s what I did. I think I got it.” And just seeing that what I’ve done this year with him has helped him grow that way. You know, so just the little things, even if it’s just one student every year or whatever. That helps.

And for Debra, these experiences reinforced her sense of purpose. “These experiences . . . help me kinda look at myself and say, ‘This is why I started teaching. This is the reason to do what I’m doing.’ This helps me stay in the profession.”

**Summary of the Results**

This chapter provided an analysis of the data collected from 25 mid-career public school teachers regarding their perspectives on what sustains their hope when faced with the stressors of the profession. Q-methodology was utilized to explore their subjective points of view. Four factors emerged from data analysis, with the fourth being bipolar or inverse of the third factor. These factors represent four distinct perspectives on hope as a sustaining influence as well as ways of coping with stress related to the teaching profession. An analysis followed for each of the factors based on interpretation of data analysis, distinguishing statements, and interview data. An identifying label was given for each factor that best expressed its underlying theme. These labels were Making a Difference through Advocacy (Factor 1), Faith-Based Calling to Teach (Factor 2), Professional Autonomy and Respect (Factor 3), and Total Reliance on God (Factor 4). The last section presented a discussion of two statements that were shared in common by
Factors 1, 2, and 3. The following is a brief explanation of the four factors and what sustains their hope and ability to cope.

Factor 1 teachers perceived hope in terms of relationships in the following ways: being advocates for students; having meaningful conversations with students to demonstrate care; feeling they are making a difference in their students’ lives; and maintaining a supportive network with friends and family. The need for recognition by their principal was deemed as having no bearing on what sustained them as they would give their all, regardless of their principal’s opinion. The idea of anything related to spirituality, faith, prayer, and/or religion as a sustaining influence for hope within the context of the teaching profession was rejected.

Factor 2 teachers felt that teaching was their “calling,” and leaned on their spiritual convictions, faith, and belief in God for hope-renewal. Equally valued for hope and coping were having supportive relationships with colleagues, emotionally uplifting experiences with students, and the understanding and acceptance that learning takes time. What was perceived as increasing their stress level were involvement in activities beyond the classroom such as curriculum planning or the teachers’ union, the pressure of high-stakes testing, and being taken for granted and disrespected in the workplace.

Factor 3 participants centered heavily on being acknowledged and respected by colleagues and their principal, and the need for control and autonomy in their professional life. Also vitally important for coping with stress and building hope is taking time away from work, having a supportive, caring network of friends and family,
and building positive collegial relationships. As with Factor 1 teachers, spirituality and religious faith were dismissed as a hope-sustaining and coping strategy.

Factor 4 was similar to Factor 2 regarding religious faith, spiritual convictions, and belief in God as being directly linked to the call to teach as well as providing the means by which to cope with stress. However, what distinctly marks Factor 4 is the total reliance on God as the means for coping and sustaining hope when faced with challenges. Unlike Factor 2, collegial relationships, although valued particularly when needing to problem solve, were relegated by Factor 4 to a secondary position when it came to coping with the stressors of the profession. God was the sole relationship that mattered for hope and coping with stress.

In Chapter 5, the study concludes with a discussion of the results, the study’s limitations, surprising findings, implications, and areas for future lines of inquiry.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Hope is the passion for what is possible.” Kierkegaard

This chapter provides a summary of this exploratory study, including a review of its purpose, research methodology, and discussion of the findings regarding the four factors that emerged as well as the two hope statements held in agreement by Factors 1, 2, and 3. Unexpected findings, gaps in the literature, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future lines of inquiry are also addressed. The participants’ “Words of Wisdom” for new teachers, as well as their “Dream Teacher Support System” are offered in Appendices G and H, respectively.

The guiding research questions this study sought to gain insight into were

1. What are mid-career public school teachers’ perspectives on the role that hope plays in sustaining them to continue teaching?

2. What strategies do mid-career teachers use to build hope?

It must be noted regarding the research questions that, based on the interviews, for virtually all the participants—regardless of the factor on which they loaded—the line between hope as that which sustains a teacher to remain in the profession (research question 1) and hope as a stress-coping strategy (research question 2) blurred in many instances, often resulting in their merging. Hope as a sustaining influence was simultaneously seen as a strategy for coping with stress, and vice versa. The two fed and built upon each other.
This blurring held as well regarding the word usages of hope, hoping, and that which was hoped for. This would confirm Godfrey’s (1987) thesis regarding the complexity of “hope-talk,” wherein hope is expressed as a noun, verb, and adjective, often within the same sentence (p. 7). Moreover, the types of hoped-for goals described by the participants similarly shifted between those that were generalized and particularized, as was theorized by Farran et al. (1995). Based on these observed tendencies, the discussion for each factor attempts to capture this flow.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore mid-career teachers’ perspectives on the ways in which hope enables them to remain in the teaching profession, as well as strategies they utilize to cope with stress and nurture hope in order to offset the potential of burnout. Although much research has focused on why teachers leave the profession, scant research exists that explores why teachers stay, particularly through the lens of hope. The hope model as developed by nurse researchers Farran et al. (1995) was chosen as the guiding conceptual framework for this study due to its multidimensional nature, as it is grounded in theories on hope from the fields of psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, and theology.

Twenty-five mid-career public school teachers from Maine, Ohio, and New Jersey participated in this exploratory study. The teachers ran the gamut of elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, and were either from rural, urban, or suburban settings. A wide range of subject matter taught was represented as well. Through the use of Q methodology, a mixed-methods research approach that explores participants’ subjective
perspectives on any given topic (Kitzinger, 1999), four factors or themes emerged and were labeled Making a Difference through Advocacy (Factor 1), Faith-Based Calling to Teach (Factor 2), Professional Autonomy and Respect (Factor 3), and Total Reliance on God (Factor 4). These labels arose from analysis of each factor’s highly ranked statements, the distinguishing statements, as well as interview data, and represent what suggested itself as the underlying theme for each factor.

Discussion of Findings

Factor 1: Making a Difference Through Advocacy

Four hope processes emerged as defining Factor 1, these being the Rational, Relational, Experiential, and Temporal. Of these processes, the Temporal was the most prominent, followed by the Relational, Rational, and then the Experiential with its one hope statement. This statement (#39) is shared in common with Factors 2 and 3, and is discussed at length in the Consensus statements section. As stated in Chapter 4, the majority of participants loaded on this factor.

The dominant theme that emerged for Factor 1 participants as that which sustained hope and enabled them to cope with the stressors of the teaching profession was the desire to make a positive difference in the lives of students through advocacy. This need to be a positive influence in the lives of others was embedded within the context of time. Fullan (1993, 2007) has long spoken of the relationship between teaching as a moral enterprise and teachers being agents of change. He defined moral purpose as that of “making a difference” which concerns itself with “bringing about improvements” (1993, p. 2), and that substantive change takes time. This theme of Factor 1 teachers
wanting to make a difference manifested in several ways. Included were being advocates for students; recognition and acceptance of the role that time plays when seeking change; helping students reimagine their life possibilities; the participants’ need to see success and experience the strong sense of personal agency that success generates; thriving on meaningful connections through conversation with students; and cherishing uplifting experiences with students to renew hope. These expressions of that which are perceived to sustain hope for Factor 1 are reflective of the Rational, Temporal, Relational, and Experiential hope processes.

The need for successes to sustain hope for the realization of desired goals (statement #24) is indicative of the Rational hope process. The successes discussed by the participants during the interviews were diverse and ranged from students demonstrating understanding of specific course material such as mathematical concepts or improved manual dexterity when working with art material, to learning new skills of an inter- and intrapersonal nature. These skills included examples such as students learning to speak up for themselves when interacting with others, to gaining a new perspective of personally held-beliefs. The latter was seen when Patricia’s student, during the Empty Bowls art project, changed her views about giving to those in the community who were in need of food.

These various student successes directly strengthened the teachers’ sense of agency in their ability to effect positive change in their students’ lives, which further influenced the teachers’ desire to continue in their efforts, and offset the potentiality of burnout. This relationship between success and determination is indicative of Bandura’s
thesis that the stronger the conviction of one’s effectiveness in achieving a goal, the stronger the likelihood of persistence in spite of obstacles, as well as Lynch’s (1965) and Menninger’s (1959) position that hope is a mutually reinforcing relationship whereby help is given and received in order to realize one’s hope.

One aspect of the Rational hope process is that of control, which is intrinsically linked with the sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982, 2001). The greater the perception that individuals have control regarding their environment, the greater the likelihood for persistence in goal attainment and coping with challenges. Yet, in contrast to Bandura’s thesis of the linkage between control and agency, Factor 1 participants expressed that the need for control (statement #10) was not important for sustaining their hope. This is in direct contrast to Factor 3, in which the element of control—particularly regarding the work environment—is one of its defining characteristics. Factor 1 teachers are mindful that their efforts may not be successful, for they recognize their various hoped-for goals are contingent upon variables over which they have no control, such as the rate at which student learning occurs, or having parental support. That said, they do not allow this lack of control regarding external variables to interfere with their hoping process nor dissuade them in their efforts with their students. One example given was framed within the context of advocacy. As Fred explained, “A lot of things are outside my control, but I still advocate for my students . . . Advocating for the kids when something positive can happen for them is not a futile effort.”

Advocacy for students (statement #5) is a core component for Factor 1 participants’ sense of and sustenance of hope and is set within the framework of the
Temporal hope process. Based on prior experiences, Factor 1 participants hold a deep understanding that seeing results of their efforts is time-dependent—results of efforts made can manifest in the near or distant future, and its actualization is not a given. Despite this uncertainty, the desire for a hoped-for outcome compels Factor 1 teachers to persist with their efforts in the present moment. This linkage between time, hope, and action by the participants supports the views of Ludema et al. (1997), Marcel (1978), and Stotland (1969) that when people hope they make a triangulation between the past, present, and future, and project their hope into this unknown yet desired future. This image of a desired future in turn influences decision making and action in the present. “Hope cannot see what will happen, but it can affirm ‘as if it saw’” (Marcel, 1978, p. 53, author’s italics).

This linkage of advocacy, time, and hope can further be seen with Factor 1’s focus on the imagery of and desire for “planting seeds” (Temporal hope process statement #13) with their students. This imagery—spoken of by the participants as both a general, overarching type of hope—represented the ingraining of ideas and values in their students that could be transformative for their lives, as well as a particularized hope by providing them with tools to see themselves and their relationship with the world in a different way. Sandy discussed how she persists in telling her students to change their saying “I can’t” to “I can” with the hope that the message will “push them to do better and attempt to do things, to quit giving up. So I think that’s a seed I plant.”

Korner (1970) spoke of the relationship between hope and the sense of personal dependence on the outcome of the hoped-for event; the valued outcome is felt as that
which is fundamentally important to one’s life and well-being. Sandy expressed that providing her students with tools that may one day assist them in fashioning for themselves a different reality is vitally important to her as a teacher. Sandy also acknowledged she may never see what changes may occur in her students’ lives once they leave her classroom, but the profound belief that the potential exists for a positive change to occur in her students, whether this change happens in a near or distant future, motivates her to continue in her “seed planting” practice, as well as strengthens her desire to make a difference in the lives of her students. For Sandy, “planting seeds” is simultaneously that which sustains her hope as well as being a coping strategy, as her concern and hope for her students’ well-being and future life chances help to put the daily stressors of the profession with which she is faced into perspective. Sandy explained: “Bottom line, my students are my number one priority.”

Susanne was eloquent in her explanation of how changes that occur through her seed planting makes her feel and renews her hope. “So when you see that change [in the student] then, it just, you get this little burst of energy that you can do this and you are making a difference.” This feeling of being energized due to the actualization of a hoped-for event would further support Korner’s (1970) thesis that hope influences one’s motivational system to continue to persist in the face of challenges and doubt (p. 136).

The notion of planting seeds for transformation is akin in nature regarding the temporal aspect of hope that students will one day make the connection between previously learned course material to their lives (Temporal hope process statement #40). This is a more particularized type of hope as it relates specifically to subject matter,
rather than a generalized hope for an overall positive transformation, as was seen with the idea of planting seeds for future manifestation. One specific hoped-for goal desired by Factor 1 teachers is for their students to develop the ability of understanding; that is, making sense of what is being learned and being able to transfer that knowledge from one setting to another (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Rose discussed how gratifying and hope-sustaining it is for her to meet former students who have made that connection with previously learned course material.

There’s nothing that satisfies me more than to be out in the community and run into former students who tell me, actually I had someone say, “Thank you for teaching me about not to overcharge on my charge card, because I had a friend who owed $3000 [on a credit card] and didn’t have any money to pay it.”

This experience of meeting with a student who was able to connect what was taught several years beforehand in class to his current life choices served to renew Rose’s hope that her actions in the present moment will influence the future, specifically that of her students. Moreover, this gratifying experience of several years later meeting a former student who has been able to utilize information learned while in her class strengthens Rose’s belief that she truly has made a difference through her efforts. This would yet again be indicative of Bandura’s (1982, 2001) thesis regarding the intimate interrelationship between the need for success, feeling effective, and its influence on persistence in spite of obstacles.

In similar fashion, albeit a more generalized type of hope, Rachel contextualizes her role as a teacher within a future orientated imagery.
I just look at hope as the bigger picture . . . that these kids will go and have grand ideas and maybe someday there will be a cure for cancer because of what we [teachers] do . . . I’m creating those doctors. They couldn’t be where they are without a teacher.

Factor 1 participants’ perspectives support the view that hope and time are intimately entwined, and that our present actions are influenced by both our prior experiences and our vision for a better future (Farran et al., 1995; Marcel, 1978). As Lynch (1965) expressed, “We move into the future, therefore, to the degree that we have hope. This must be taken literally” (p. 34).

Another hope-nurturing area regards the Relational hope process, with the focus on having meaningful conversations with students (statement #34). Meaningful conversations provide the teachers a sense of affirmation that their demonstration of genuine care and interest in their students is recognized by and responded to by the students’ willingness to participate in that exchange. For Tina, meaningful conversations are emblematic of the intersection of trust and care. “I believe that children will try their best if they trust the person they’re working with. I understand how hard life can be and want my students to know that I really do care about them.” This expression of “care” on the part of the teachers for their students strengthens Marcel’s (1978) position that hope is inspired by love and is evidenced through the relational process that occurs between individuals.

This reciprocity of relationship is what Lynch (1965) stated is the heart of hope. It is a mutually interdependent process that occurs as an interaction of giving and
receiving between individuals, for it is with and through others that help is given and can be received. The act of caring as the grounds for a mutual, hope-reinforcing relationship supports the literature regarding the importance of relationships in order for hope to thrive (Lynch, 1965; Menninger, 1959, 1963).

The one Experiential hope statement (#39) that arose for Factor 1 addresses the need for having uplifting experiences with students. These kinds of experiences play a powerful role in sustaining the participants’ hope and aids in their ability to cope with stressors that challenge their decision to stay in the profession. As this statement is shared in common with Factors 2 and 3, it is addressed in detail in the Consensus Statements section following Factor 4 discussion.

**Factor 2: Faith-Based Calling to Teach**

Of the three hope processes that emerged for Factor 2, the Spiritual/Transcendent and the Relational are the dominant processes relied upon for coping with on-the-job stress, along with both particularized and generalized types of hope. The Experiential hope process statement (#39) associated with Factor 2 is shared in common with Factors 1 and 3, and is addressed in the Consensus Statement section following Factor 4 discussion. The key point to keep in mind regards the seeming similarity between Factor 2 and Factor 4 with their emphasis on the Spiritual/Transcendent as the primary hope-sustaining and stress-coping strategy. Factor 2 participants lean nearly equally on their spiritual/religious beliefs and their relationships with others to sustain their hope and cope with job-related stress, whereas Factor 4 relies solely on belief in God.
The Spiritual/Transcendent hope process manifested as specific hope-building, coping strategies for on-the-job stress: the belief that everything happens for a reason (statement #15), prayer, and the reliance upon one’s faith (statements #19 and #23, respectively). When the participants addressed their perspectives on these statements during the interviews, their discussion focused on their belief and faith in God as well as doing God’s will. This was set within the framework of Christianity as all Factor 2 teachers identified themselves as Christians.

The need to have faith in and to lean upon a higher power in order to nurture hope as well as provide the means to cope with stressful challenges is repeatedly borne out in the literature, be it in the fields of nursing (Herth, 1990; Pipe et al., 2008), psychology (Pruyser, 1986), and theology and philosophy (Lynch, 1965; Marcel, 1978). According to Fowler (1995), faith is aligned with a quest for transcendence—in this case rising above one’s challenges—but does not necessarily have to be religiously-based. Faith can be understood as “an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions” (p. 14). That said, Factor 2 participants framed their understanding of faith within a religious context. Pruyser (1986) noted that a strong relationship exists between hope and religious beliefs due to the fact that “some religions are religions of hope that offer to their adherents a set of ideas that are powerful adjuncts in seeing them through dark times” (p. 473; author’s italics) and are thus imbued with religious attitudes and ideas. Faith and the practice of prayer are two of these hope-building “ideas.”
Maxine relies upon her religious faith and use of prayer whenever she starts feeling overwhelmed at work due to difficult challenges, such as collegial disrespect because of her race. “I have overcome these obstacles through my strong belief in God. I believe that prayer is the essential force that has helped me to keep going in a school that continues to ignore the voices of African American teachers.” Maxine gave specific examples of prayer strategies she uses to alleviate her frustrations.

Prayer kicks in when I’m feeling stressed. I talk to God in my “prayer closet.” I release my frustration to God who hears everything . . . Sometimes I take a walk outside the building to reconnect with the Lord . . . I feel better, have strength and hope.

When asked if prayer and her faith help her when she begins to feel a sense of burnout, she replied, “Yes.” This renewal of hope through such active means as the reliance on faith and prayer is supported by Marcel (1978) when he spoke of the relationship between hope and a trial, that is, when one feels trapped in some fashion and is experiencing distress. Hope within the individual emerges through the very act of hoping to overcome “the temptation to despair” (p. 36). The usage of hope in its verb form indicates action of some sort (Godfrey, 1987). It is this active component that is a necessary part of hope that distinguishes it from a wish.

For Maxine and the other Factor 2 participants, faith in God and use of prayer are conscious acts taken to address their feelings of frustration, particularly when the challenge starts to verge on becoming emotionally and psychologically overpowering. Through these strategies of prayer and faith, Factor 2 participants create an internal space
of respite from the trials of the profession in their life as an educator; through the aid of belief in a supernal being, they can reimage the present into a new possibility, an alternate future wherein the trial is overcome or transformed. This reimagining of the trial is considered a vital part of the hoping process. As Menninger (1959) said, to be unimaginative is to be “hope-lacking” (p. 489).

Tied with the notion of faith and prayer when facing hope-depleting challenges is the belief that everything happens for a reason; this enables one to see beyond the present and remain hopeful (statement #15). One theme repeatedly arose in the interviews regarding this reason and was set within the context of being aligned with God. This was the deeply-felt conviction of being personally “called to teach” by God for some purpose. An overall definition of calling is it being “a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action” (Merriam-Webster, 2011a). This inner impulse is felt as a pulling that sets alight an internal motivation to pursue a life path and/or career (Bigham & Smith, 2008).

This pulling is evidenced in two ways: a calling to service which is typically interpreted as one’s vocation or profession, and/or a calling to God (Hartnett & Kline, 2005). Alexis explained that she views teaching as a calling based on her religious beliefs. “I feel called into the teaching profession as a mission field.” For Alexis, this means she is to “share God’s love with others [her students]. Since I feel this is where God wants me right now, this is where I will stay as long as He wants me to.” This belief in teaching as a calling also assists Alexis with coping with on-the-job challenges, as well as sustaining her hope that she is fulfilling God’s will as she works with students. “No
one said it was going to be easy to share God’s love with others.” A few Factor 1 participants alluded to this sense of being called but, unlike Factor 2, gave it no religious or spiritual ascriptions.

The idea of being called to teach as an expression of one’s spiritual and/or religious beliefs can be considered an aspect of seeking purpose and meaning in life, another defining feature of the transcendent nature of hope. Hansen (1995), in his examination of teaching as a vocation, argued that “vocation emerges at the crossroads of public service and personal fulfillment . . . [it] describes work that is of service to others, and that at the same time provides the person with a sense of identity and meaning” (p. 115). Although Hansen framed his treatise of vocation and teaching in secular terms, he did discuss that when it comes to teachers’ attempts to describe why they teach, hope and spirituality enter into the discourse. “They [teachers] may find themselves resorting to language with spiritual overtones, speaking, for example of their hopes for and faith in their students” (p. 5).

The notion of “call” hearkens to the imagery of a call and response relationship. Lynch (1965) described this relationship, whether it be with humans and/or a belief in a higher power, as one of help: Hope is an inner sense that help lies outside of us. We must be able to imagine that help does indeed exist, and thus it is up to us to reach out to receive that help. For Factor 2 teachers, relationship with God provides spiritual support when coping with challenges and acts as a stress-reducer, which then has the effect of mitigating burnout. This was seen in Maxine’s explanation that when she prays, she
believes God hears her and responds to her plea for help, which in turn provides her the needed calm to cope with her stressors.

In addition to leaning on spiritual/religious beliefs for hope-sustaining strength, interpersonal relationships with a support group provided Factor 2 participants with emotional and psychological support when faced with unrelenting on-the-job stress. This human touch centered on colleagues (statement #22) and friends and family (statement #14). It will again be noted the dominance of the Relational hope process for Factor 2. This stands in direct contrast to Factor 4, which rejects this need for human relationships to provide hope, help cope with the stressors of the profession, and reduce feelings of burnout.

Factor 2 participants deemed collegial support (statement #22) as essential for hope. Debra, who teaches science at the elementary school level, works in a team of four. Having colleagues who problem-solve together helps sustain her and strengthens her hope.

It’s really important. We talk daily. We even talk on weekends. We try to stay together with our subjects—what we’re doing, having tests at the same time, and I feel that’s really important [the support]. It helps me a lot.

Denise experienced the need for collegial support when faced with non-subject matter related matters, as she says her colleagues “get” what is going on.

Sometimes I need a colleague to talk to who understands things like what my building is like, what the dynamic is, what is expected . . . Because when I’m having a really big problem at school, like with a parent or with a student or
anything that goes on behind the scenes, it’s helpful to have a colleague because they understand. They *get* the frustration, they *get* the dynamic of the school and what you’re expected to do . . . versus when you’re venting to a friend or family member. They really can’t offer you as much [work-related support] as an insider in the situation.

Denise, however, shared that she does rely on individuals outside the work environment for emotional nurturance: “It’s the same kind of thing, that same sharing your hopes and beliefs.” This need for meaningful, supportive relationships by the participants is another core feature of hope, and supports the thesis that hope thrives when one is in relationship with others (Erikson, 1982; Lynch, 1965; Menninger, 1959, 1963). In hope-filled, mutually affirming relationships, be it in the home, with friends, or in one’s workplace, we trust that our needs will be met in some fashion, as it is the nature of hope to reach for and take help from others. For Lynch (1965), this is part of relational mutuality that “is part of the growth of hope. If I ask I shall receive” (p. 42). For collegial relationships to sustain and nurture hope, they must be with others who equally seek to nurture their hope through the exchange. Otherwise there can be the risk of burnout contagion, where the focus is on non-constructive, non-problem solving griping rather than the seeking of solutions (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000).

The one experiential hope process statement for Factor 2 (statement #39) centered on uplifting experiences teachers have with students that renew hope. This statement is shared by Factors 1 and 3 as being of importance, and is addressed in the consensus statement section following Factor 4 discussion.
Factor 3: Professional Autonomy and Respect

Three participants comprised Factor 3 with one sort being bipolar, that is, holding a diametrically opposed viewpoint. For ease of discussion, this bipolar sort is examined separately as Factor 4; therefore two participants are representative of Factor 3. The hope processes that arose as most indicative of Factor 3 are the Rational, Relational, Spiritual/Transcendent, and Experiential, with the Rational and Relational being the most dominant hope processes.

The need for professional control over one’s work environment (Rational hope process, statement #10) and respect as well as support from the building principal (Relational hope process, statement #17) were considered most essential for hope and reduction of stress for Factor 3 participants. These were very specific types of hope-sustainers. When either of these were lacking, frustration began to set in. Strategies such as reliance on friends and family (Relational hope process, statement #14) and engaging in fun, non-work related activities either with friends or with oneself (Rational hope process, statement #9) helped to alleviate those feelings of frustration and even despair when faced with loss of autonomy and an unsupportive, disrespectful principal.

Secondary for the sustaining and nurturing of hope were the experiencing of uplifting encounters with students each year (Experiential hope process, statement #39), and holding onto the inner belief that one’s life has purpose based on perceived self-worth (Spiritual/Transcendent hope process, statement #28). Statements #39 and #14 are discussed in the Consensus Statement section, as Experiential statement #39 was shared
in common with both Factors 1 and 2, whereas Relational statement #14 was shared with Factor #2.

Whereas Factor 1 draws on the Rational hope process by needing successes as hope inspiration, Factor 3 participants require having control, another Rational hope process component. Factor 3 participants directly linked the need for control with feelings of agency, and thus with hope. This need is in alignment with Bandura’s (1982, 2001) studies on self-efficacy or agency, anxiety and motivation. “Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people’s beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environmental events” (2001, p. 10). When individuals feel they have inadequate control over their environment, they can become “saddened and depressed by their perceived inefficacy in gaining highly valued outcomes” (1982, p. 141), and have “little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties (2001, p. 10). As Farran et al. (1995) explained, loss of control is “often associated with feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness” (p. 9). Jen shared how frustrated she gets when she feels a lack of control over her work environment. “There’s so much in a teacher’s life that they are not in control of, such as something as simple as assembly schedules to standardized testing, which can make or break a district.”

In addition to the need for autonomy and control, Factor 3 participants cited particularized rather than generalized hopes regarding relationships with colleagues and their building principal as being hope-sustaining. Having colleagues who shared similar beliefs and a willingness to problem-solve (Relational statement #22), positive
administrative acknowledgment (Relational statement #17), as well as control over one’s professional life and being treated as a professional educator, have been amply documented as influencing retention rates (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cherniss, 1995; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Tye & O’Brien, 2002).

Inadequate administrative support, which includes refusing teacher involvement in decision making, was one of the most common reasons given by teachers contemplating leaving the profession, alongside salary and disruptive students. “Teachers seek environments where they are supported and treated as professionals” (Brill & McCartney, 2008, p. 757). This includes receiving respect from one’s principal. Jen elaborated on her experiences in the profession. “Teaching, as I’ve discovered over 14 years, is often a thankless, conflict wrought job . . . administrative recognition, if it’s meaningful, makes me feel good about my job.” Receiving respect by her principal through recognition of work well done directly influences her hope and feelings of efficaciousness. Guin (as cited in Brill & McCartney, 2008) found that “how teachers feel they are valued in the school” (p. 12) influences teachers’ feelings of agency and commitment to the profession. This feeling of being valued can influence the nurturing or diminishment of hope. Likewise, Cherniss (1995) found a direct link between self-efficacy and burnout where “certain job characteristics, such as low autonomy” and “adverse organizational conditions” exist (p. 139).

Jen continued, addressing the relationship between the need for autonomy and control in terms of professional decision making, the forces that intervene with said autonomy, and its resultant effects.
It is my belief that this profession particularly lends itself to the onset of frustration and the feeling of helplessness. It seems that so many times when I know deep inside my professional bones what is the right thing to do for students I am blocked by state or local decisions, [district] financial issues . . . These things not only halt what I am wishing to accomplish, but because of an ever-increasing frustration I feel myself reverting to just doing what is required.

This frustration and sense of helplessness due to loss of autonomy experienced by Factor 3 participants corroborates research findings regarding factors influential in promoting teacher attrition and burnout (Certo & Fox, 2002; Johnson et al., 2005; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991).

Factor 3 participants expressed their need for and appreciation of positive relationships with like-minded colleagues to sustain hope (Relational hope statement #22), and stay away from fellow teachers who exhibit negativity and signs of burnout. Laura described the symptoms she has seen in a number of her colleagues at her school who she perceives as being or close to being burned out. “They complain about everything, they cut corners a lot more than usual, they stop caring about or even stop showing interest in their students, they look angry and disgusted, get frustrated really easy, and are counting down to retirement.” These symptoms are all indicators of burnout (Maslach, 1982), which are intimately intertwined with a marked diminishment of one’s coping skills when managing stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This diminishment of effective coping ability can lead to a reduced sense of hope.
Laura has seen this negativity spread to other teachers in her building, particularly those who have difficulty effectively coping with on-the-job stress. The result has been a palpable decreased sense of community and hope among staff over time. This spread of negativity among vulnerable teachers at Laura’s school supports the notion of “burnout contagion” as described by Bakker and Schaufeli (2000), whose studies have shown that being with others who are experiencing varying degrees of burnout such as emotional exhaustion, decreased feelings of hope, a rise of and increased negative attitudes towards students, coworkers, and even teaching itself, can lead to a rise in teacher attrition.

As discussed in Chapter 2, hope also has a spiritual or transcendent component (Farran et al., 1995; Tanyi, 2002). The Spiritual/Transcendent hope process statement (#28) that emerged as representative of Factor 3’s perspectives addressed the belief that one’s life has intrinsic value and worth, which in turn provides strength to face adversity. This statement was perceived by the participants as unrelated to religious beliefs but rather signified existential “meaning;” that is, having something meaningful to offer others because one’s life has value and, therefore, purpose. “man’s [sic] main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life” (Frankl, 1970, p. 115).

Factor 3 teachers rely on this belief of self-worth to combat negative feelings and sustain hope. Laura’s explanation captures the intersection between hope and one’s life having purpose and meaning. The conviction of personal worth helps Laura persist and remain in the profession despite the negativity of many of her co-workers as well as her
experiences with an unsupportive principal. Rather, she focuses on her purpose as an educator and its relationship to her life.

I always tend to look at the bigger picture when faced with adversity in teaching, because I do believe my life has value and worth. I guess all of that is just one part of my existence. I hope to make a difference in my teaching . . . I feel I have an important contribution to make to the education community locally, nationwide, international, whatever, so that’s why I keep going.

**Factor 4: Total Reliance on God**

One participant out of 25 was emblematic of Factor 4. This was Dwayne (participant #22), an African American male who teaches elementary school in an economically and racially diverse suburban school district. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, Dwayne’s sort was bipolar of Factor 3 and was designated as its own factor to aid in discussion purposes. The hope processes that emerged for Factor 4 are the Spiritual/Transcendent, the Temporal and, albeit weakly in comparison to the other emergent hope processes, the Experiential. Of these, the dominant hope process is the Spiritual/Transcendent (S/T), with its emphases on faith (statement #23), the belief that a reason exists for everything which enables one to see beyond the present challenge (statement #15), the need for a spiritual connection to maintain hope (statement #4), and spiritual convictions being the core motivation for teaching (statement #37).

Factor 4 shares the following S/T perspectives with Factor 2, one being a particularized hope, the other a generalized hope: (a) the reliance on faith to ease on-the-job frustrations (statement #23), and (b) the belief that a reason exists for everything,
which helps one see beyond the current situation (statement #15). As with Factor 2, Factor 4 interpreted all statements related to spirituality, belief, and faith within a Christian paradigm and ascribed these terms as representative of a belief in God. Likewise, the terms spirituality and religious were used interchangeably. As previously discussed, Factors 2 and 4 share a marked similarity regarding belief in God for the sustaining of hope. The crucial difference between the two factor types is the following: Whereas Factor 2’s need for human support (colleagues, friends, and family members) is almost equal to the need for reliance on God for hope in times of stress, Factor 4, as typified by Dwayne, relies solely on faith and belief in God to sustain hope and dismisses the need for others.

Dwayne’s rationale for his dependence on faith to cope with the frustrations of the teaching profession (statement #23) as well as sustain hope was virtually identical to that of Factor 2 participants: The leaning on faith represents a leaning on God, who, it is believed, will assist one in coping with and transcending the trials with which one is faced. This faith in a higher power is what renews hope. As was discussed with Factor 2, this reliance upon faith and belief in a higher power to cope with challenges has ample support by theologians and psychologists alike (Lynch, 1965; Marcel, 1978; Pruyser, 1986), particularly when viewed from the perspective of a call and response relationship between human and divine (Lynch, 1965).

Dwayne linked his unwavering belief that there is a reason for everything (statement #15) with his spiritual convictions (statement #37), and framed this as a “trust in God” that Dwayne’s life’s path and purpose is to teach. “God has given me a heart to
serve children. I know this because of my relationship with Him.” Spiritual convictions that motivate an individual to pursue a particular path are emblematic of Frankl’s (1970) thesis that humans need meaning and purpose in life in order to have something to hope for. As discussed in Chapter 4, the principal example Dwayne gave regarding his conviction that God meant for him to teach children was his experience regarding gaining a teaching position just prior to the start of a new school year. This reinforced his belief that a reason exists for everything, regardless the trial, because of God.

“Spiritual connections” (statement #4) was articulated by Dwayne as his relationship with God. This felt-connection provides Dwayne with an overall sense of support, a way to stay linked with his religious/spiritual beliefs, and a place of refuge. Unlike Factor 2 participants, Dwayne dismisses the need to reach out for support from others when faced with stressors in the teaching profession. As Dwayne had said, “I disagree with that [relationships with colleagues to help him cope] because I have a relationship with God . . . I have trust in God.” For Factor 4, God is the ultimate source of hope. By maintaining connection with this source through faith, hope is nurtured and strengthened.

Erikson (1982), in his psychosocial developmental model, theorized that hope is the first instinctual drive for survival that evolves from our earliest experiences as an infant regarding trust and mistrust with our primary caregiver. In this model, trust in the primary caregiver—what Erikson called the “primal (maternal) other” (p. 88, author’s italics), eventually transfers to an “ultimate other who will ‘lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace’” (p. 88, author’s italics). How this “ultimate other” is defined is
left to the individual, be it labeled God or Allah—terminology typically based on a religious framework; a universal presence; or a “harmonious interconnectedness” (Delgado, 2005, p. 160) that is unrelated to any religious structure. It is this felt-connection with and trust and hope in the “ultimate other” that provides resolution of turmoil, even despair, and the promise of inner peace that theoretically was once experienced as an infant being nurtured by the caregiver (Erikson, 1982). For Factor 4, it is this “ultimate other,” designated as God, that is the source of comfort, solution, and hope as well as that which renews hope when one is faced with stressful challenges.

The Temporal dimension is likewise valued by Factor 4 for sustaining hope in two areas: the desire that one day students will make a connection with course material that has been taught in the present (statement #40), and making a difference in the lives of students through one’s teaching efforts (statement #21). Dwayne intertwined these two statements during his interview. He shared that many of his elementary school students come from difficult home lives and face many challenges. Dwayne hoped that what his students would remember long after they left his class and grew into adulthood was not course material per se, but rather that they came away with an ever-deepening understanding that they can learn, regardless of their personal life challenges.

This particular hope morphed into Dwayne’s more generalized hope that he would be a positive influence in their lives. Menninger (1959) spoke to this relationship between teacher, student, and hope but in the language of medicine, using the terms physician and patient. “Hope is implicit in our effort and hope nurtured in our patient”
Herbert Kohl (1994) similarly addressed this relationship between teachers and their students: The role of the teacher is to be a hopemonger (p. 43) by encouraging students to “learn how to dream beyond the world they live[d] in and imagine ways in which life can be made fuller and more compassionate. The ability to see the world as other than it is plays a major role in sustaining hope” (p. 38). This dreaming and seeing the world as it could be is key for temporality and hope. In the context of Marcel’s (1978) discussion of the trial, once we shut the doors of a new future we make way for despair, for the future would be perceived as naught but a repeat of today. “Despair is in a certain sense the consciousness of time as closed or, more exactly still, of time as a prison—whilst hope appears as piercing through time” (p. 53).

The one Experiential hope process statement (#38) associated with Factor 4 centers on involvement with school-related activities outside the classroom as being rejuvenating. For Dwayne, this entails coaching sports. As discussed in Chapter 4, he had coached high school basketball for several years prior to his employment at his current position, and continues coaching students at his school. This type of involvement with the students allows Dwayne to continue working on the hope-mongering (Kohl, 1994) process with his students, guiding them with learning skills of cooperation, teamwork, and self-discipline. Dwayne believes these are skills that will be useful in their lives at some point in the future. This Experiential hope statement can be seen as an extension of the temporal hope process statements, with the underlying yearning that
one’s efforts in the present will make a difference in the lives of students at some point in
time. For Factor 4, this is all embedded within the framework of personally being
aligned with God and doing God’s will.

Consensus Statements Among Factors 1, 2, and 3

The two statements held in agreement by Factors 1, 2, and 3, but not Factor 4 as
this factor is inverse of Factor 3’s perspective, are statements #14 (It is important that I
have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress), a Relational hope
process, and statement #39 (It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with
students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my
hope), an Experiential hope process. Both statements are a generalized type of hope.

The need for a support system from friends and family is deemed essential when
coping with occupational stress for Factors 1, 2, and 3. Farran et al. (1995) described the
Relational hope process as the heart of hope, and how relationships are vital to one’s
hope (be it existential or a specific hope-goal) and the hoping process. This particular
aspect of the Relational focuses on the need for a reliable support system of caring
individuals to provide emotional, psychological, even spiritual support during the times
when coping with challenges that can potentially lead one to burnout. As was shared
throughout the interviews, the reasons given by various participants regarding the need
for friends and family to sustain hope were virtually identical: being understood and
cared for, a willing “ear” when needing to vent frustrations, and a source of
encouragement. Becky’s explanation speaks for all the participants (excluding Factor 4)
when coping with on-the-job stress: “My friends and family are extremely important to me. They encourage and listen and help put things in perspective.”

As has been discussed throughout, hope and relationships are intricately bound (Erikson, 1982; Lynch, 1965; Marcel, 1978; Menninger, 1959). Positive relationships assist one in coping with feelings of frustration, despair, or even hopelessness, and enable the individual to maintain the inner balance between hope and hopelessness. Lynch (1965) explained that hope and hopelessness are coexisting opposites; we cannot have one without the other as they are powerful lived experiences existing simultaneously within the individual. Flaskas’s (2007) research found that hope and hopelessness are not necessarily inverse in strength to each other. One can have strong hope as well as strong hopelessness existing side by side. “People can feel hopeless, but still do hope” (p. 190). The challenge is to not allow hopelessness to take over one’s entire perspective, thus obviating any sense of hope. For if that happens, one is unable to imagine new possibilities, new horizons, a new future (Lynch, 1965). A supportive network of caring individuals enables Factors 1, 2, and 3 participants to reestablish and maintain that balance so hope continues to flourish, thereby assisting them to remain in the profession.

The need for experiencing uplifting encounters with students is equally valued for the strengthening of hope. Lynch (1959) and Menninger (1963) asserted that hope is an act of relationship, of mutuality, where we imagine with others to enlarge our world of possibility as well as assisting them in realizing their own. For Lynch, without imagining there is no hoping. The Experiential process, in addition to its being representative of where we encounter and address the trials and challenges we face in our life, is also
where we negotiate the tension between hope and hopelessness within ourselves (Lynch, 1965; Marcel, 1978). In the interviews, many of the participants expressed that the various educationally-related trials they experienced challenged them to reflect on why they are in the profession as well as their purpose as an educator.

Experiences perceived as emotionally uplifting helped the teachers work through their doubts. One example regarding coping with doubts is Phil who, as discussed in Chapter 4, was nominated for the Golden Apple Award by one of his former students. This unexpected award convinced him to stay and continue working with the students despite the fact that “the daily apathy of the kids wears me down.” This gift of appreciation freely given by his former student helped Phil to not allow frustrations override his hopes that he is making a difference in his students’ lives.

Another example is that of Anne. After a few of her students who had been struggling with math concepts said, “Oh! I do get it! I see where we’re going,” she was filled with a renewed sense of purpose that, as an educator, she could be of direct, effective assistance for their learning new skills, and conversely they could rely on her for this help. Hope seeks help through the act of engaging in community with another in order for us to realize our hopes (Lynch, 1965; Menninger, 1959). For the students in the above examples, it was gaining an understanding of new concepts and skills, and/or being emotionally touched in some fashion that was deeply appreciated as a result of their teacher’s efforts. For the teachers, it was the students’ gift of acknowledgment, appreciation, and affirmation of those efforts.
The teachers themselves may have been unaware they were seeking help from their students in order to sustain their hopes, and may not have framed it in those terms. But they received it nonetheless and, at some inner level, sought it out. The various uplifting experiences through the relationships with their students, regardless of frequency, helped Factors 1, 2, and 3 teachers to reconnect with their expressed, core reason of why they chose to enter and remain in the profession: making a difference in their students’ lives. And at an even deeper level, often unexpressed unless gently pushed to inwardly reflect on one’s motivation, as was the case I found with several of the participants during their interview, is that of making a difference in the world.

Summary as Respects the Research Questions

As expressed at the beginning of this chapter, the lines between the two research questions that guided this study often blurred, whereby hope was seen both as that which sustained one’s commitment to the profession and, in and of itself, a coping strategy for stress. Repeatedly, the participants’ articulation of their hope perspectives mirrored that convergence of and movement between the research questions during their interviews. Bearing this in mind, the following provides a brief summary of the two research questions in relationship to the four factors that emerged, as well as the two consensus statements.

Research Question One

How do mid-career public school teachers view hope in terms of the ways in which it sustains them in their decision to remain in the teaching profession?
For all four factors, hope, at its core, is broadly conceived as an existential construct: It is the “thing” that provides the participants with a sense of meaning in life, filtered through the lens of personal and professional purpose. Hope is perceived by the teachers to be an inner source of strength when faced with and having to cope with challenges on the job. Hope is also described as being linked to one’s inner essence and, for some, articulated within the framework of spirituality which may or may not be connected to religion. Hope is felt as both a yearning as well as an expectation for a desired future that goes beyond visible facts; the participants expressed hope that positive results based on their efforts with students would one day manifest, whether or not they, the teachers, will see it for themselves. These results or hope-objects (Dufault, 1981) were described as being of both a particularized and generalized nature.

Hope expresses itself through relationships, particularly those that provide emotional support. These relationships range from colleagues, students, and administrators, family, friends, and the larger community, a belief in a Higher Power, as well as with oneself. The intersection of relationships and hope as that which provides meaning and purpose in life is framed in the language of making a difference; this is viewed by all the participants as making a difference in the lives of students, which then extends to making a difference in society. This demonstrated itself in a variety of ways, such as advocacy, caring interactions, “planting seeds” of possibility in the minds of the students, and experiencing uplifting encounters with students, as these were seen as the result of students having been “reached” through the development of trust and caring.
For some participants, another sustaining form of hope is that of being called to teach, and is intimately linked with having meaning and purpose in life. This was viewed as having a personal relationship with God, from which flows the belief—or at least the yearning to believe—that one’s actions with students are part of a larger, Divinely-inspired plan for making a difference in their students’ lives.

Having purpose in life through making a difference is seen as being connected to the larger world, as the teachers hoped that through their efforts changes in the world for the better can be made, one student at a time. Hope as a sustaining influence is experienced as the vision for the possible that links the future and present with students’ lives and the world at large, with the teacher as the agent of change. This is eloquently expressed by Rose.

We’re the ones who are supposed to be passing on this generation to the next . . . that they [one’s students] take on the responsibility of what’s important [such as the health of the environment], the responsibility of what’s going to be happening in our future, even our near future.

Rachel personalized this vision in terms of how her efforts will return to her later in life.

That’s kinda the ultimate goal when my days are dreary, kinda keeps me going. Because they’re [the students] gonna take care of me when I’m old, you know? These children that I’m teaching, I better do a good job or who’s gonna take care of me someday? . . . I’m creating those lawyers, those doctors.

A consistent refrain across all four factors is that one must take action, regardless of the form, in order to transform what begins as a wish to a “realistic hope” (Menninger,
1959, 1963). This action must take into account the teachers’ contextual reality as well as the students’, while simultaneously recognizing the need for patience regarding the role of time and the manifestation of the desired change if hope is to be a sustaining influence. Finally, all the participants perceived hope as that which enabled them to be hopemongers—for themselves, for their colleagues, and for their students.

The first stanza of Emily Dickinson’s poem (1927) on hope best expresses how the teachers perceive hope as that which sustains:

“Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all . . .

Or it can be found in the deceptively simple, yet profoundly existential words of Rachel: “I just define hope as what keeps you going.”

**Research Question Number Two**

What hope-building strategies were utilized that assisted with coping with the stressors of the profession?

Most hope-building strategies utilized by the participants overlapped between the four factors, whereas others, such as the belief in and reliance upon God, prayer, and faith, were utilized by Factors 2 and 4. Factors 1, 2, and 3 leaned on the following relational strategies. The first revolves around relationships with students. These include embracing and celebrating students’ successes, as these represented the teachers’ personal success; embracing uplifting experiences they have with students, regardless
how fleeting in number these experiences may be; and developing personal connections
with students and being involved with them on a more personal, yet professional, level,
as an expression of care. Denise described this as talking with them, getting to know
them, and “helping them gain new perspectives or new connections to something to
enrich their lives . . . That’s really what I look forward to what sustains me as I go . . .
to be involved in the student’s life.”

Friends and family are likewise vital as a support system when coping with stress
and for the building of hope. These are the go-to people outside of the work environment
to lean on for guidance, those who will listen and be the “ear” when needing to vent, and
who help put things in perspective. Along this line, engaging in fun activities with
friends and/or family is utilized as a stress-relieving strategy. For Greer, this includes
being physically active and keeping herself physically fit. This gives her the needed
energy to cope with the challenges that arise at work with her severely disabled students,
as well as the energy needed to raise her two daughters.

Collegial support is another hope-building relational strategy leaned upon by
Factors 1, 2, and 3. Colleagues provide assistance with problem-solving, a sense of
camaraderie, as well as having an inside understanding of the pressures endemic to the
teaching profession. At times, the need to rely on colleagues for emotional and
psychological support is greater than that which can be offered by family or friends
because of this insider understanding.

As discussed earlier, having a genuinely supportive, respectful administrator, such
as the principal, is key for Factor 3’s building of hope. When that support is not present
or, at the least, is felt to be disingenuous, over time hope begins to diminish. As described by Laura, due to the principal’s poor communication skills as well as overall lack of respect, her morale began to decline, as well as commitment to teaching in the K-12 arena. In contrast, a few participants from Factors 1 and 2 shared in their interviews that they have wonderful support from their principal, and how good this makes them feel. When the principal does provide needed support and demonstrates respect perceived to be sincere, hope as well as morale is boosted and trust develops.

Another hope-building, stress-coping strategy employed, particularly by Factors 1, 2, and 4, is that of staying focused on that which is within one’s control, despite the temptation to do otherwise. Acknowledging limitations helps with one’s perspective of where to channel energy, such as their students. This recognition of what one has control of also plays a factor in being an advocate for the students—knowing with whom to speak regarding students’ rights and educational needs. Similarly, focusing on what one has control of extends to curriculum. All the participants accept, willingly or otherwise, the reality of state-mandated high-stakes tests their districts must administer in order to comply with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and the resultant need of teaching to the prescribed state-imposed educational standards. Although a number of the participants expressed great frustration with this reality, they also developed the “wiggle room” (Cuban, 2003, p. 35) needed to balance the demands of teaching to the standardized tests with their belief in teaching for deepened understanding and the course materials’ relationship to the students’ lives.
Unexpected Findings

All the factors displayed a wide range of teacher demographics in respect to geographic locale, type of school and school setting, subject matter and grade level, years teaching, gender, and age. Overall, these variable appeared to play no role with respect to the participants’ perspectives regarding hope as a sustaining influence. Nor was that the focus of this study, as demographics served to define the requirements for participant selection. That said, one unexpected finding is that of teachers entering the profession as a second career and its effect on views regarding hope and coping with stress.

Five participants were second-career teachers; that is, they chose to enter the teaching profession after having worked at another career rather than going directly from high school to a teacher education program and then into the profession. Greg, Gunner, and Patricia, who loaded on Factor 1, each had their own business prior to becoming a teacher. Greg had an auto body shop for several years, Gunner owned a chain of Taco Bells for nearly 20 years and supervised over 1,500 employees who were mostly teenagers, and Patricia had been a professional studio artist and ministerial counselor. Greg began teaching in his 30s, and Gunner and Patricia in their mid-40s. In the interviews, all three discussed how they believed their strong coping as well as hoping skills when faced with occupational stress in the teaching profession were a direct result of their experiences of running their own business. They believed these skills directly helped to fortify their hope that they can be successful in actualizing their goals with students.
In a similar vein, although never having run their own business, Phil, who loaded on Factor 1, and Alexis, who loaded on Factor 2, expressed an almost identical perspective as Gunner, Greg, and Patricia regarding life and prior work experiences playing a significant role in their ability to cope and hope as a teacher. Phil became a teacher in his 40s after retiring from a career in the Navy, while Alexis began in her mid-30s after having worked in the business field for many years. As with the other three, Phil and Alexis spoke about their belief that their life experiences have given them an “edge” regarding better developed stress-coping and hope-building strategies compared to their colleagues who went into the teaching profession soon after high school without any significant break in time to pursue other life avenues.

The influence of life experiences of a second-career teacher on hope-sustaining, coping strategies in contrast to those who are not second-career teachers may possibly prove to be a fruitful line of inquiry regarding teacher retention. Most research on second-career teachers tends to focus on reasons why individuals choose teaching after having worked in other professions (Castro & Bauml, 2009), how their life experiences influence the ways in which they teach as well as beliefs regarding the purpose of education (Chambers, 2002), challenges transitioning to the classroom and ways teacher education programs could address second-career teachers’ needs in this area (Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006), as well as how second career teachers perceive their decision to become teachers (Wiehe, 2009). The construct of hope was not considered in any of the literature I have found to date on second-career teachers.
Yet another unexpected finding regards the teacher career cycle. In his classic study of Swiss teachers, Huberman (1989) utilized research on phases of career development—an employee’s “life cycle”—regarding the progression of personal satisfaction in one’s professional life, and focused on teachers working between 5 to 40 years in the classroom (p. 33). One of the theorized early phases in one’s teaching career is that of experimentation/activism, where new instructional strategies are sought to increase one’s effectiveness with students. Years in service for this phase as found in Huberman’s data are roughly between 5–10 years. He placed the reassessment/self-doubt phase that follows experimentation roughly between 11–19 years teaching experience (p. 43). Reassessment is when the teachers take stock of their life in terms of the teaching profession, and weigh the pros and cons of staying. The data showed that many teachers in the reassessment phase were beginning to have feelings ranging from “a gnawing sense of routine to a full-blown existential crisis over staying in or leaving the profession” (p. 35). It was also within this phase that burnout began to rise. Huberman found that teachers who “invested consistently in classroom-level experiments” (p. 50), such as learning new strategies for teaching, grading, and so forth, were more likely to be satisfied with their career.

When developing the Q sample, I was unaware of the teacher career cycle literature. However, one statement in particular in the Q sample inadvertently reflected elements of this literature, which was statement number one (Learning new strategies to teach my subject helps me feel like I can be more effective). It was during the post-sort interview with Ricardo regarding the influence of learning new strategies on hope, when
he brought this line of research to my attention. At the time of this study, Ricardo had been teaching between 6–8 years. He was one of the few participants who ranked this statement high in his personal sort. This statement placement choice stands in direct contrast to Laura, who had been teaching between 12–15 years, and placed this statement in the negative ranking. Their explanations vividly depict the contrast.

Ricardo:

New strategies to me always help give me hope in the fact that it will be something different that I can try. Maybe it will work, maybe it won’t . . . but that creates more hope in the fact that I’ve got to find something else to get it [student understanding of course material] to work. And I also think it just helps me become a better educator.

Laura:

The whole idea about learning new strategies, I don’t think I’m there anymore. I think I’ve gone beyond that stage of my career. First five years, oh definitely. I can see that with my student teachers that I’m teaching in a seminar course this semester . . . they want to know strategies because they haven’t done it yet. But for me, learning ways to teach science, I’ve seen it all in 15 years. I know what works for me. This is not even where I’m at anymore.

The contrast of Laura and Ricardo’s views regarding what sustains their hope in light of where they are in their career in terms of years in service appears to corroborate the teacher life cycle literature.
Gaps in the Literature

First, the bulk of educational research focuses on factors that promote teacher attrition, but not what *sustains* teachers to remain despite the stressors of the profession. Secondly, the few studies that do address this issue focus on beginning teachers—teaching between one to three years, with some studies including up to five years’ experience, and veteran teachers—teaching 15-plus years to retirement. Research on mid-career teachers, those teaching between 6 to 15 years, is almost non-existent.

The third reason was to investigate the phenomenon of hope, as hope has been found to be an essential ingredient in resisting burnout, one factor leading to teacher attrition (Betoret, 2006). Yet, to borrow from Menninger’s 1959 American Psychiatric Association academic lecture where he had exclaimed, “the shelves are bare” regarding research on hope in psychiatry, the same exists in the educational field regarding systematic research on understanding the ways in which teachers, particularly those in their mid-career, perceive hope as a sustaining influence and how it may influence teacher retention. This study served to address these gaps.

Limitations

Based on the interviews, participants interpreted the Spiritual/Transcendent hope process statements within a Judeo-Christian-based paradigm, specifically that of Christianity. As Debra said, “When I think of ‘spiritual’ I think of Jesus. That’s how I took it.” Despite that a number of participants explained they were agnostic or atheist, all the participants stated they were either Christians or had been raised in a Christian-based belief system. Specific religious orientations (such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Wicca,
etc.) was one area that had been overlooked when considering participant demographics, as faith, spirituality, and/or religious beliefs were unaddressed in the research literature on teacher attrition. As such, deliberative examination of various religious or spiritual orientations in relationship to hope, coping strategies, and teacher retention, was not built into this study. Exploring differing faith-based orientations in relationship to hope and teacher retention may be an area for further investigation.

There was also a decided lack of ethnic and racial representation despite the fact that this study was open to all racial and ethnic groups. Of 25 participants, all but 2 were European American. Those remaining were African American. This lack of representation could be due to the geographic regions in which the participants were residing. It could also be due to the overall make-up of the teaching body in which White females dominate the profession, as earlier discussed. It could also have been due to lack of interest, as participation was voluntary.

One other potential limitation regards the Q statements themselves and how the wording may have affected placement decisions by the participants. Gunner expressed he had some difficulty regarding placement with statement #12 (I never feel alone in this difficult profession because I have faith that I am being guided), as he interpreted it as being two different thoughts combined into one, and leaned towards religion. He shared he sometimes feels alone in his work environment due to his age (mid-50s) as most his colleagues are chronologically younger. Gunner came to the profession as a second-career choice in contrast to the younger teachers in his building who chose the traditional
path: attending a teacher education program immediately following high school graduation. Overall, his colleagues are at least 10 years or more younger in age than him.

Gunner finds that he does not share the same cultural mindset due to the generational difference, which includes jokes and their reference origins, experiencing the Woodstock phenomenon, the sexual explosion and changing mores after the introduction of birth control pills, or even television shows and music from the 1970s onwards. He occasionally feels isolated in that regard, and yearns for more colleagues closer to his age for a sense of camaraderie based on a shared set of cultural experiences. Relatively few teachers at his school are in his age bracket, as many of them have already retired or are close to retirement as they began teaching in their 20s. Gunner’s personal experience in terms of the decreased number of teachers past the age of 55 reflects the U-curve hypothesis regarding teacher retirement (Luekens et al., 2005). Had this particular Q statement focused solely on the concept of feeling alone rather than having a faith-based element attached, Gunner said he would have reconsidered this statement’s placement in his individual Q sort by placing it in the “Agree” range.

If conducting this study again, I would re-examine the statements and, again utilizing feedback from teachers, reword those that may be confusing or be perceived as having a double meaning to avoid as best as possible such a conundrum for participants. That said, the purpose of Q methodology is to unveil and explore participants’ perspectives on a given topic; how they interpret the statements is uniquely individualized and the researcher has no control over their interpretations. Understanding the participants’ rationale for choices made emerges through the post-sorting interviews,
potentially revealing unexpected findings, as was the case with Gunner regarding second-career teachers and a generational gap.

A final potential limitation has to do with having the participants conduct only one Q sort rather than two separate sorts, as I had two research questions. Based on the literature, hope is a confounding construct in that it is perceived as that which sustains while simultaneously being a coping strategy in and of itself. Hope as a strategy flowed from hope as a sustaining influence, and acted as a reinforcing feedback loop. Based on the interviews, it became obvious that the participants were discussing hope in both ways, and were often having a hard time dissembling the two.

If conducting this study again, I would have the participants do two Q sorts with the same statements, with two Conditions of Instruction, one for each research question. This may provide finer distinctions between as well as greater insight into hope as a sustaining influence, and hope as a stress-coping strategy.

**Implications**

Many factors are at play within the educational profession that can overly stress teachers and reduce their ability to cope; this may lead to teacher burnout and thereby influence teacher attrition (Huberman, 1993, as cited in Johnson et al., 2005; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). What this study has attempted to do is explore hope as a sustaining influence and ways it may aid teachers in coping with stress, thereby enabling them to remain committed to teaching. Based on the findings of this study, several implications arise.
First is the need of many teachers to be an advocate for students. For this to happen successfully, supportive collegial relationships are necessary. The majority of the participants were aligned with this theme. It is well-documented in the literature that teachers tend to be isolated from each other in their workaday world, often lack interpersonal support from colleagues as well as administration, and do not feel they are part of a learning community within the school (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2008; Lortie, 1975). To be effective advocates for students, teachers need to feel they are supported in their efforts by administration as well as their colleagues. Various examples were given by the participants, such as Patricia who was supported by the school counselor when recommending her student for the school robotics club, and by Ricardo who advocated for his students in his team meeting regarding curriculum pacing, where he gained their acknowledgment for his concerns. These types of teacher support need to be fostered in schools if hope-filled relationships are to flourish. This could be promoted in a district or in individual schools that have a strong ethos of teachers, support staff, students, and building administrators all being committed to being part of a school-wide learning community.

Areas for administrators to address are the importance of administration-faculty relationships and effective communication geared towards a reciprocity of understanding, and the development of a climate of hope. Administrators must be ever-mindful that they are educational leaders and, to be genuinely effective, need to lead from a vision and position of hope in order to generate hope in their staff (Herth, 2007). This means they must explore the dimensionality of hope within themselves and develop hope-building
skills so they can become an agent of hope for others (p. 4). Walker (2006) discussed the need for administrators to foster hopefulness in their staff by providing “hope-generating leadership” (p. 564) with the focus on developing schools as “communities of hope” (p. 565). Some strategies offered are giving feedback to teachers and publicly recognizing a job well done; giving the type of support that enables the teachers to feel their work is important, valued, and has meaning; and staying open to new possibilities and new ideas, both from oneself and those that one’s teachers may generate.

Another implication is that of the need to provide guidance for staff in terms of curricular mandates. This concern for guidance is based on Susanne’s lack of faith in her administrators (see Chapter 4, Factor 1) regarding implementation of what she describes as ever-changing state standards. As she expressed with great frustration, “we’re at a loss at how they want us to do this [implementing the new standards] . . . We’re left to sink or swim.” To alleviate such frustration and potential loss of trust in administration, when changes are made to curriculum standards and assessment requirements as mandated by the State Department of Education, a training program could be implemented by the district curriculum director with staff who feel they need the support regarding understanding of the curricular and/or student learning assessment changes, and provide strategies for ways to implement these changes in the classroom. On a smaller scale, team leaders could be the liaison between the curriculum director and the teachers so they can explain the new standards and provide guidance for teaching. Perhaps this type of program might alleviate frustration among staff for whom this issue is a potential source of hope-depletion.
An important research implication from this study is that of hope models chosen by current educational as well as psychological researchers who explore motivation and hope in students and teachers. As discussed in Chapter 2, the hope model of choice is that of C. R. Snyder. However, its limitation is that it narrowly defines hope as a bi-dimensional, cognitive-behavioral “expectancy” mechanism, and does not consider hope from the existential perspective. Based on the findings of this study, hope is experienced as multidimensional in nature, embracing as an interactive gestalt one’s cognition, emotions, spiritual beliefs, the power of relationships, and behaviors. I believe these must be taken into account when utilizing hope models, and thus advocate for the usage of a multidimensional hope model when further research is conducted on hope in the educational arena.

For new teacher mentorship, some ideas emerge from this exploratory research as regards the dimensionality of time. During the mentorship process, the need for the development of patience regarding the evolution of student learning must be emphasized. As this exploratory research shows, the participating mid-career teachers all understood that learning takes time, regardless the demands of the high-stakes tests. This understanding and acceptance of this reality helped the teachers cope with the learning pace of their students, and when students did experience success, the teachers felt both their students’ as well as their own hope strengthened, as well as feelings of self-efficacy. Also what should be emphasized in mentorship programs is the necessity for new teachers to create and maintain a strong emotional support system with caring individuals outside the school environment, be they friends, family, even colleagues.
Spirituality in teachers’ lives is another dimension that must be addressed, based on the findings of this research. As discussed in Chapter 2, spirituality is not the same as religion or religious beliefs, although they may be entwined. Rather, spirituality is that which is viewed variously as a relationship of a transcendent nature with something greater than oneself, an interconnectedness to life and the world in which one lives, the search for meaning and purpose in life, that which enables one to rise above challenges, and that which can lead one to experience a sense of inner peace and well-being. The concept of spirituality in education is not new. Parker Palmer defined spirituality as “the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected with the largeness of life—a longing that animates love and work, especially the work called teaching” (2007, p. 5).

Many of the teachers in this study expressed how their religious as well as spiritual convictions gave them hope and strength in times of challenges in the profession. They were frustrated that they were not allowed to freely share with other like-minded colleagues their views regarding the importance of their spiritual life in coping, for fear of potential reprisal due to the legalities of separation of church and state. To address this legal issue, as well as honor and support those teachers for whom spirituality is a hope-building and coping strategy, two possibilities exist. One is that a physical space can be made available for teachers who voluntarily wish to meet at the end of the school day to share their thoughts about spiritual values and what sustains them, as well as sharing hope-building ideas. This idea was offered to me by a school district superintendent, based on his experience when he had attended a conference one year in Columbus, Ohio, where such a session was provided for interested superintendents.
The second is developing a district-wide “teacher renewal wellness program” that can be offered to teachers, for the long-range goal of promoting teacher retention. This could be held at a local YMCA or YWCA or similar organizational setting, where instructors from community organizations come in and lead teacher renewal workshops. These instructors could be local hospital staff, such as nutritionists, nurses, psychologists and doctors who wish to give stress-reduction, health and quality of life enhancing strategies, “pro bono.” Yoga instruction as well as meditation techniques could be offered. In this way, the spiritual dimension of a teacher’s life is addressed within a more holistic venue. Attending this renewal wellness program could be offered as a professional development day by a participating school district. This type of program would be in compliance with separation of church and state, so no potential legal issues would ensue.

To create “buy-in” by the district for such a teacher renewal program, the Board of Education members would need to be educated on the cost-benefits that such a program may have for the district, based on teacher attrition literature. To assist with finance start-up costs, a grant could be written and submitted to the Fetzer Institute, a non-profit organization whose mission is to “foster awareness of the power of love and forgiveness in the emerging global community” (www.fetzer.org). Currently, the Fetzer Institute is funding a research project entitled “Transformative Professional Development: The Influence of Emotional, Spiritual, and Personal Development of Educators on Public Education” (http://www.fetzer.org/research/research-detail/?type=project&resource_id=2171). The Institute’s goal is to gain a research-based
understanding of the impact transformative professional development (TPD) for educators may have on student learning and outcomes. The conceptual model for TPD is grounded in Parker Palmer’s “Courage to Teach” program, a program designed for preK-12 educators as well as administrators. Its focus is on professional growth through inner renewal, reflection on classroom practice, and the transformation of relationships through reflective listening (http://www.couragerenewal.org/programs/courage-to-teach). As can be seen in the research project’s title, spirituality is considered a core piece of TPD.

**Future Lines of Inquiry**

Several areas arise for future lines of inquiry. One of these is the notion of faith and its relationship to a calling to teach. A number of participants spoke in the language of “calling” and how they believed it was related to their religious beliefs, which included trust and faith in God. Thus, their sense of being called was couched in religious language. However, as previously discussed, there is ample research that has documented teachers using the language of being called to teach with or without its being religiously-based, as it is a temperament, an inclination (Hansen, 1995), and has at its core a commitment to a “social practice” that has “social value” (p. 9). How much of an influence does calling have on teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession? Is there a difference between a religious/spiritual calling to teach or one grounded in non-religious values, and its relationship to hope and teacher retention?

As discussed in the “unexpected findings” section, other potentially fruitful areas to explore regard second-career teachers and those who entered teaching as their first
profession. Some questions come to mind. Does a difference in generational experiences affect hope-building with second-career teachers as they interact with their chronologically younger colleagues? If so, what kinds of collegial support systems might be explored to address the needs of second-career teachers? Might there actually be hope-building as well as coping strategies utilized more often by second-career teachers due to their life experiences?

Exploring teachers’ perspectives on hope in relationship to the teacher career cycle may provide additional insight into what teachers may need to sustain them throughout their career, particularly as it relates to stress and its effect on one’s sense of health and wellbeing. One tie-in to the teacher career cycle could possibly be that of work conducted in Quality of Life (QOL) studies. QOL is a multidimensional construct and is broadly defined as satisfaction with our life conditions; these can range from health to one’s living environment, to one’s sense of happiness and subjective well-being, and is often tied to one’s quest for meaning in life (Frankl, 1970; Hunt, 1997; Scioli, 2007).

Here Anthony Scioli’s (2007) work on hope, spirituality, and quality of life may prove useful. Scioli gave a clear articulation of the relationship between hope and QOL. “At the psychological or subjective level, hope is a potent QOL variable because of its impact on the mental, social, and physical functioning of the individual” (p. 141, author’s italics). A direct tie-in can be made between QOL studies, teacher burnout, and hope. As previously discussed, many individuals who suffer from burnout experience have increased health problems such as migraines, colds, even depression. These all fall under
the category of wellness and QOL. As no research to date exists on hope, teachers, and QOL, this could be yet another avenue for exploration.

Another line of inquiry regards the intersection between nationality and hope, as well as culture. Anecdotally, one colleague of mine who resides in Denmark shared that he observed their educational system similarly experiences a high rate of teacher attrition, particularly within the first three to five years. We remarked how this rate is similar to the attrition statistics in the United States. He wondered how the Danish teachers perceive hope and if it plays any role in retention. Does culture play a role in the relationship between hope and stress management, or is the phenomenon of stress and burnout similar between nations as regards teacher retention, regardless of culture?

There is evidence to the speculation that teacher burnout is transnational (see Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). However, the weakness in these transnational studies on burnout was that they focused only on North American and Western European nations with no reference to cultures associated with each nation. Moreover, the theoretical models used to explore teacher burnout centered on psychological and social-cognitive factors, with no examination of hope. To my colleague’s knowledge, no study regarding hope and its potential influence on burnout and teacher retention has ever been conducted within his country. Cross-national comparisons on hope and occupational stress that includes non-Western nations and cultures could be intriguing lines of inquiry.

Another area for further exploration would be to compare administrators’ (such as a building principal or district superintendent) perspectives on what they think sustains their faculty members’ hope, then compare the resulting factor themes between the two
groups to see where shared beliefs as well as disconnects exist. The reason for doing so is based on the literature regarding the role that the administrator plays in establishing the emotional tenor of the school culture—staff as well as students (Fullan, 2001). By exploring each party’s perspectives on what they believe to be needed for the sustaining of hope, effective dialogue could be held, which could pave the way for improved communication regarding hope-building needs and ways to address those needs.

As discussed in the section on surprising findings, a fruitful line of inquiry could be that of exploring second-career teachers and hope, as this study did not make a distinction between first- or second-career teachers. And, as pointed out in the limitations section regarding Gunner, the question arose if a generational gap among teachers has any influence upon older teachers’ hope and which colleagues they reach out to for support when coping with stress and feelings of burnout.

One other area must be mentioned as an area for research regarding hope and teachers, as one participant raised this point in her interview: the need for humor when coping with stress. The relationship between humor, or lightheartedness, and healing has long been acknowledged, particularly in the health disciplines. Humor has been found to be effective in promoting pain-cessation and healing (Cousins, 1989), as well as strengthening the capacity to hope and cope when faced with great stress and despair (Herth, 1990). Research into the fostering of lightheartedness in teachers may be another fruitful line of inquiry regarding hope, coping, and teacher retention.

As can be seen, there are limitless potential lines of research on hope in the field of education, constrained only by the imaginative capacity of the researcher.
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which hope was perceived by mid-career public school teachers as being a sustaining influence in their decision to remain in the teaching profession, as well as coping strategies utilized that sustained hope. Twenty-five teachers, from rural, urban, and suburban settings in Ohio, New Jersey, and Maine, participated in this study. Q methodology was utilized to explore their perspectives. The participants sorted 40 statements on hope along a continuum of *most like my perspective* (+5) to *most unlike my perspective* (-5). The resulting data were factor analyzed and rotated, from which four factors emerged, the fourth being bipolar of the third factor. These factors represented different perspectives on hope; each were given a label that best described its underlying theme: Factor 1, Making a Difference Through Advocacy; Factor 2, Faith-Based Calling to Teach; Factor 3, Professional Autonomy and Respect; and Factor 4, Total Reliance on God.

Interpretation of these factors also yielded hope-sustaining, coping strategies preferred by some factors and shared between others. Unexpected findings, gaps in the research, limitations of the study, implications, and suggestions for future lines of inquiry were discussed. My hope with this exploratory study is that it may pave the way for greater understanding of and further research into the phenomenon of hope and “what keeps teachers going.”
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT
Appendix A

Letter of Consent

Mid-Career Teachers’ Perspectives on the Sustaining Power of Hope: A Q-
Methodological Study

Spring Semester 2010

I am researching mid-career public school teachers (teaching anywhere from 6–15 years) and their perspectives on hope. I am specifically interested in teachers’ perspectives on the role they believe hope plays in sustaining them to continue teaching. There is consensus that teachers experience a wide variety of stressors that can potentially lead to burnout and influence their decision to leave the profession. Hope has long been known to be a source of strength and support when individuals face challenges. However, there is very little information about teachers and their perspectives on hope in the ways in which it sustains them to keep teaching in teacher education literature. In short, what keeps teachers going?

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the role that hope plays in teachers’ professional lives. It is possible that insight may be gained as to ways in which hope-sustaining strategies can be developed that can nurture teachers and offset the potential of burnout.

I would like you to take part in this project. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to rank 40 statements regarding hope and teaching from “most like my perspective” to “most unlike my perspective.” This will be followed by a brief post-sort interview regarding your statement choices. This process will take approximately 45 minutes of your time.

You may also be asked to participate in a brief interview a few months after data analysis occurs for follow-up questioning. You may elect to participate in one or more phases of the research with no penalty for non-participation. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at (330) 268–2229. You may also contact Dr. James Henderson at (330) 672-0631 in the Department of Teaching Leadership and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University. This project has
been approved by Kent State University. If you have any questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call Dr. Evelyn Goldsmith, Assistant Provost and Interim Associate Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies at (330) 672–3012.

You will receive a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Anita C. Levine
Kent State University doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I agree to take part in this project. I know that I have the right to stop at any time.

______________________________
Signature
APPENDIX B

AUDIOTAPE CONSENT FORM
Appendix B

Audiotape Consent Form

I agree to audiotaping for this project. I know what I have to do and that I can stop at any time.

________________________________________________________________________
(print your name)
________________________________________________________________________
(signature)

________________________________________________________________________
Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the tapes before they are used. I have decided that I:

[ ] want to hear the tape [ ] do not want to hear the tape

*If you want to hear the tape, you will be asked to sign after hearing the tape. Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tape.*

Anita C. Levine and other researchers approved by Kent State University may use the tapes for the following:

* dissertation or other written publication
* presentation at professional meetings

________________________________________________________________________
Signature Date

Address: ___________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix C

Demographics Questionnaire

Please mark the appropriate spot for you; make additions wherever necessary.

A. Sex  
(a) Female ____  (b) Male ____

B. Age  
(a) 24–29 ____  (b) 30–39 ____  (c) 40–49 ____  
(d) 50–59 ____  (e) 60–69 ____

C. Years teaching  
(a) 6–8 _____  (b) 9–11_____  (c) 12–15 _____

D. Subject  
(a) Language Arts _____  (b) Mathematics _____  (c) Science _____  
(d) Social Studies _____  (e) Art/Music ______  
(f) Physical Education _____  (g) Special Education _____  
(h) Foreign Language _____  (i) Other ____________

E. Ethnicity/Race  
(a) African American _____  (b) European American _____  
(c) Hispanic _____  (d) Asian _____  
(e) Mixed (self-defined)_______  (f) Other _________

F. Geographic Locale  
(a) Rural _____  (b) Suburban _____  (c) Urban _____

G. School Level  
(a) Elementary _____  (b) Middle School _____  
(c) High School _____

H. Specific Grade level(s)  ________________
APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS WITH KEY
## Appendix D

**Participant Demographics With Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Type School</th>
<th>Grade(s)</th>
<th>Subject(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0309MN</td>
<td>Maxine</td>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0319JP</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>9–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SpEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0322DC</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>All subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0324TE</td>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>10–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Ma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0325LB</td>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>10–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Sci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0326GW</td>
<td>Greer</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>K–5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SpEd-SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0327SN</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>9–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0328DK</td>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>7–8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0330CD</td>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0331KM</td>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>24–29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0331TS</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SpEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0331CP</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0401BD</td>
<td>Ricardo</td>
<td>24–29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>8–9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; FL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0401LW</td>
<td>Susanne</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0402SW</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0401WN</td>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0416TC</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0416MR</td>
<td>Gunner</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>9–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SpEd-ED, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0418IS</td>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12–15</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>9–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SpEd-ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0420JM</td>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>9–12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>0420VD</td>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>0504DW</td>
<td>Dwayne</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>Sb</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>0411LG</td>
<td>Meghan</td>
<td>24–29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>LA, Ma, Sci, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>0429CH</td>
<td>Becky</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>SpEd, all subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>0503JC</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9–11</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Elem</td>
<td>K–2</td>
<td>LA, Ma, T1A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key**

Race: AA = African American  C = Caucasian
Locale: U = Urban  R = Rural  Sb = Suburban
School Type: Elem = Elementary  MS = Middle School  HS = High School
Grade: K = Kindergarten
Subject(s): SS = Social Studies  LA = Language Arts  FL = Foreign Language  Ma = Mathematics  Sci = Science  SpEd = Special Education  SpEd-ED = Special Education, Emotionally Disturbed  SpEd-SD = Special Education, Severely Disabled
Title 1A = T1-A Reading specialist
APPENDIX E

Q SAMPLE

WITH HOPE PROCESSES AND TYPES OF HOPE LISTED FOR EACH
Appendix E

Q Sample With Hope Processes and Types of Hope Listed For Each

1. Learning new strategies to teach my subject helps me feel like I can be more effective. (Rational-Particularized)

2. When I am faced with a situation I try to stand up to but can’t change, I begin to feel frustrated and sometimes even helpless. (Experiential-Particularized)

3. Having worked through prior difficult challenges has given me the ability to face challenges I encounter today. (Experiential-Generalized)

4. I find that if I am not spiritually connected, that is when I lose hope. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Generalized)

5. Being an advocate for my students motivates me to continue teaching, even though I may not see the results right away. (Temporal-Generalized)

6. When I help a student reimagine his or her possibilities, I know I’ve made a difference. (Relational-Generalized)

7. Over time I have learned that I have to accept my feelings of frustration and despair in order for me to hope. (Experiential-Generalized)

8. I feel like I have a sense of purpose and can keep chugging along despite setbacks. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Generalized)

9. Doing things outside of work, such as being with friends, taking a walk, exercising, or going on trips, gives me the break that I need to come back recharged. (Rational-Particularized)

10. I get really frustrated when I am not in control. (Rational-Generalized)

11. Generating a new vision for my difficult life situations allows me to feel more powerful and hopeful for the future. (Experiential-Particularized)

12. I never feel alone in this difficult profession because I have faith that I am being guided. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Particularized)

13. I believe that I am forever planting seeds when it comes to my students’ future. (Temporal-Generalized)
14. It is important that I have a supportive network of friends and family during times of stress. (Relational-Generalized)

15. The sense that there is a reason for everything helps me see beyond my current situation and keeps me hopeful. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Generalized)

16. When I see my short-term goals successfully completed, I am re-energized to work towards my long-range goals. (Temporal-Particularized)

17. When my principal does not acknowledge me for my efforts at excellence, I want to give less of myself. (Relational-Particularized)

18. Although there may be nothing I can do right now to bring about the changes I want, my energy is still oriented toward the future. (Temporal-Generalized)

19. When I feel taken for granted and not respected in my workplace, prayer helps me get through the day. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Particularized)

20. It is frustrating when I do not see results fairly quickly, such as when I do a new lesson with my students. (Temporal-Particularized)

21. I believe that my teaching efforts and work in the school can make a difference and bring about a better future. (Temporal-Particularized)

22. Building relationships with colleagues who share my hopes, beliefs, and the willingness to problem solve, helps me cope with the stressors of school. (Relational-Particularized)

23. Were it not for my faith, I would have a difficult time dealing with the frustrations of the teaching profession. (Spiritual/Transcendent-Particularized)

24. The successes, no matter how small or large, inspire me to keep trying. (Rational-Generalized)

25. It would bother me as time went by if I did not know whether or not I made a positive difference in the lives of my students. (Temporal-Generalized)

26. The more I try things, experiment and push the boundaries, the more empowered I feel. (Rational-Generalized)

27. What helps sustain me is simply accepting the ongoing struggle that occurs in the teaching profession. (Experiential-Generalized)
28. Because I believe that my life has value and worth, I have the strength to continue teaching in the face of adversity.  (Spiritual/Transcendent-Particularized)

29. It is important to me that I am contributing to the larger community in my work with my students.  (Relational-Generalized)

30. When weak students successfully complete assignments, I feel energized because other students may be able to do so as well.  (Rational-Particularized)

31. Sometimes just being with someone who “gets” me, listens, and says “you’ll get through this,” is enough to give me the strength to continue.  (Relational-Generalized)

32. When faced with all sorts of challenges in this profession, what helps is just being patient while I rethink strategies to address them.  (Experiential-Particularized)

33. I feel more hopeful when I acknowledge limitations, consider options, and find ways to take action to improve the situation.  (Rational-Particularized)

34. I can sustain my hope by connecting with my students through meaningful conversations to show them that I care.  (Relational-Particularized)

35. I have found that the times my “voice” was recognized and respected by my colleagues or administrators, my hope and resolve were strengthened.  (Relational-Particularized)

36. It can become very disheartening when results do not show the hard work my students and I have put into their learning.  (Rational-Generalized)

37. My spiritual convictions are at the heart of why I am motivated to teach and stay in the profession.  (Spiritual/Transcendent-Generalized)

38. I have found that getting involved with things beyond the classroom, such as school-wide or district curriculum planning, even union activities, helps rejuvenate me.  (Experiential-Particularized)

39. It is those few uplifting experiences I have each year with students that make me think, “Yes, this is what teaching is all about,” that renew my hope.  (Experiential-Generalized)

40. My hope is that even if right now students do not see the connection of the class material to their lives, some day it will click for them.  This keeps me going.  (Temporal-Particularized)
APPENDIX F

COMPOSITE FACTOR ARRAYS
Appendix F

Composite Factor Arrays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor 4**
APPENDIX G

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR NEW TEACHERS
Appendix G

Words of Wisdom for New Teachers

- When experiencing the “burn out” types of behavior, try to revisit the real reason you went into teaching—was it to make a difference? Focus on the students you know grew to appreciate you and learned from your efforts.

- Question authority.

- Always keep learning new things and challenging yourself. It will keep you fresh and allow you to avoid burnout.

- Find the things that bring you joy whether it is working out or spending time with friends and family and make sure you continue to find time for those. Keep a sense of humor and don’t let your job overshadow living your life.

- Stay the course. Don’t make rash judgments either about your effectiveness as a teacher, or your students’ opinion of you. Be kind, firm and clear. Reach out to others for emotional support. Talk with colleagues about your experiences. Take summers off! Take regular breaks and vacations.

- As a new teacher, you have to find time to “get away” from the classroom, thinking about your students, planning, worrying, etc. You need to find time for yourself. You could spend all night every night on school work, but if you do you will get burned out.

- New teachers need to know that if they are going into teaching for money and recognitions, it isn’t going to happen. Do it because you like it. Don’t be afraid to reach out to someone who can provide help. Don’t be a wise guy and be sarcastic with kids. You don’t know what kind of baggage they are coming to school with. Riding kids and making comments to them can add to the stress. They can make or break your life.

- Find a mentor or group that can help you to vent and build solutions to your frustrations. Don’t accept a job because the bills need paid. Find a job where they pay you for your ability and desire to reach students even if it doesn’t follow the flavor of the day educationally.

- I would tell new teachers that teaching is a wonderful profession. Children need strong teachers. Take time for yourself and always remember that you are very influential to each student. I remember my first year of teaching—I was just
getting ready to fill out report cards and there was my name, on their report card, forever. We all remember our teachers. Which one will you be—the one who cared and showed it or the one who didn’t?

- You can’t do it all your first year. Pick one or two major things to focus on each year. Teaching is a learning experience for both the teacher and the students. Ask questions. Get help, and celebrate your small successes . . . they will add up to great ones some day!

- To always look for the good in every situation and in everyone. To be prepared. To have a sense of humor. To set ground rules and make students accountable. To be firm, fair and consistent.

- Talk to people that know the job—people that are positive.

- Do not take things personally. Things do not change overnight. Communicate with your students, not just crossing “T’s” and dotting “i’s”.

- Have courage. Things will be different next year! The prep time DOES eventually decrease. Realize that all your students are children, no matter how big they are—just love them!

- Do not be so rigid. Establish a strong rapport with your students and give them as much praise as you can.
Appendix H

Participants’ Dream Teacher Support System

• Have renewal retreats. A time to get away and brainstorm with teachers of all ages to share ideas.

• University-school partnerships, where professors are actually engaged in the public school.

• Administration that values the professional opinion of all team members (including paraprofessionals). Money for supplies and curriculum as the need arises—not prior to meeting and working with students. Kudos for a job well done when things are going smoothly—not just when things turn from bad to good.

• First, a better economic climate. Our union has had to give back salary and health benefit agreements in order for us to keep our jobs this year. Job security. More professional development opportunities in which teachers share lesson plans, strategies for teaching specific lessons and emotional support during difficult times.

• Parents who are on my side and understand that I want what’s best for their child as well they do. Students who always try their best. Teachers who work with each other and not against each other.

• Positive people who love teaching. A government that values education, public schools included. Teachers who love their job and want to continue to learn. A community that stands behind their local schools. Friends that uplift and support me.

• Having colleagues who support and admire what I want to accomplish with each of my students.

• I believe teacher morale begins with an understanding “mentor.” Just a confidante. I also believe that a type of horizontal, not top-down, leadership is necessary. Here there needs to be a deep level of respect at both ends (administration and teacher). I believe that workshops, by choice, should be provided to help teachers communicate in effective ways. Example: Ways to deal with students, either behaviorally or by ability—that way we could learn from each other.
• Good, effective communication with action, not just rhetoric. Some teachers, especially new ones that have never dealt with inner-city, at-risk students, need to have some discussion groups—perhaps getting to know parents. That way they learn to cope.

• Autonomy in the classroom. Nearby friends to chat with and commiserate with in the hallways and teacher’s lounge!

• To be able to see my fellow teachers teach their classes so that I can see what works for them and try to implement some of those ideas. And to have the money and the administrative support to provide opportunities for teachers to get together and discuss how to be better teachers.

• Built-in time with mentor.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


of the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.