

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 453

SP 020 835

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 TITLE Teacher Perception of Selected Factors Affecting Teaching Success.  
 INSTITUTION East Texas School Study Council, Commerce.  
 PUB DATE 78  
 NOTE 38p.  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Interpersonal Competence; \*Locus of Control; \*Performance Factors; Student Teacher Relationship; \*Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Background; Teacher Behavior; \*Teacher Characteristics; \*Teacher Effectiveness; Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

A study sought to determine how various groups of teachers rated selected factors in teaching success. A review of literature on the topic indicated that both non-teacher-controlled factors and teacher-controlled factors were important to teaching success. A survey was conducted to collect data from teachers in 64 elementary and secondary schools that were part of the East Texas School Study Council. This survey questionnaire obtained demographic information and also contained 20 statements, 10 of which were classified as factors of the teaching situation and 10 which were classified as personal factors relating to the teacher. It was found that teachers uniformly regarded the major personal traits of knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, and enthusiasm as the most important success factors. Nine of the ten most highly rated factors were teacher-controlled. The major administrative functions of facilities provided, administrative support, school discipline, and capable administration were uniformly regarded as at least moderately important, with administrative support considered extremely important to teaching success. Situational determinants such as professional activity, luck, school of education attended, socioeconomic community, and academic talent of students were uniformly perceived as being only slightly or very slightly important to teaching success. These findings produced eight recommendations offered for school administrators, staff developers, and teacher education institutions. (JD)

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# Teacher Perception of Selected Factors Affecting Teaching Success

by

George W. Garrett

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East Texas School Study Council  
Fall 1978

SP 020 835

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

A wide range of opinion exists among educators concerning the characteristics of successful teachers. Some writers believed with Kerlinger (1967:654) that no common agreement on the question of desirable traits of teachers can be reached. He felt that the only answerable question was "What traits of teachers do different sets of individuals believe desirable in teachers?" Educators contend that there are ways of defining desirable teacher characteristics, although the parameters of the definition must be arbitrarily limited. Gage (1968:399) supported this contention when he stated:

Successful teacher behavior, or characteristics are those that have been found through empirical research to be related to something desirable about teachers. That something desirable may be improved achievement by pupils, or any of the various cognitive, affective, or psychomotor objectives of education. It may be a favorable evaluation of the teacher by pupils, a supervisor, a principal, or someone else whose opinion is important.

Thus, these educators and others felt that successful teaching can only be defined as what various groups of people believe it to be.

Although there may be considerable differences between various groups of educators on the desirable traits of a teacher, there does appear to be a general consensus on several factors that help determine whether a teacher will be successful. Ryans (1975:45-46) felt that the underlying conditions contributing to the success of a teacher might be divided into two groups: (1) characteristics of the teaching situation and (2) characteristics of the individual teacher. He suggested:

Some . . . characteristics of the teaching situation which may have marked effect upon teaching behavior . . . are sociopsychological conditions: economic, ethnic and cultural conditions; administrative policies; grade level or subject matter taught; resources, including facilities; teaching aids; available personnel; the pupils taught, their ability level, motivation, and expectations; and parental expectations.

Perhaps the variation in these characteristics of the teaching situation often determines differences in the degree to which a particular teaching act is judged effective.

Personal characteristics identified by Ryans (1963:33) also contribute to teaching success. They included the teacher's academic ability, the ability to express himself clearly, his information processing ability, the ability to recall in his mind and to adapt relevant information to the situation, and the ability to control his own behavior. From the personal characteristics of teachers observed by Ryans (1975:47) there emerged five clusters of teacher behavior styles. They were:

(X) considerate, warm, sensitive, and supportive teacher behavior. (Y) organizing, managing, orderly responsible, and businesslike behavior. (Z) achievement motivating, stimulating, and imaginative behavior. (E) expressive, attractive, clear, personally and academically impressive teacher behavior. and (DI) directive, authoritative versus non-directive integrative teacher behavior.

In elaborating on personal qualities, Ryans (1975:49) referred to a communication from R.L. Turner. Turner compared inner-city with outer-city teachers who were rated in the upper versus lower quarters of principals' ratings and found evidence of the importance of career motivation and professional involvement in teaching

success. Ryans (1975:49) reported that for the purpose of identifying successful and unsuccessful teachers, "Turner feels . . . the scale he has developed to measure career motivation may be one of the most significant of those available."

Although Ryans' divisions are justifiable, a more workable analysis of teaching success factors came from McClelland and others (1953:315), who connected achievement need with belief in individual controllable and non-controllable factors. These factors were emphasized within a psychological framework by Heider (1958:82), who stated that "the result of an action is felt to depend on two sets of conditions, namely factors within the person and factors within the environment." The implications of this idea for a study of teaching success factors are found in Bliss and Vickery's (1976:2) interpretation of Combs and Snyggs' beliefs. They asserted:

If a person's perceptions are the determinants of behavior, the study of professional beliefs should prove to be a fertile area of research in understanding the antecedents of teacher behavior.

While many studies have been concerned with teacher behavior, most seemed to overlook that what teachers do is largely determined by perceptions. In noting this, Gage (1975:33) stressed, "Any innovations in the context, practices, and technology of teaching will necessarily be mediated through the minds and motives of teachers." Wylie also believed that human behavior cannot be understood nor predicted without knowledge of a subject's conscious perceptions of his environment and of himself as he sees it in relation to the environment.

## The Problem

A review of the literature has revealed a general consensus on several factors that contribute to teaching success but very few studies of how these factors are perceived by teachers. As a result of this deficiency, unknown and important perceptions may exist among various groups of teachers in the value which they place on teacher-controlled and non-teacher-controlled factors that contribute to teaching success. Thus, the problem of this study was to determine if such differences exist and if differences lie in the variables of age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and size of school.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how various groups of teachers rated selected factors in teaching success. In order to achieve this objective, the following questions were identified for investigation:

1. Which of the twenty factors identified for inclusion in this study do teachers rate as extremely important, important, moderately important, slightly important, and of very little importance?
2. Is there a significant difference between the number of teachers who place a high or low rating on teacher-controlled factors and those who place a high or low rating on non-teacher-controlled factors?
3. Do teachers rate each individual factor differently on the basis of (1) age, (2) sex, (3) teaching experience, (4) degree, (5) teaching level, and (6) size of school?

## Delimitations

The way in which teachers perceive and interpret teaching success may vary considerably from person to person. Teacher perceptions may or may not agree with the actual importance of a factor.

The subjects for this study were drawn from a random sample of teachers in the schools that comprise the East Texas School Study Council. The personnel directories of sixty-four cooperating schools were arranged in the order they were received, and names were selected by using a table of random numbers. A sample of 525 names was drawn from a population of 10,500 teachers.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined.

### *East Texas School Study Council*

The East Texas School Study Council (ETSSC) is a cooperative organization of sixty-six public school districts in Northeast Texas and East Texas State University. The purpose of the ETSSC is to promote the improvement of education through research, information sharing, educational meetings, and publications. Council activities are approved by a board of directors and funds are distributed through the cooperation of East Texas State University. The ETSSC serves approximately 12,450 teachers and administrators in both large and small school districts. Regular publications include: *ETSSC Newsletter*, *Forum of Educational Ideas*, *Financial Data Summary*, *Storehouse of Innovative Ideas*, *ETSSC Annual Report*, and *The Catalyst For Change*.

### *Teachers*

Teachers in this study included all regular professional personnel who were teaching full-time in the cooperating schools. Teachers employed in federal programs, special education, and part-time teaching were not included.

### *Size of School Districts*

The sizes of school districts in this study were AAAA, AAA, AA, and A or less.

**AAAA:** Schools with an average membership of 520-1,134 students in grades nine through twelve.

**AAA:** Schools with an average membership of 520-1,134 students in grades nine through twelve.

**AA:** Schools with an average membership of 235-519 students in grades nine through twelve.

**A or less:** Schools with an average membership of 234 or fewer students in grades nine through twelve.

### *Secondary Teacher*

Secondary teachers included those identified as a part of the study who taught in grades seven through twelve.

### *Elementary Teacher*

Elementary teachers included those identified as a part of the study who taught in grades kindergarten through six.

### *Teacher-Controlled Factor*

Any situational or personal factor that affected the teaching-learning process and whose status was dictated mainly by the teacher was labeled teacher controlled.

### *Non-Teacher-Controlled Factor*

Any situational or personal factor that affected the teaching-learning process and whose status was dictated mainly by the situation was labeled non-teacher controlled.

## **Procedure**

A questionnaire was devised to collect data from teachers in sixty-four schools of the East Texas School Study Council. The survey instrument was submitted to a panel of experienced educators who validated the questionnaire's construction. Two pilot studies were conducted to test the instrument's performance. One pilot study was conducted with the aid of eighty prospective teachers at East Texas State University. The second pilot study was completed with the assistance of teachers in two local school districts.

Permission was obtained from cooperating districts by means of a letter requesting a copy of the district's teacher directory. After the mailing list was compiled, building principals in each of the cooperating schools were informed by letter that one or more teachers in their schools might receive a questionnaire relating to the study.

A table of random numbers was used to select a sample of 525 teachers from a population of 10,500 teachers in the cooperating schools. The subjects were mailed a questionnaire and a letter explaining the purpose of the study. Ten days later, a follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents soliciting their participation in the study. A total of 373 usable questionnaires was returned for a response of 71 percent. Krejcie and Morgan (1970:608) indicated this number to be an acceptable sample size for a population of 10,500.

## **Significance of the Study**

Indications are that teachers will play an increasingly important role in shaping the structure of education at the local level. As democratic decision making becomes a reality in the public schools, administrators will need to understand better the perception of teachers concerning the factors that they consider important to successful teaching.

The goal of this study was to assist administrators by increasing their understanding of the perceptions of regular teachers. Such understanding might lead to increased proficiency in identifying successful teacher candidates, selecting prospective administrators, and in designing more appropriate inservice programs. It is also anticipated that a better understanding of personnel motivation will result in an improved relationship between administrators and teachers.

## **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

This chapter included an introduction to the research subject, the problem, delimitations, definitions, procedure, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to the study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and procedures, and Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Conclusions and recommendations resulting from the study are found in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

Many factors affect the success or lack of success experienced in teaching. The more common factors have tended to recur in numerous studies of teacher effectiveness. Nearly all studies of effective teaching have been described as inadequate by educational leaders. Popham's (1972:59) comment was typical.

Since the turn of the century, how to measure a teacher's instructional skill has perplexed a stream of educational researchers and evaluators. The most widely used measures—ratings, classroom observations, and pupil performance on standardized tests—all have proved dismally inadequate.

Regardless of the pessimism expressed toward research efforts, almost all educators were in agreement on one aspect of the profession. The success or failure of the educational enterprise was determined more by the classroom teacher than by any other factor.

In a review of research findings regarding teacher attitudes, Taddeo (1977:7) concluded that teacher attitudes have a definite impact on a student's learning and development. She further observed that "since research in attitudes is deficient and results inconsistent, the subject does not receive its due importance." Taddeo supported this position by noting that the Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, virtually ignored the subject of teacher attitudes, even in the broadest sense.

### Need for Understanding Teaching Factors

The need for understanding teaching factors was considered under three broad areas as applied to teaching. These areas were (1) demands for accountability, (2) development of teaching personnel, and (3) recruitment of teachers into the profession.

#### *Demand for Accountability*

Toler (1973:98) identified three major developments which have increased efforts to appraise teacher competence as a part of the accountability movement.

First is the growing acceptance of the principle of accountability, as applied to the educational area. The second is the changing economic picture in which a combination of recessionary trends and inflationary pressures have produced a diminished tolerance on the part of most people for assuming heavy tax burdens. The third is the mounting concern with the issue of the relevance of the educational enterprise in a rapidly changing society where traditional values and goals are constantly being challenged.

In response to the mounting pressures, a number of state legislatures passed various forms of accountability acts that were directed toward the evaluation of teaching. An example of the early laws dealing with accountability was the Stull Act that was passed by the California Legislature in 1972.

#### *Development of Teaching Personnel*

The purposes of evaluation are generally expressed as improving the quality of instruction or eliminating incompetent personnel. While the first of these is a positive objective, the second is negative and punitive. Many educators are alarmed at the views of the public on the purpose of evaluation. Berger (1974:148)

commented "Unfortunately as the public sees it, the purpose of evaluating teachers is punitive—to eliminate incompetent teachers."

During the early 1970's, the widespread emphasis on in-service education as a means of improving teaching effectiveness attests to the attractiveness of the instructional improvement model to educators; but in-service education was often approached with little enthusiasm by both teachers and administrators.

### *Recruitment of Personnel*

Many educators regard teacher characteristics as criteria for selecting teaching personnel. Zanells (1977:67) listed seven guidelines for interviewing teaching applicants as follow: (1) enthusiasm about teaching in the district; (2) the candidate's poise—nervousness; (3) knowledge of—subject area, school routine, discipline procedures; (4) experience—student teaching, previous teaching; (5) references—variety, sources; (6) education—school, grade average; and (7) adaptability—flexibility and reception to change.

## **Difficulty of Assessing Personal Factors**

Assessing the personal factors that affected teaching success has proved to be a difficult task. The two main difficulties involved selecting those attributes which dependably identified the successful teacher and determining which instructional goals of the school were most important. Some teachers were better than others at achieving certain goals, while others were better at achieving different goals.

Some measures of the school situation and teacher performance have been shown to be related. McKenna (1973:22) felt these included measures of financial effort, staff characteristics, and numerical adequacy of staff. He stressed that this relationship existed "even when the influence of other variables is taken into account."

### *Efforts to Measure Teaching Factors*

After reviewing the research dealing with teacher effectiveness, Hamachek (1969:34) concluded:

Most research efforts aimed at investigating teacher effectiveness have attempted to probe one or more of the following dimensions of teacher personality and behavior: (1) personal characteristics, (2) instructional procedures and interaction styles, (3) perceptions of self, and (4) perceptions of others.

Almost nine years earlier Turner and Fattu (1960:9) had advocated a research study based on a combination of behavior style and teacher characteristics as a means of predicting how well a teacher would perform. Their design was based on a systematic strategy developed by David Ryans. Turner and Fattu (1960:9) suggested:

In broad outline this strategy consists of: (1) searching for relationships between the classroom behavior of the teacher and the concurrent and subsequent behavior of pupils, (2) identifying the specific conditions under which a specified relationship between a pattern of pupil behavior occurs, and (3) demonstrating that a teacher with known characteristics will, in fact, engage in a particular pattern of behavior under a particular set of classroom conditions.

Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to define the major operations of the teaching process was undertaken by Barr (1961:14). He summed up the operations as determining pupil need; formulating educational objectives; choosing means, methods, and materials; guiding the learning process; and evaluating outcomes. Reynolds (1975:468) has suggested an approach which calls for involving the individual "first in defining his or her duties and responsibilities, then in setting standards for judging performance, and finally in self appraisal."

An opinion similar to Reynolds' was expressed by Cardellicchio (1974:9).

A guiding principle for developing evaluative criteria should be that teaching methods be assessed for congruence with the objectives outlined by the teacher in consultation with his supervisor. . . . Methods cannot be evaluated without reference to the goals one desires to achieve; to do so would cause the errors which originally fostered evaluation by outcomes.

Worcester (1961:132) summarized eighty-three studies on teacher effectiveness and identified the following assumptions in one or more of the studies reviewed:

There is a general teaching ability—a talent for teaching, teaching ability is a result of training—knowledge of the subject matter is sufficient training, words used in professional courses have the same meaning for instructor and student. Teaching ability can be objectively evaluated by trained observers, subjective evaluation of teaching performance has considerable validity, teaching effectiveness can be adequately rated by specialists, ratings given teachers are independent of the rater's philosophy, certain personality characteristics are essential to effective teaching, intelligence is directly related to teaching effectiveness . . .

Effectiveness of teaching is determined by the motivation of the teacher, effectiveness of teaching is determined by the motivation of the pupil, the teacher can be a major influence in motivating pupils, certain special conditions are related to effective teaching. Teaching effectiveness is a matter of an almost infinite number of interrelationships . . .

Although this list does not include all those identified by Worcester, it does emphasize the extent of the field of investigation which confronts educational researchers.

## Classificatory Variables

Statisticians and those interested in public opinion long have recognized that populations can be demographically divided into special interest groups. These groups were usually not based on formal organization, but existed as the result of common interests arising from such factors as age, sex, working conditions, et cetera. Sometimes formal organizations based on these factors did come into existence, especially when an advantage from such organization became apparent.

### *Age, Sex, and Years of Experience*

In his Five-Towns Study, Lortie found differences based on a combination of age and sex. He observed that involvement apparently varied with age for men as it did for women. He felt that the basis for variation was probably different in the two groups. Men high school teachers worked less than women. Men teachers who

planned to leave the profession worked the fewest number of hours. A feature of life involvement (Lortie, 1975:94) of male teachers' over forty in the study was that almost every such man in the Five-Towns Study had either a strong avocational interest outside teaching or an additional source of employment income.

For women-teachers, the outlook was somewhat different. Prior to age forty, women teachers appeared to devote less time to teaching than they did after forty due to strong outside interests such as marriage, having children, or leaving the profession for other reasons to later return. These patterns according to Lortie suggested "stabilization."

Hall (1974:154) investigated staff effectiveness and recommended dividing teachers on the basis of experience for the purpose of evaluation. He believed these divisions should be the first-year teacher, the third-year teacher, the fifth-year teacher, and the tenth-year-and-up teacher. The three-years-experience category agrees with the findings of Brophy and Evertson (1974:2), who found that teaching behavior becomes more stable after three years in the field.

### *Degree, Teaching Level, and Size of School*

In a study of teachers and teacher organizations in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota, area, Brinkmeier, Ubben, and Williams (1967:58) discovered that teachers with master's degrees were more knowledgeable about teacher organizations and their position on certain issues than were teachers with less than master's degrees. Speculating on the reasons for this, Brinkmeier, Ubbens, and Williams (1967:62) decided that "those were the teachers who have been around awhile and were most likely in the business to stay."

Lortie (1975:199) found that significant differences existed between elementary and secondary teachers on the principal's role in supervision. He reported:

The idea that the principal should check for teacher errors was found primarily among elementary teachers; 34 percent of them, compared with four percent of the high school teachers made that point. Some respondents (elementary teachers) held the principal responsible for close scrutiny of the teacher's work, whereas others (secondary teachers) stressed his obligation to extend autonomy.

Turner and Fattu (1960:14) looked for an explanation of the difference between teachers in large and small schools. They theorized that schools tended to select and retain teachers who were in accord with the prevailing views on educational practices in the system. They also noted that some school systems have a great deal more to offer teachers in the way of teacher autonomy, community stature, and progressiveness.

## **Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors**

The teacher controlled and non-teacher controlled classification of factors in this study should not be confused with Rotter, Chance, and Phare's (1972:261) explanation of internal-external locus of control. In this study, teacher controlled and non-teacher controlled refer only to whether the status of a factor is dictated by the teacher or by other forces. Non-teacher-controlled factors discussed are: the school plant, socioeconomic level of the community, administrative support, type of student assigned, teaching supplies, school discipline, luck, college attended, capability of the principal, and innate ability of the teacher.

### *School Plant*

The importance of the school plant was emphasized by Knezevich (1975:562), who viewed it as the space interpretation of the school curriculum. He stated, "the size, proportions, and relations of learning spaces influence the type and quality of instruction." This interpretation of the school plant is supported by Maxson (1975:177), who commented, "the classroom as a foundation of structural space, molds the teaching pattern, setting not only the scene but also the style of teaching."

### *Socioeconomic Level of the Community*

The Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, concluded that the highest correlate with student achievement was the socioeconomic level of his family. Coleman and others (1966:399) stated:

Teacher characteristics accounted for a higher proportion of variation in student achievement than did all other aspects of the school combined, excluding the student body characteristics.

Dreikurs (1968:12) saw an even stronger relationship between the teacher's success and the socioeconomic level of the community in which he taught. He asserted:

In most cases the expectations of the community are not in conflict with the educational goals of the teacher. However, in many communities, especially those with considerable racial or economic differences, the teacher is not considered a friend, but a critical and imposing authority.

These and other studies suggested that the socioeconomic level of the community may have had a significant effect on the degree of success the teacher achieved in producing student achievement.

### *Administrative Support*

In a study of how teachers perceived the principal's role in supervision considerable emphasis was placed on the effect of administrative support of the teacher on student learning. Lortie (1975:198) noted that over one third of the respondents, 38 percent, mentioned support in reply to the question "did the principal support the teacher in problems with parents and with difficult students?"

### *Students Assigned to the Teacher*

Citing a study involving over fifteen thousand California teachers, Biehler (1974:730) listed the reasons given by teachers as having caused their extreme disenchantment with teaching. The reasons were lack of response from students, lack of a discernible impact on students, and problems in controlling the class. This and other studies seemed to indicate that the student's academic ability had considerable influence on the amount of discernible impact that the teacher had on his students.

### *Teaching Supplies*

Biehler (1974:730) reported that one of the questions asked on the survey of California teachers was:

Is there any specific thing which you think calls for state action to help teachers do a better job of teaching? Among the most often listed answers were: (1) Smaller classes, (2) Less pupil supervision, (3) More clerical help, (4) Higher salaries, (5) More supplies, equipment, and textbooks, (6) Better

education colleges and courses, (7) More preparation time, and (8) More special classes and vocational schools.

This survey indicated that teachers consider teaching supplies to be somewhat important in the successful performance of their tasks. Jordan (1969:85) stated, "School supplies and equipment or 'educational tools' are assuming an increasingly important role in the instructional process." Quoting from the *Cost of Education Index*, which indicated that less than 12 percent of the operating budget in most schools was designated for supplies, Jordan (1969:85) further stressed:

The importance of securing maximum return on the educational dollar cannot be overemphasized in view of the contribution which this relatively small expenditure makes to the success of the educational process.

However, he implied that supplies, like the school plant, would be considered as highly important only by those professionals who had experienced inadequate amounts of supplies.

### *Luck*

Many studies have been conducted on the effects of a belief in luck or fate on individual performance. Veblen (1934:183) connected a belief in luck with lessened effort, lower productivity, and general passivity on the part of an individual. Weiner (1976:182) discovered that gender was an individual variable related to causal attributions. He observed that there was suggestive evidence that females were more likely to invoke luck explanations than were males and perceived themselves as less in ability. This may have been the results of role stereotyping and would not apply to all professionals.

### *Capability of the Principal*

Many professionals agreed that the principal had much to do with the organizational climate of a school. Summers (1973:169) studied the relationship between the climate of a school and teacher behavior. He identified six organizational climates by using the *Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire* developed by Halpin and Croft. The organizational climates were open, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal, and closed. From his study Summers found:

As a school climate changes from open to closed, its incumbent teachers have a tendency to become more directive. They (1) order and give more verbal commands to their students, (2) criticize student behavior more frequently, (3) have more silence or confusion (in the classroom), rely more and more on authority, rather than logic to maintain classroom control, and (5) spend less time using and expanding the ideas that are presented by the students.

From a study of the influences that teachers believed to affect the curriculum taught in school, Walker (1976:102) felt that the principal was a major influence in the curriculum. The principal was rated first among the local administrative personnel in his influences.

### *Innate Teaching Ability*

Educators have generally believed that teaching was a learned behavior. However, Walberg (1976:147) admitted that some persons seemed to possess innate teaching ability. The findings of natural science appeared to support his observation. Walberg stated:

Researchers have marshalled natural science findings supporting the existence of prior mental structures. There is little reason to doubt that adaptive capacities and complex patterns of behavior are passed on genetically through DNA and RNA.

## Teacher Controlled Factors

Ten factors involved in this study may be classified as teacher controlled. They are teacher perception of the pupil, persistent effort, professional growth, work enthusiasm, self-understanding, instructional skill, human relations skill, helping the student, knowledge of subject, and membership in a professional organization.

### *Teacher Perception of the Pupil*

The importance of teacher perception of the student was emphasized by Combs (1972:36), who asserted that "the beliefs teachers hold about what children are like and why they behave as they do play a crucial role in their influence upon students." Combs and others (1974:23) offered a more complete explanation:

What a teacher believes about the nature of his students will have a most important effect on how he behaves toward them. If a teacher believes his students have the capacity to learn, he will behave differently from the teacher who has serious doubts about the capacities of the charges.

Ryans (1960:142) believed that good teachers rated higher than poor teachers in at least five different ways. Among the most prominent were a more favorable opinion of students and a more favorable opinion of other people.

Educators are observing the findings of research closely in the area of casual ascriptions of human behavior. Gage (1975:36) concluded:

Causal ascription in educational settings refers to perceptions of the cause of success or failure. . . . If a teacher ascribes the student's failure to low ability, his behavior towards that pupil will be different than if he ascribed the failure to lack of effort or the excessive difficulty of the test. Since ascriptions for success and failure prevade the teaching situation, they should be systematically examined.

Goldberg (1977:60) believed the key to a successful individualized program could be found in the teacher's attitude toward the student. He characterized a good program as one in which "teachers know their students well."

### *Persistence of Effort*

Dreikurs (1967:98) believed that the greatest obstacle to pupil learning was posed by children who were so discouraged that "they discouraged the teacher too. It is necessary that the teacher doesn't fall for the pessimism of the child and accept it but sees a chance for every human being." Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963:34) had explained this concept:

The discouraged person cannot perceive the possibility of winning a battle, or ever solving his problems, or moving toward possible solutions. He has neither confidence in his own ability nor in life. He assumes that he has no choice.

It appeared from these studies that persistence would not make up for glaring personal deficiencies but without it the opportunity for other teaching qualities to become effective might never be realized. Persistence afforded the opportunity for other teaching qualities to develop through the medium of experience.

### *Professional Growth*

Two indicators of a teacher's desire for professional growth were membership and participation in a professional organization and seeking to continue his or her education. Both of these variables have been investigated by researchers.

Jensen (1961:70) investigated the hypothesis that good teachers possessed to a greater degree than poor teachers the characteristics deemed important by those who made the evaluations. One quality which he identified was "group membership and leadership." Although group membership was not a distinctive quality of teachers highly evaluated, he did find that group leadership as exemplified by work habits, professional judgment, adaptability, system of values, energy, and initiative appeared to be consistent differentiations. Many educators believed with Brinkmeier, Ubben, and Williams (1967) that those teachers who obtained advanced degrees and were active in professional organizations were the ones who had tested the field and were likely to stay in the profession. It appeared that participation in a professional organization was only slightly related to professional growth.

### *Work Enthusiasm*

Lortie (1975:65), in his *Five-Towns Study*, concluded that responding teachers found their teaching experience to be different from expectations. He reported, "They found tasks harder and more taxing than anticipated." Noting that the real situation was misperceived, Lortie observed that "neither the apprenticeship-of-observation nor their (teacher's) formal training prepared them for the inner world of teaching." A large part of the teacher's work time outside the classroom was taken up with planning. Radebaugh and Johnson (1971:417) found from their study that "excellent teachers seem to take the planning phase of teaching more seriously than other teachers." Barr (1961:136) listed fifteen personality traits derived from a review of the related research.

### *Instructional Skill*

Instructional skill was closely related to teacher behavior. Dropkins (1973:143) believed that competence could be determined only by gauging the teacher's knowledge and ability in terms of specific criteria for teacher behavior. Combs and others (1974:26) believed:

An effective teacher must have a stock of methods he may call upon as needed to carry out his teaching duties. . . . These may vary widely from teacher to teacher and even from moment to moment.

A conscious and definite effort may be required to improve teaching skills.

### *Human Relations Skill*

For many years psychologists and those affiliated with the mental health field have emphasized the need for better human relations skills in the teaching profession. Carkhuff and Pierce (1976:4) emphasized the importance of human relations skills. They stated:

Effective teaching begins with the teacher's ability to enter the student's frame of reference, to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each student's learning potential.

Moskowitz (1976:285) conducted a year-long study of inner-city teacher strategies. Among other conclusions, he found that the differences which appeared within his study occurred in motivating behaviors. He reported, "Best teachers constantly

used more consecutive indirect or motivating behaviors, while new teachers always used more consecutive direct or controlling behaviors."

### *Use of Own Time to Help Student*

Some educators deplored the reliance on observing teacher behavior for the purpose of evaluation. McNally (1973:26) quoted from his research:

No fallacy is more widely believed than the one which says it is impossible to judge a teacher's skill by watching him teach: . . . knowledge of relevant research will go far in helping us avoid proceeding on the basis of this fallacy.

The teacher's attitude toward use of his own time to help a student depended on the means he had developed to achieve self-actualization. Lawler (1970:162) reported on intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to the individual. He observed that these rewards stemmed directly from the performance itself and therefore were internally mediated, because the individual rewards himself.

### *Knowledge of Subject Matter*

Some studies found a varying degree of knowledge of subject matter to be related to teaching success. Jones (1956:178) found that teachers who were categorized in his study as good teachers were superior in intelligence, knowledge of subject matter, and professional knowledge. Saunders and Wright (1974:41) discovered that among teacher traits highly regarded by students were those displayed by the teacher who was fair in grading, knew the subject matter, and who explained thoroughly. Mercer (1972:102) found that professional grades in the student's teaching area were related to his teaching performance. Benedict (1977:95) discovered in her study that only one variable distinguished the most effective from the least effective student teachers. The most effective group had a higher grade point average than the least effective group in their subject area.

### *Membership in a Professional Organization*

*The Texas Outlook* (1973:27) listed six reasons for joining the National Education Association, including "to improve teaching methods." Barr (1961:136) reviewed the research in prediction of teaching efficiency. Among other things he found that there was moderate interest in the teacher's related professional activities. There seemed to be a correlation between interest in teaching and interest in professional activities. It appeared that little effort had been made to determine the extent to which teachers felt that professional organizations were helping them to improve their teaching skills and methods.

## **Summary**

Review of the literature indicated that both non-teacher-controlled factors and teacher-controlled factors were important to teaching success. It was not possible to identify many teacher-controlled factors that would be effective in every teaching situation.

Twenty factors were identified which significantly affected the results of the teacher's efforts. Ten of these were categorized as "non-teacher-controlled" and ten as "teacher controlled."

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine how teachers rated twenty selected factors affecting teaching success (Appendix A) and if those who rated the factors differently could be identified on the basis of various classificatory variables. A descriptive and comparative approach was employed to investigate the problem.

The question of how teachers rated selected factors affecting teaching success was investigated by determining the relative importance of each factor from the total score placed on the factor by teachers. Factors were then ranked in descending order of importance by score size and the results displayed in tables for the purpose of data analysis and discussion.

A chi square test of independence was used to determine if a significant difference existed between teacher ratings of non-teacher-controlled and teacher-controlled factors. Total scores for non-teacher-controlled factors and teacher-controlled factors were obtained by summing the individual ratings of each teacher on the survey instrument.

The question of whether the teachers rated a factor differently on the basis of age, sex, teaching experience, degree, teaching level, and school size was determined by a chi square test for independence. All twenty factors were tested by this method in each of the six classifications.

This chapter considers four divisions of the methodology. They are survey of the population, development of the instrument, design of the study, and the procedure.

### Survey of the Population

The population studied consisted of approximately 10,500 regular teachers in the sixty-four cooperating districts of the East Texas School Study Council. The superintendent of each district was contacted by means of a letter requesting a copy of the district's teacher directory (Appendix B). After the mailing list was compiled, building principals in each of the cooperating schools were informed by letter that one or more teachers in their schools might receive a questionnaire relating to the study (Appendix C).

Teacher directories were stacked in the order they were received and the subjects counted and marked in sections of twenty for the purpose of identifying the sample. A table of random numbers was used to select 525 teachers from a population of 10,500 to be surveyed. This amounted to a total of 5 percent of the population. The subjects were mailed a questionnaire and a letter explaining the purpose of the study (Appendix D). Ten days later, a follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents soliciting their participation in the survey. A total of 384 questionnaires was returned for a response of 73 percent. A total of 373 questionnaires, or 71 percent, was usable. Kerjcie and Morgan's (1970:608) table for determining sample size indicated this to be an acceptable sample size for a population of 10,500.

### Development of the Instrument

The survey instrument was developed through two methods, (1) a review of the relevant literature and (2) testing by means of a pilot study. Structure of the instrument was based on the results of these investigations.

## *Review of the Literature*

The ideas of Ryans (1975) were particularly helpful in designing the survey instrument. He noted that very often such factors as administrative policy resources; pupil taught; economic, ethnic, and cultural conditions; as well as socio-psychological conditions have a marked effect on teaching success. Turner and Fattu (1960) contributed ideas in the area of career motivation and professional involvement. The comments of Kerlinger (1967) and Gage (1968) suggested that any definition of teaching success would have to be arbitrarily defined. Many other educators, psychologists, and authors contributed ideas to the study through their written works or personal communications on the subject of teaching.

## *Pilot Study*

The pilot study revealed several weaknesses in the survey instrument which needed to be corrected. Revisions indicated were (1) inclusion of "subject area of the teacher" in the survey instrument, (2) further clarification of the instructions on completing the instrument, and (3) clarification of the instrument by more concise wording. The comments of a panel of educators who reviewed the instrument were very helpful in revising the questionnaire. The panel consisted of three professors of educational administration, three superintendents, three principals, and three teachers. The survey instrument was constructed to insure the privacy of each respondent to the questions.

## *Structure of the Instrument*

The survey instrument was structured in two parts. Part A of the instrument consisted of demographic information which was used as the basis for dividing the respondents into six classificatory variables. Part B of the instrument contained twenty randomly distributed statements, ten of which could be classified as factors of the teaching situation and ten of which could be classified as personal factors relating to the teacher.

## **The Design**

The respondents were asked to rate twenty selected statements on the basis of a numerical scale ranging from one to five, according to the perceived importance of each statement to successful teaching. Number one was designated as the least important rating and number five as the most important rating. Since there is a wide range of opinion as to what successful teaching involves, according to Gage (1968) and Kerlinger (1967), the respondents were instructed to regard successful teaching as "teaching which produces the greatest positive change in the learner and which is balanced between cognitive and affective results."

The 373 respondents comprising the sample were divided into six classificatory variables for the purpose of data analysis. They were age, sex, teaching experience, degree, teaching level, and school size.

The following definitions apply for operational procedures of the study:

*Classificatory variable:* The classificatory variable was the respondent teacher groups as determined by the six categories on the survey instrument.

*Independent variable:* The independent variable was the respondent's performance on the survey instrument resulting in a total score for each of the twenty factors.

*Respondents:* A total of 373 teachers responded to the survey of sixty-six schools comprising the East Texas School Study Council.

## Procedure

The subjects chosen for the survey were contacted by mail with a letter containing a request to participate by completing a copy of the enclosed questionnaire (Appendix A). A follow-up letter was sent to non-respondents after a period of ten days had elapsed from the date of the first mailing. The information gathered by the survey instrument was transferred to IBM computer cards for purposes of data analysis.

### *Analysis of Data*

A score for each factor was calculated from the total ratings which teachers placed on the factor. The factors were then ranked in descending order of importance as determined by the score. Ranked order of factors was displayed in a table for the purpose of comparison.

The score for each of the twenty factors was assigned an arbitrary level of importance for the purpose of data analysis and discussion. A score of 1,678 to 1,865 was considered to be of extreme importance. A score of 1,492 to 1,677 was considered to be of high importance. A score of 1,119 to 1,491 was considered to be of moderate importance, and a score of 746 to 1,118 was considered to be of some importance. A score of 373 to 745 was considered to be of very little importance. Score range was obtained by multiplying the lowest score (one) by the number of respondents (373) and by multiplying the highest possible score (five) by 373 which equals 1,865. Intermediate score levels were based on multipliers of 4.50 to 5.00, 4.00 to 4.49, 3.00 to 3.99, 2.00 to 2.99, and 1.00 to 1.99.

A chi square test of independence was employed to determine if a significant difference existed between teacher ratings of non-teacher-controlled factors as a whole and teacher ratings of teacher-controlled factors considered as a whole. Total scores for non-teacher-controlled factors and teacher-controlled factors were obtained by summing the individual ratings of each teacher on the survey instrument.

The question of whether the teachers rated a factor differently on the basis of age, sex, teaching experience, degree, teaching level, and school size was determined by a chi square test for independence. All twenty factors were tested by this method in each of the six classifications. Analysis of data and the subsequent findings were limited by the following factors.

### *Limitations*

The sample subjects were chosen from regular teachers employed in schools comprising the East Texas School Study Council, which are representative of school districts in Texas. Federal program teachers, teachers in special education, and part-time teachers were not included.

In a comparative study there are a number of variables which cannot be controlled. These variables may affect the results of the study. Conclusions were carefully drawn, even where significant results appeared to occur.

The arbitrary definition of such terms as "teaching success" limited the study, since there are numerous views on what constitutes successful teaching.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of the Data

The purpose of this study was to determine how teachers perceived selected factors affecting teaching success. It was designed in the following manner: (1) to determine the rank of twenty selected teaching factors in order of their importance from the total score value of each factor; (2) to determine if a significant difference existed between subject ratings of grouped success factors; (3) to determine if significant differences existed between teacher groups within the classificatory variables; (4) to determine if significant differences existed regarding non-teacher-controlled factors, and (5) to determine if significant differences existed regarding teacher-controlled factors.

Section one reports the level of importance assigned to the factors and is discussed as follows: (1) a score of 1,678 to 1,865 indicates extreme importance; (2) a score of 1,492 to 1,677 indicates high importance; (3) a score of 1,119 to 1,491 indicates moderate importance; (4) a score of 746 to 1,118 indicates slight importance; and (5) a score of 373 to 745 indicates very little importance. Section two reports the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of teacher-controlled factors as a group and non-teacher-controlled factors as a group. Section three reports the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of each factor based on the various groupings within six classificatory variables, which are: age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and size of school. Section four reports the perceptions of teachers regarding each of the ten non-teacher-controlled factors, which are: (1) school plant, (2) socioeconomic level of the community, (3) administrative support, (4) student assigned to the teacher, (5) teaching supplies, (6) school discipline, (7) luck, (8) college attended, (9) capability of the principal, and (10) innate teaching ability. Section five reports the perceptions of teachers regarding each of the ten teacher-controlled factors, which are: (1) teacher perception of the pupil, (2) persistent effort, (3) professional growth, (4) work enthusiasm, (5) self-understanding, (6) instructional skill, (7) human relations skill, (8) use of personal time to help student, (9) knowledge of subject matter, and (10) membership in a professional organization.

### Rank and Importance of the Factors

The data in Table 1 indicate that teachers perceive "possesses skill in human relations" and "strongly supported by the school administration" to be extremely important in teaching success. Nine factors were perceived as highly important in teaching success. They were as follows: "possesses substantial knowledge of the subject taught," "possesses skill in methods of instruction," "views pupil as capable of benefiting from the teacher's effort," "willing to use his or her own time to help a student," "possesses an understanding of self and his or her personal motives," "desires to grow professionally as an educator," "able to maintain persistent effort in spite of difficulty," "willing to work hard and long hours," and "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal." Teachers perceived four factors to be moderately important to teaching success: "teaches in a school district that maintains strict discipline," "has an adequate amount of teaching supplies," "demonstrates innate teaching ability," and "supported by well-planned facilities." The four following factors were perceived to be low in importance to a teacher's success: "has membership in a professional organization," "has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations," "attended a highly regarded school of education," and "teaches in a middle class or higher socioeconomic community."

One factor, "assigned more academically talented students," was perceived to be of very little importance to a teacher's success.

**Table 1**  
Factors Ranked by Importance to Teaching Success

Order by Score Value	Success Factors	Total Score Value
1	*Possess skill in human relations	1,712
2	Strongly supported by the school administration	1,689
3	*Possesses substantial knowledge of the subject taught	1,655
4	*Possesses skill in methods of instruction	1,654
5	*Views pupil as capable of benefiting from the teacher's effort	1,637
6	*Willing to use his or her own time to help a student	1,616
7	*Possesses an understanding of self and his or her personal motives	1,615
8	*Desires to grow professionally as an educator	1,605
9	*Able to maintain persistent effort in spite of difficulty	1,595
10	*Willing to work hard and long hours	1,554
11	Assigned to a school headed by a capable principal	1,520
12	Teaches in a school district that maintains strict discipline	1,440
13	Has an adequate amount of teaching supplies	1,438
14	Demonstrates innate teaching ability	1,431
15	Supported by well-planned facilities	1,419
16	*Has membership in a professional organization	1,048
17	Has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations	901
18	Attended a highly regarded school of education	891
19	Teaches in a middle-class or higher socioeconomic community	769
20	Assigned more academically talented students	744

\*Indicates teacher-controlled factor.

**Intervals of Importance Levels of Success Factors:**

- 373- 745—Very little importance
- 746-1,118—Slight importance
- 1,119-1,491—Moderate importance
- 1,492-1,677—High importance
- 1,678-1,865—Extremely high importance

## Teacher Perception of Grouped Success Factors

The data in Table 2 indicate that responding teachers placed a significantly higher rating on teacher-controlled factors as a group than on non-teacher-controlled factors regarding the importance of each group to teacher success. The extreme difference in teacher ratings of the teacher-controlled factors as a group and the non-teacher-controlled factors is emphasized by the fact that only two non-teacher-controlled factors were rated above the moderate level of importance. "Strongly supported by the school administration" was perceived as extremely high in importance, and "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal" was perceived as high in importance.

**Table 2**  
Rating of Teacher-Controlled and  
Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors

Factors	Rating Frequencies					X <sup>2</sup>
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Teacher-Controlled</b>						
Observed	97	126	374	1,410	1,716	
Expected	327	276.5	629	1,230.5	1,260	
<b>Non-Teacher-Controlled</b>						
Observed	556	426	882	1,047	800	
Expected	326	275.5	627	1,226.5	1,256	1,078.2*

\*Significant at the .01 level.

### Perception of Factors by Classificatory Variables

The six classificatory variables investigated by this study were as follows: age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and size of school. The variable of age is presented in the first division of this section.

#### Age

The classificatory variable of age was divided into three categories: ages twenty-one through thirty-five, thirty-six through fifty, and fifty-one through sixty-five. The data indicated that significant differences were found to exist between the ratings of the three age groups on four non-teacher-controlled factors. They were "teaches in a middle-class or higher socioeconomic community," "has an adequate amount of teaching supplies," "demonstrates innate teaching ability," and "attended a highly regarded school of education." The data indicated that significant differences were found to exist between the age groups on four teacher-controlled factors. They were as follows: "maintains persistent effort in spite of difficulty," "has membership in a professional organization," "possesses skill in methods of instruction," and "willing to use time to help student."

#### Sex

Data analysis revealed that significant differences existed between male and female subjects on two non-teacher-controlled factors. They were "teaches in a

middle-class or higher socioeconomic community" and "assigned more academically talented students." The results are presented in Table 5, page ?. The data in Table 12, page ?, indicated that significant differences existed between male and female subjects on two teacher-controlled factors. They were "possesses an understanding of self and personal motives" and "possesses substantial knowledge of subject taught."

### *Experience*

The variable of experience was divided into four categories: none to three years, four through ten years, eleven through twenty years, and twenty-one or more years. The data indicated that significant differences existed between experience categories on two non-teacher-controlled factors. They were "demonstrates innate teaching ability" and "attended a highly regarded school of education." Significant differences were found to exist between experience categories on three teacher-controlled factors, as indicated by the data. They were "desires to grow professionally as an educator," "has membership in a professional organization," and "possesses skill in methods of instruction."

### *Degree*

Response to the survey on variable four revealed that 165 teachers held the bachelor's degree, 207 teachers held a master's degree, and only 1 respondent held the doctorate. The one respondent with a doctorate was not included in data analysis. The data indicated that differences existed between teachers with bachelor's and master's degrees on one non-teacher-controlled factor. This factor was "assigned more academically talented students." Significant differences were found to exist between teachers with bachelor's and master's degrees on one teacher-controlled factor. The factor was "has membership in a professional organization."

### *Teaching Level*

The data indicated that elementary and secondary teachers differed to a significant degree on one non-teacher-controlled factor. This factor was "attended a highly regarded school of education." One teacher-controlled factor elicited a significantly different response from elementary and secondary teachers, as indicated by the data. The factor was "desires to grow professionally as an educator."

### *Size of School*

The University Interscholastic League size categories applied only to secondary schools. The data indicated that teachers in the various school size categories differed significantly on one non-teacher-controlled factor. The factor was "has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations." Significant differences were found to exist between teachers in schools of varying size on one teacher-controlled factor. This factor was "possesses an understanding of self and personal motives."

## **Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors**

Ten factors are discussed in the non-teacher-controlled section. The factors included in this section are as follows: "supported by well-planned facilities," "teaches in a middle-class or higher socioeconomic community," "strongly supported by the school administration," "assigned more academically talented students," "has an adequate amount of teaching supplies available," "teaches in a

school that maintains strict discipline," "has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations," "attended a highly regarded school of education," "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal," and "demonstrates innate teaching ability." The data in Table 3 indicate that eight non-teacher-controlled factors were considered moderate to very low in importance to teaching success. One non-teacher-controlled factor, "strongly supported by the school administration," was perceived as extremely high in importance. One non-teacher-controlled factor, "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal" was perceived to be of high importance by responding teachers.

**Table 3**  
Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors Ranked by Importance

Order by Score Value	Success Factors	Total Score Value
1	Strongly supported by the school administration	1,689
2	Assigned to a school headed by a capable principal	1,520
3	Teaches in a school district that maintains strict discipline	1,440
4	Has an adequate amount of teaching supplies available	1,438
5	Demonstrates innate teaching ability	1,431
6	Supported by well-planned facilities	1,419
7	Has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations	901
8	Attended a highly regarded school of education	891
9	Teaches in a middle-class or higher socioeconomic community	769
10	Assigned more academically talented students	744

**Intervals of Importance Levels of Success Factors:**

- 373- 745—Very little importance
- 746-1,118—Slight importance
- 1,119-1,491—Moderate importance
- 1,492-1,677—High importance
- 1,678-1,865—Extremely high importance

*Supported by Well-Planned Facilities*

Teachers placed moderate emphasis on the importance of the school plant in teaching success. They were obviously not as enthusiastic as Knezevich (1975:526) and Maxson (1975:177) in their perception of the school plant as a factor in the educational process. No significant difference of opinion appeared to exist among teacher groups in any of the classificatory variables on this factor.

*Socioeconomic Level of the Community*

Coleman and others (1966:399) found the highest correlate with student achievement to be the socioeconomic level of his family. Teachers' rating of the

socioeconomic level of the community in which they taught as a factor in teaching success indicates that they do not agree with Coleman's assessment, or they do not perceive student achievement as an appropriate measure of teaching success. This factor may also be in conflict with the traditional beliefs of teachers in the democratic philosophy of education. The data indicated that significant differences existed within the variables of age and sex regarding the importance of this factor in teaching success.

#### *Strongly Supported by the School Administration*

Teachers perceived this factor as extremely important in successful teaching. Their perception apparently agreed with the findings of Lortie (1975:198) regarding administrative support of the teacher. No significant difference was found among teacher groups in any of the six classificatory variables regarding the importance of the factor. This finding appeared to agree with those of March and Simon (1970:111) that the most frequently cited reason for job dissatisfaction was an adverse conception of administrative control and freedom.

#### *Assigned More Academically Talented Students*

Review of the data indicated that teachers place very little importance on being "assigned more academically talented students" as a factor in teaching success. Significant differences between teacher groups were found within the variables of sex and degree regarding the academic ability of students assigned to the teacher.

#### *Adequate Teaching Supplies*

A moderate rating of this factor by respondents indicated that supplies are not a significant problem in most of the schools included in the survey. The data indicated that significant differences of opinion regarding this factor did exist within the variable of age. Results did not appear to support the findings of Biehler (1974:730), who reported that supplies were one of the most often listed items by California teachers who responded to a survey asking them to list the things that called for state action to help teachers do a better job.

#### *School Maintains Strict Discipline*

Since this factor received only a moderate rating by respondents, it does not appear to be an urgent issue to the teachers surveyed. The background of students and teachers surveyed may be more homogeneous than those studied by Barfield and Burlingame (1974:10), who indicated that many discipline problems resulted from the divergent backgrounds of teachers and pupils. The results of data analysis revealed no significant differences among teacher groups regarding the importance level of this factor.

#### *Has to Have a Certain Amount of Luck*

In view of the many factors that cannot be controlled by the teacher but which affect the outcome of his or her efforts, luck was ranked lower in importance than might have been expected. Findings appeared to contradict the suggestive evidence of Weiner (1976:182) that female teachers rated this factor higher in importance than did male teachers. The data indicated that one classificatory variable did produce a significant difference among teachers who taught in schools of various sizes.

#### *Attended a Highly Regarded School of Education*

A rating of slight importance on this factor indicated that teachers surveyed were in agreement with the findings of Ryans (1960:394) that college attended made little

difference in regard to teacher ability. However, significant differences were found among teacher groups regarding the importance of this factor within the variables of age, years of experience, and teaching level.

*Assigned to a School Headed by a Capable Principal*

Teacher rating of this factor was in agreement with the findings of Walker (1976:102), who found that the principal was perceived as a major influence in the school curriculum. Results supported the findings of Doyle and Olszewski (1975:276) that teachers believed the adoption of improved teaching practices depended on the support of the principal. Data analysis of the six classificatory variables revealed that no significant differences existed among any teacher groups regarding the importance of this factor in teaching.

*Innate Teaching Ability*

In placing a moderately important rating on this factor, respondents appeared to agree with the findings of Walberg (1976:147) that some teachers seemed to possess innate teaching ability. The data indicated that significant differences did exist among respondent groups within the variables of age and experience regarding the importance of innate teaching ability.

**Teacher-Controlled Factors**

Ten factors are discussed in the teacher-controlled section. Factors included in this section are "views pupil as capable of benefiting from teacher instruction."

**Table 4**  
Teacher-Controlled Factors Ranked by Importance

Order by Score Value	Success Factors	Total Score Value
1	Possesses skill in human relations	1,712
2	Possesses substantial knowledge of the subject he or she teaches	1,655
3	Possesses skill in methods of instruction	1,654
4	Views pupil as capable of benefiting from the teacher's instruction	1,637
5	Willing to use his or her own time to help a student	1,616
6	Possesses an understanding of self and his or her personal motives	1,615
7	Desires to grow professionally as an educator	1,605
8	Able to maintain persistent effort in spite of difficulty	1,595
9	Willing to work hard and long hours	1,554
10	Has membership in a professional organization	1,048

**Intervals of Importance Levels of Success Factors:**

- 373- 745—Very little importance
- 746-1,118—Slight importance
- 1,119-1,491—Moderate importance
- 1,492-1,677—High importance
- 1,678-1,865—Extremely high importance

"able to maintain persistent effort in spite of difficulty," "desires to grow professionally as an educator," "willing to work hard and long hours," "possesses an understanding of self and his or her motives," "possesses skill in methods of instruction," "possesses skill in human relationships," "willing to use his or her own time to help a student," "possesses substantial knowledge of the subject he or she teaches," and "has membership in a professional organization." The data in Table 4 indicate that nine teacher-controlled factors were perceived as high to extremely high in importance to a teacher's success. Teachers perceived "has a membership in a professional organization" to be of moderate importance. "Possesses skill in human relations" was perceived as being extremely high in importance to teaching success.

#### *Views the Pupil as Capable*

Many educators agreed with the conclusions of Gage (1975:36), Combs (1972:36), and Combs and others (1974:23) that the teacher who views the pupil as capable of benefiting from his or her instruction is essential in the educational process. Teachers surveyed also appeared to rate this factor highly but perhaps not as highly as these authors. No significant difference in teacher ratings of this factor was found among any of the variables tested.

#### *Maintains Persistent Effort in Spite of Difficulty*

Many teachers in this study appeared to agree with Dreikurs (1967:98) that a large obstacle to learning results from discouraged students who also discourage the teacher. The data indicated a clear trend for older teachers to rate this factor as more important to teaching success than did younger teachers. Teachers who were twenty-one to thirty-five years of age placed the least emphasis on this factor.

#### *Desires to Grow Professionally*

Teachers seemed to agree with the conclusions of Brinkmeier, Ubben, and Williams (1967:58) and Jensen (1961:70) that those who were actively engaged in professional activities and leadership were very likely to stay in the profession. The degree of emphasis on professional growth was not equally shared among teacher groups. The data indicated that significant differences existed within the variables of teaching experience and teaching level. A consistent trend appeared among experience groupings with teachers having three years or less experience placing the least emphasis on professional growth and increasing emphasis being observed with increasing experience. It appeared that the more experience acquired by the teacher the more awareness of a need for professional growth. Elementary teachers exhibited more emphasis on professional growth than did secondary teachers as indicated in Table 5, page 30.

#### *Willing to Work Hard and Long Hours*

This factor appeared to receive considerable emphasis by all teacher groups included in the study. Data analysis indicated that no significant differences existed among any of the teacher groups regarding the importance of this factor. Teachers appeared to agree with the findings of Lortie (1975:65) that teaching required harder and more taxing effort than was anticipated by new teachers.

#### *Understanding of self and motives*

Teachers who rated "possesses an understanding of self and his or her personal motives" as highly important were in agreement with Combs and others (1974:24),

who felt that teacher behavior was the result of his or her self-concept. The data indicated that significant differences existed within the variables of sex and size of school regarding the importance of this factor. Although both male and female teachers rated this factor highly, it appeared that the women were more positive in their rating of the factor. Data analysis indicated that the larger the school in which the teachers taught the more importance they placed on self-understanding. This trend held true for teachers in all four size groups.

#### *Skill in Methods of Instruction*

In placing a high value on this factor, teachers appeared to agree with Dropkins (1973:143) that a teacher must of necessity have a store of methods in order to be effective as a teacher. Jenkins and Bausell (1974:573) found that teachers emphasized skill in methods and procedures as a basis of evaluation over the amount students learn. The data indicated that significant differences existed among teacher groups within the variables of age and experience regarding the importance of "possesses skill in methods of instruction." The emphasis on skill in methods of instruction seemed to increase with the age of the teacher. The same pattern prevailed in the variable of experience regarding this factor. The more experienced the teacher the greater he or she rated "possesses skill in methods of instruction" in importance. The greatest difference occurred between those with three years of experience or less and teachers with ten or more years of experience.

#### *Skill in Human Relations*

The emphasis placed on human relations skill by teachers appeared to agree with the assessment of Carkhuff and Pierce (1976:4), who felt that an important need existed in the area of dealing effectively with the human element in the educational process. Moskowitz (1976:285) found that urban students rated human relations skill in teachers as very important. Data analysis of this factor revealed that no significant differences existed among any teacher groups regarding the importance of this factor. Almost all respondents rated human relations skill as being extremely important in teaching success.

#### *Willing to Use Own Time to Help a Student*

Data analysis revealed that teachers rated this factor as highly important in teaching success. This agrees with the findings of Lawler (1970:162), who connected this kind of teacher behavior with self-actualization of the teacher. Some educators indicated that such attitudes were more important in teacher evaluation than trying to observe teacher behavior. The data indicated that significant differences existed among teacher groups within the variable of age concerning the importance of this factor. Teachers 51 years of age and older appeared to rate this factor as significantly more important than did teachers in the younger categories. The least emphasis on the factor appeared to lie in the 36 to 50 years of age group of teachers.

#### *Knowledge of Subject Matter*

This factor was ranked second highest in importance by teachers, who appeared to agree with the characterization by Jones (1956:178) of the good teacher as being superior in knowledge of subject matter. Teachers were also in agreement with students who, according to Saunders and Wright (1974:41), highly regarded this quality in a teacher. Benedict (1977:195) found that a higher grade point average in their subject area also distinguished most effective from least effective teachers in her study. The data indicated that a significant difference existed between the

ratings of male and female teachers on the importance of "possesses substantial knowledge of subject taught." It appears that female teachers rated this factor more important to the teacher's success than did male teachers.

### *Membership in a Professional Organization*

Although teachers rated professional growth in the range of high importance, the perception did not carry over to membership in a professional organization. This factor was rated as only slightly important by respondents. Teachers apparently did not detect a relationship between professional activities and successful teaching as did Barr (1961:136). The data indicated that significant differences existed among teacher groups within the variables of age, experience, and degree regarding the importance of this factor in teaching success. Teacher perception of the importance of this factor was highest in the fifty-one to sixty-five age group. Opinion was equally divided in the thirty-six to fifty age group and decidedly lower in the twenty-one to thirty-five age group on "has membership in a professional organization." Teacher perceptions within the variable of experience followed closely with those in age groups. Those with the fewest years of experience ranked this factor decidedly low in value to a teacher's success, while teachers with twenty-one or more years of experience ranked it very high. The progression from low to a high rating was consistent throughout the experience categories. Teachers with a master's degree placed significantly more emphasis on membership in a professional organization than did teachers with a bachelor's degree. This result agreed with the findings of Brinkmeier, Ubben, and Williams (1967:58), who believed that these teachers have made a commitment to the profession since entering the field.

### **Data Summary**

One teacher-controlled factor, "possesses skill in human relations," and one non-teacher-controlled factor, "strongly supported by the school administration," were ranked by teachers as extremely important in teaching success. Only teaching level produced a significant difference in teacher ratings on either of these factors. Elementary and secondary teachers appeared to differ significantly on "strongly supported by the school administration." One factor, "is assigned more academically talented students," was perceived to be of very little importance to successful teaching. The ten teacher-controlled factors were ranked significantly higher in importance than were the ten non-teacher-controlled factors regarding the teacher's success.

One teacher-controlled factor, "has membership in a professional organization," elicited significantly different responses within the variable groupings of age, experience, and degree. One non-teacher-controlled factor, "attended a highly regarded school of education," elicited significantly different responses within with variable groupings of age, experience, and teaching level. Fourteen factors elicited significantly different responses on at least one variable. Six factors did not elicit a significantly different response on any variable. They were "supported by well-planned facilities," "views pupil as capable of benefiting from teacher effort," "willing to work hard and long hours," "possesses skill in human relations," "teaches in a school that maintains strict discipline," and "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal."

A nearly significant difference of  $p < .10$  was found within the variable of teaching level on four factors. They were "strongly supported by the school administration," "possesses an understanding of self and personal motives," "willing to use own time to help student," and "demonstrates innate teaching ability." Elementary teachers appeared to place more emphasis on all of these factors than did secondary teachers except for "strongly supported by the school administration." This factor was more strongly emphasized by secondary teachers than by elementary teachers.

## Chapter 5

# Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter consists of four sections: (1) summary of the study, (2) findings and conclusions, (3) recommendations, and (4) recommendations for further study.

### Summary of the Study

Democratic decision making has received increasing acceptance during the past decade in the administration of the nation's schools. The widespread adoption of participatory practices in public schools has emphasized the teacher's role in shaping the structure of education. As a result, administrators need to understand better the perception of teachers regarding the importance of several factors that affect teacher success. It was anticipated that such understanding might lead to increased proficiency in identifying prospective teachers and in designing more appropriate in-service programs. Improved relationships between teachers and administrators could result from a better understanding of teacher motivation.

The purpose of this study was to assist administrators in increasing their understanding of teacher perceptions: (1) by identifying some of the factors which affect teaching success and ranking these factors in order of their importance as perceived by regular teachers; (2) by determining whether teachers perceive the factors which they can control as being more important to successful teaching than those factors which they cannot control; and (3) by investigating the effects of such classificatory variables as age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and school size on the perception of teachers regarding the importance of teaching factors.

The study was designed to investigate teacher perception of the importance of selected teaching factors. A total of 525 questionnaires was mailed to teachers in schools comprising the East Texas School Study Council. A return of 71 percent provided a sample of 373 subjects who supplied the data for analysis.

Teachers rated the importance of twenty selected teaching factors on a scale of one to five. A rating of one was considered very low in importance and a rating of five was considered extremely high in importance. The factors were ranked in importance from highest to lowest on the basis of total factor score. A chi square test of independence was computed for each factor as rated by teacher groups within six classificatory variables. They were: age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and size of school. Conclusions and recommendations were based on data analysis of the twenty selected factors.

### Findings and Conclusions

The findings and conclusions of this study are presented in three parts. The first part consists of findings and conclusions regarding the ranked importance of teaching success factors as perceived by teachers. Part two presents findings and conclusions regarding teacher perception of non-teacher-controlled versus teacher-controlled factor groups. Part three presents findings and conclusions regarding the effects of age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and school size on teacher perception of non-teacher-controlled and teacher-controlled factors.

#### *Rank and Importance of the Factors*

Findings and conclusions regarding the ranked importance of teaching factors are presented below. Table 1, page 2, displays the factors by rank and importance

level with significant differences indicated by Tables 5 and 6, pages 30 and 31 respectively.

*Findings.* The importance levels assigned to factors were extremely high importance, high importance, moderate importance, slight importance, and very little importance. Teacher ratings provided the following findings:

1. A rating of extremely high importance (1,678 to 1,865) was placed on one teacher-controlled factor, "possesses skill in human relations." One non-teacher-controlled factor, "strongly supported by the school administration," was rated extremely high in importance.
2. A rating of high importance (1,492 to 1,677) was placed on eight teacher-controlled factors. They were as follows: "possesses substantial knowledge of the subject taught," "possesses skill in methods of instruction," "views pupil as capable of benefiting from the teacher's effort," "willing to use his or her own time to help a student," "possesses an understanding of self and his or her personal motives," "desires to grow professionally as an educator," "able to maintain persistent effort in spite of difficulty," and "willing to work hard and long hours." One non-teacher-controlled factor, "assigned to a school headed by a capable principal," was rated highly important.
3. A rating of moderate importance (1,119 to 1,491) was placed on four non-teacher-controlled factors. They were "teaches in a school district that maintains strict discipline," "has an adequate amount of teaching supplies," "demonstrates innate teaching ability," and "supported by well-planned facilities."
4. A rating of slight importance (756 to 1,118) was placed on one teacher-controlled factor, "has membership in a professional organization." Three non-teacher-controlled factors were rated as slightly important. They were "has to have a certain amount of luck in many situations," "attended a highly regarded school of education," and "teaches in a middle class or higher socioeconomic community."
5. A rating of very little importance (373 to 745) was placed on the non-teacher-controlled factor of "assigned more academically talented students."

*Conclusions.* Analysis of the findings listed above would appear to support the following conclusions in regard to factor rankings and their respective importance levels.

1. Teachers uniformly regarded the major personal traits of knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, and enthusiasm as the most important success factors. It is significant that nine of the top ten factors were teacher-controlled.
2. The major administrative functions of facilities provided, administrative support, school discipline, and capable administration were uniformly regarded as moderately important or above, with administrative support considered extremely important to teaching success.
3. Situational determinants such as professional activity, luck, school of education attended, socioeconomic community, and academic talent of the students were uniformly perceived as being only slightly or very slightly important to teaching success.

#### *Perception of Grouped Success Factors*

Findings and conclusions regarding teacher perception of non-teacher-controlled versus teacher-controlled factor groups are presented below. A chi square test of independence between the factor groups indicated a highly significant difference.

*Finding.* The data indicated that teachers as a whole placed a much higher rating on teacher-controlled factors than on non-teacher-controlled factors regarding their importance in teaching success.

*Conclusions.* The above finding would appear to support the following conclusions regarding the rating of teacher-controlled versus non-teacher-controlled factor groups.

1. Teachers perceived their own efforts and skills to be more important to teaching success than factors outside their control.
2. Teachers as a whole appeared to accept the major responsibility for their own success.
3. The high degree of agreement among teachers regarding teacher-controlled and non-teacher-controlled factors indicated that their views are quite homogeneous as a whole.

**Table 5**  
**Ranked Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors**  
**by Classificatory Variables**

Factors	Age	Sex	Experience	Degree	Teaching Level	School Size
Support by school administration						
Capable principal						
School discipline						
Adequate teaching supplies	X					
Innate teaching ability	X		X			
Well-planned facilities						
Luck in many situations						X
School of education attended	X		X		X	
Socioeconomic community	X	X				
Academically talented students		X		X		

X indicates significant differences among teacher groups.

### Classificatory Variables

The six classificatory variables were as follows: age, sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and school size. Findings and conclusions regarding teacher-controlled and non-teacher-controlled factors are presented below.

**Table 6**  
Ranked Teacher-Controlled Factors by Classificatory Variables.

Factors	Age	Sex	Experience	Degree	Teaching Level	School Size
Skill in human relations						
Knowledge of subject matter		X				
Skill in methods of instruction	X		X			
Teacher view of the pupil						
Uses own time to help student	X					
Understands self and motives		X				X
Professional growth			X		X	
Persistent effort	X					
Willing to work long, hard hours						
Membership in a professional organization	X		X	X		

X indicates significant differences among teacher groups.

*Findings.* Interaction of the classificatory variables and teaching factors produced the findings listed below (Table 5, page 30 and Table 6, page 31).

1. Age contributed more differences in regard to the perceived importance of teaching factors than did any other classificatory variable. Significant differences among teacher groups were found regarding the non-teacher-controlled factors of "adequate teaching supplies," "innate teaching ability," "school of

- education attended," and "socioeconomic community." Significant differences among teacher groups were found regarding the teacher-controlled factors of "skill in methods of instruction," "uses own time to help student," "persistent effort," and "membership in a professional organization."
2. General uniformity of opinion was found among teacher groups within the variables of sex, experience, degree, teaching level, and size of school regarding the rating of teaching factors. Three teacher-controlled factors elicited significant differences within the variable of experience, two factors within the variable of sex, and one factor within the variables of degree, teaching level, and size of school. Only two non-teacher-controlled factors elicited significant differences within the variables of sex and experience and only one factor within the variables of degree, teaching level, and school size.
  3. No general pattern was found in regard to the relatively few significant interactions of factors and the classificatory variable.

*Conclusions.* Findings regarding interaction of the classificatory variables and teaching factors appeared to support the conclusions listed below.

1. Teachers are most likely to differ in their perception of teaching factors due to age and experience. Perceptions appear to evolve and change during the teacher's career rather than remaining fixed.
2. Other variables such as sex, degree, teaching level, and size of school appear to have little influence on teacher perceptions.

#### *Non-Teacher-Controlled Factors*

Findings and conclusions regarding teacher perception of individual non-teacher-controlled factors are presented below (Table 5, page 30). A test of independence between groups was administered for each factor.

*Findings.* No significant differences were found among teacher groups regarding "support by school administration," "capable principal," "school discipline," and "well-planned facilities." Significant differences were found among teacher groups regarding the following factors:

1. "Adequate teaching supplies" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variable of age.
2. "Innate teaching ability" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of age and experience.
3. "Luck in many situations" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variable of school size.
4. "School of education attended" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of age, experience, and teaching level.
5. "Socioeconomic community" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of age and sex.
6. "Academically talented students" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of sex and degree.

*Conclusions.* Significant findings regarding non-teacher-controlled factors appeared to support the conclusions listed below.

1. Teachers twenty-one to thirty-five years of age appeared to believe that adequate teaching supplies were more important to teaching success than did older teachers.
2. Younger teachers and less experienced teachers appeared to believe that "innate teaching ability" was less important to teaching success than did older and more experienced teachers.

3. Teachers in class AA and AAA schools appeared to believe that "luck in many situations" is less important as a factor in teaching success than did teachers in schools of other sizes.
4. Teachers thirty-six to fifty years of age appeared to believe that the level of the "socioeconomic community" in which the teacher taught was more important to teaching success than did either younger or older teachers. Male teachers perceived this factor as being more important to teaching success than did female teachers.
5. Teachers age fifty-one to sixty-five and those with more experience appeared to believe that the "school of education attended" was a more important success factor than did younger and less experienced teachers. Elementary teachers valued the factor more highly than did secondary teachers.
6. Female teachers perceived being assigned more "academically talented students" as less important in teaching success than did male teachers.

### *Teacher-Controlled Factors*

Findings and conclusions regarding teacher perception of individual teacher-controlled factors are presented below (Table 6, page 31). A test of independence between groups was administered for each factor.

*Findings.* No significant differences were found among teacher groups regarding "skill in human relations," "teacher view of the pupil," and "willing to work long, hard hours." Significant differences were found among teacher groups regarding the following factors.

1. "Knowledge of subject matter" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variable of sex.
2. "Skill in methods of instruction" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of age and experience.
3. "Uses own time to help student" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variable of age.
4. "Understands self and motives" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of sex and school size.
5. "Professional growth" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of experience and teaching level.
6. "Persistent effort" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variable of age.
7. "Membership in a professional organization" produced significant differences among teacher groups within the variables of age, experience, and degree.

*Conclusions.* Significant findings regarding teacher-controlled factors appeared to support the conclusions listed below.

1. Female teachers appeared to believe that "knowledge of subject matter" was more important to teaching success than did male teachers.
2. Emphasis on the importance of "skill in methods of instruction" increased with the age and experience of the teacher. The difference was rather marked after the first few years of experience.
3. Older teachers believed that the factor of "uses own time to help student" was more important than did younger teachers.
4. Female teachers and teachers in larger schools appeared to believe that "understands self and motives" was more important to teaching than did male teachers and teachers in smaller schools.

5. The more experience a teacher acquired the more aware he or she became of a need for "professional growth." Elementary teachers believed that "professional growth" was more important than did secondary teachers.
6. Younger teachers believed that maintaining "persistent effort" was less important than did older teachers.
7. Older and more experienced teachers perceive "membership in a professional organization" to be more important than did younger and less experienced teachers. The change in emphasis was rather marked throughout the variable. Teachers with master's degrees appeared to believe "membership in a professional organization" was more important than did teachers with bachelor's degrees.

### **Recommendations**

1. Administrators should attempt to increase their understanding of how teachers perceive teaching success factors through the means of personal contacts, meetings, and literature which deals with the subject.
2. Schools should look closely at such factors as professional involvement, attitude toward professional activities, and plans for continued education in recruiting prospective teachers.
3. Since teachers attach extremely high importance to "skill in human relations," in-service activities should concentrate on helping them improve this skill. The problem could be approached by securing specialists in human relations as resource persons in in-service programs.
4. Administrators should plan occasions for positive interaction with teachers such as special awards, recognition, and assignments. This is very important in view of the emphasis that teachers placed on "administrative support."
5. Administrators should plan for more interaction opportunities between experienced teachers and beginning teachers, such as assigning new teachers to work with experienced teachers and allowing time for observation and sharing.
6. In-service programs should be provided for teachers based on the age and experience of the teacher as well as subject and grade level taught.
7. Experienced teachers within the school should be utilized in providing professional growth opportunities for younger teachers in planning and conducting in-service programs.
8. Teacher preparation colleges should include a course in human relations skill as a part of the required studies for teacher candidates. Such skill is widely recognized as being very important for teachers.

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