



# HELPING TEACHERS BE SUCCESSFUL: LESSONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

STEVEN W. NEILL  
PAUL BLAND  
EDWIN CHURCH,  
CLIMETINE CLAYBURN  
W. MICHAEL SHIMEALL  
Emporia State University

*The goal of this study was to identify areas of teacher performance that were lacking to the point that the teacher was non-renewed. Individual school districts can gain insight into why teachers are failing and make adjustments to their training and teacher induction programs that will improve professional practice. The study found that teachers failed primarily in the area of classroom management. Of the 22 possible teaching skills in which teachers could be deficient, four of the top five causes for nonrenewal came within the category of classroom management (Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, Managing Student Behavior, Managing Classroom Procedures, and Establishing a Culture for Learning). School districts should examine their staff development strategies and teacher induction programs to assure that these areas of concern are addressed.*

*Keywords: teacher characteristics, administrator attitudes, teacher evaluation, personnel management, teacher competencies, teacher shortage, teacher dismissal, job performance, employer-employee relationship, employment problems, teacher-administrator relationship*

In 2005 it was estimated that, each year, replacing public school teachers who leave the profession or who transferred to other schools costs \$2.2 billion (Alliance for Excellent Education Issue Brief, 2005). Dr. Richard Ingersoll (2002) found that teaching suffers from a higher level of turnover than other professions, with 16% of teachers leaving each year compared to 11% in other professions. Teachers in lower income schools leave at the even higher rate of 20%. Even more significantly, Ingersoll found that 33% of new hires leave the profession within the first three years and 46% leave during the first five years. Although teacher shortages have been temporarily slowed by the economic downturn, our educational system is paying a price both financially and in terms of valuable experience from teacher turnover and teachers leaving for other professions.

Studies have continually shown how important the teacher is to the success of students. Ernest Boyer (1995) reminded us that a shared vision is important in any community of learners. Teachers and administrators are the keepers of that shared vision, along with their ability to inspire and evaluate the progress of students. Successful schools depend on teachers and administrators to establish and maintain that kind of climate. Allington and Cunningham (2002) recognized that parents and the home environment have a tremendous influence on student progress, but nothing carries the day-in day-out influence that the teacher exerts on the success or failure of a student's education. Kauchak and Eggen (2005, p. 3) stated it a different way: "No one, other than parents and other caregivers, has more potential for touching the personal, social, and intellectual lives of students than do caring and dedicate teachers." As Gail Thompson (2007) states, to be a good teacher one needs

subject matter competency; cohesive, comprehensible, challenging, and relevant curriculum; high expectations for students; multiple means of assessment; an engaging style of delivery; and the overall objective of not only equipping students with the skills they need to advance toward their personal goals but also encouraging them to use their education to bring about social justice. (p. 15)

Although the literature effectively chronicles the problems created by turnover and affirms the value of a quality teacher, not as much has been written regarding the skill deficiencies that result in teacher nonrenewal. Those studies that have been conducted deal mostly with the viewpoint of the teacher. Much research is focused on the process of dismissal, as opposed to the types of skills or lack thereof that lead to dismissal.

In many states, a school may decide not to renew the contract of a teacher in the probationary period of employment for any reason and without granting a hearing or following any specific procedures. For those teachers who have received tenure (non-probationary), each state's statutes establish a list of the only acceptable bases for termination or nonrenewal of the contract. Acceptable causes for dismissal may include incompetence, violation of role model obligations, poor citizenship within the school, posing a threat to students, and other similar issues (Schimmel, et al., 2011).

Clearly, methods that can effectively improve teacher longevity and reduce turnover would result in the creation of a better learning environment for our students. Whatever methods we elect to use need to be focused on solving the problems that contribute to teacher turnover.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study is designed to look at the problem of teacher nonrenewal from the point of view of the building administrator. It is hoped that insights developed from the study will allow school districts and administrators to evaluate their programs and identify areas that may need either to be eliminated or reinforced as districts and administrators seek to help teachers be successful. The study was designed to answer two questions: *What do building principals report as the most common factors that contribute to teacher nonrenewal?* and *What steps should school administrators take to assure that candidates are better prepared to deal with these common factors?*

## METHODS

### Research Design

The design adopted in this research project used both quantitative and qualitative methods to identify the most common factors that contribute to teacher nonrenewal. The questionnaire (Appendix A) that was developed included three major sections:

- A demographic section that identified the principal, the school and district and district and school size.
- A section indicating nonrenewal factors. In this section, principals were asked to detail the reasons why individual teachers were non-renewed.
- A section of comments in which principals were allowed to elaborate on the information provided in the survey.

This approach was selected for several reasons: (1) survey methodology allows a large group of potential principals to be questioned (Babbie, 2001); (2) personal interviews by phone or in person with a potentially large group of principals were impractical; (3) the study design allowed the issue to be examined from a quantitative point of view with more principals' views examined; (4) using a standardized instrument insured that each principal was asked the same questions; (5) the potential influence of an interviewer's facial expressions, demeanor, and variations in follow-up questions was eliminated; and (6) open-ended questions allowed the principals' answers to be analyzed without ascribing meaning or intent based on the interpretation of a physical response or interviewer bias (Gillham, 2000).

The advantages implicit in this approach allowed the clear depiction of the principals' beliefs through the development of a rank or priority order. Using these priority orders, it was possible to identify teaching skills that are more frequently missing in teachers who are non-renewed. The use of a fixed percentage scale allowed for the determination of principals' experience so that the most important problems could be identified.



The qualities of an effective teacher identified for the study's questionnaire came from the work of Charlotte Danielson. The *Framework for Teaching* is a research-based set of components of instruction. In this framework, teaching is divided into 22 components. Each component defines a distinct quality of effective teaching. The twenty-two components are then grouped into five domains (Danielson, 2009). Principals were given the option to rate each non-renewed teacher on each of these 22 components identifying each as either "a major factor in dismissal," "a contributing factor in dismissal," or "not a factor in dismissal."

The compilation of responses to the comments section allowed the identification of variations that might have influenced specific nonrenewal decisions and gave the principals the opportunity to identify situations that they felt might not have been addressed in the questionnaire. The use of open-ended questions provided principals with flexibility not found in the sole use of a questionnaire (Gillham, 2000).

### Adopted Questionnaire

In the adopted questionnaire, the principals were asked to identify the specific teaching skill that was absent in teachers who were non-renewed. The principals were asked to identify the specific professional shortcoming that resulted in teacher dismissal.

The percentages assigned to each variable by the principals were input into a spreadsheet program using Microsoft Excel. Excel was selected because of its simplicity of operation and the fact that the study design did not call for complex statistical measures. Computations were conducted to determine an average percentage for each variable and to assign a rank to each variable. The results were calculated as percentages and then ranked to determine their impact on the eventual nonrenewal decision.

### Subjects

Two hundred and eighteen principals in Kansas agreed to complete a questionnaire. Principals were asked to report on teachers they had recommended for nonrenewal in the last two years. The principals were not paid for their participation in this research study. Principals who participated were informed that they would be provided a copy of study results.

The survey process was implemented with the assistance of the staff at the United School Administrators [USA] (specifically, Michele Velde and Cheryl Semmel). The survey was distributed to all current building principals in Kansas utilizing SurveyMonkey, the online survey software and questionnaire tool. The support of USA was crucial to the development of this study.

Nine hundred and fifty principals were contacted electronically and were given the opportunity to participate in this study. Two hundred and eighteen agreed to participate (23% return rate). Of the two hundred and eighteen who responded, forty-four reported having non-renewed a total of one hundred and seven teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1  
*Survey Response Results*

Years	Principals Contacted	Principals Responding	Principals Reporting Nonrenewals	Total Nonrenewals Reported
2008-2010	950	218	44	107

Each principal was asked to provide a limited amount of demographic information. These items included:

- principal's name
- school and district
- school and district size

Responses to these items allowed the opportunity to examine trends in nonrenewal that might be specific to district or school size.

## Data Collection

The electronic mailings to the principals included a letter of introduction, consent information, and the questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaires were sent to principals electronically during May of 2010.

## Data Analysis

Analysis of each variable (professional shortcoming that resulted in teacher dismissal) was conducted by applying an average percentage that served to establish a priority list of shortcomings (Alreck & Settle, 1995). The mean was selected because it is commonly accepted as the best measure of central tendency, regularly used in quantitative research, and is more stable than the median or mode (Gall et al., 2003; Hittleman & Simon, 2002). The resulting data provided the answer to the first of the research questions by determining what principals believed caused these teachers to be non-renewed.

The data were analyzed through an examination of those shortcomings that were identified most frequently by principals. A ranking was developed based on the data to allow those most critical elements to be identified and addressed.

Of the 44 principals who identified being involved in a nonrenewal, 24 identified specific examples in answering the comments section. Data provided from these responses were first unitized and then analyzed through the search for emergent categories, themes, and patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

# RESULTS

## Survey Data

In reviewing the survey data, several factors emerged as critical deficiencies leading to teacher nonrenewal. Table 2 lists the deficiencies in priority order.

As these ranking were examined, a significant trend developed when Dr. Danielson's five domains were considered. The four of the five most significant deficiencies came within the domain of classroom environment (see Table 3). Clearly, teachers who were non-renewed consistently experienced problems with establishing a classroom environment consistent with learning. The two most significant factors were management of student behavior and creating an environment of respect and rapport.

## Narrative Results

Some of the administrators who responded to the survey provided narrative comments that amplified the survey results and provided further validation of three dominant themes (classroom management, dispositions, and teacher preparation) that this study found to be the basis for many teacher nonrenewals. A complete list of all comments is included in Appendix B.

An examination of selected comments paints a more complete picture of these nonrenewal decisions when coupled



Table 2  
*Ranking Skill Deficiencies that Lead to Teacher Nonrenewal*

Rank	Total	Characteristic
1	1.55	Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
2	1.55	Managing Student Behavior
3	1.49	Managing Classroom Procedures
4	1.47	Establishing a Culture for Learning
5	1.43	Communicating with Students
6	1.33	Engaging Students in Learning
7	1.20	Designing Coherent Instruction
8	1.19	Showing Professionalism
9	1.14	Communicating with Families
10	1.10	Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
11	1.05	Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
12	0.95	Growing and Developing Professionally
13	0.93	Setting Instructional Outcomes
14	0.90	Reflecting on Teaching
15	0.85	Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
16	0.81	Participating in a Professional Community
17	0.77	Using Assessment in Instruction
18	0.76	Designing Student Assessments
19	0.71	Maintaining Accurate Records
20	0.66	Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
21	0.58	Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
22	0.46	Organizing Physical Space

**Table 3**  
*Rankings Separated into Domains*

Domain	Component	Rank
<b>Planning and Preparation</b>	Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy	15
	Demonstrating Knowledge of Students	11
	Setting Instructional Outcomes	13
	Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources	21
	Designing Coherent Instruction	7
	Designing Student Assessments	18
<b>The Classroom Environment</b>	Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	1
	Establishing a Culture for Learning	4
	Managing Classroom Procedures	3
	Managing Student Behavior	1
	Organizing Physical Space	22
<b>Instruction</b>	Communicating with Students	5
	Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	20
	Engaging Students in Learning	6
	Using Assessment in Instruction	17
	Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	10
<b>Professional Responsibilities</b>	Reflecting on Teaching	14
	Maintaining Accurate Records	19
	Communicating with Families	9
	Participating in a Professional Community	16
	Growing and Developing Professionally	12
	Showing Professionalism	8



with the previously discussed survey results. A principal speaking about classroom management reported that the teacher not being renewed had been through two separate teaching assignments in the district and had been non-renewed twice. The principal added that “she was not able to handle secondary students effectively to create a quality learning environment. This caused problems with time on task and the students ran over her. She has the knowledge base, but can’t control the kids.” Another principal reported, “This instructor did not have the respect of the students and could not control student behavior. Part of this is the teacher was not confident in his own teaching ability.” An administrator relayed the importance of a teacher getting off to a good start when he or she stated, “Without an established set of expectations, there was little opportunity to engage students in learning.”

Communication and the importance of interpersonal skills were detailed through the following two comments provided by different administrators in neighboring districts. “Teacher’s means of managing students was unacceptable. Teacher demonstrated negative attitudes towards students repeatedly. Interactions were frequently inappropriate with students.” Another administrator reported that “Non-renewed teacher was unable to monitor and change her attitude towards students, specifically students who were not ‘model’ students. There was no discipline with dignity. Many times she humiliated students to the point where they would cry.”

The importance of communication with parents was also reported as a source of concern. One response indicated that “Teacher could not develop a rapport with students. Lacked discipline and regard for rules. [The teacher] was defensive with parents and other staff members.” This view was supported by the comments of another principal who stated, “Teacher used sarcasm and [relied on] a my way, or the highway, approach to discipline of young children. [The teacher] did not deal effectively with parents who voiced concerns.” In one of the most critical observations an administrator stated, “Basically there was no growth. Several suggestions were made, modeling was done, but there was not any follow through on the part of the educator. For this person dealing with people in general was difficult. No skills with parents, disrespectful towards colleagues and students.”

The comments that were more specific to the dispositions theme were defined with responses such as, “This teacher was very immature even after having taught in another district and two years in mine. This teacher simply was not emotionally mature enough for a teaching position. His unprofessional behavior interfered with his ability to perform his duties effectively.”

Even when support and help is provided, as indicated in this principal’s comment, some beginning teachers still fail. “This individual was making inappropriate comments to students during the school setting. He was placed on a plan of improvement, but failed to abide by that plan. He seemed to want to be the students’ friend as opposed to maintaining a student-teacher professional relationship. He lost the respect of students and staff as a result.”

Comments like the following indicate that some employees fail to recognize the importance of professional attitude and conduct: “[The teacher] had a poor attendance record, no confidence, and lacked motivation. Teacher was not willing to grow professionally, and take suggestions intended to further the teacher’s skills.”

“[The teacher] was not a team player” and the teacher displayed “a lack of interpersonal skills and the ability to work as a team” are examples of comments about teachers who had problems with interpersonal skills. One administrator phrased the teacher’s dismissal in a succinct manner: “Unfortunately, this nonrenewal is totally based on this teacher’s non-ability to be a team player.”

Finally, the theme of teacher preparation, particularly in the area of instructional skill, was mentioned in one principal’s assertion that the teacher’s “content knowledge was strong, however knowledge of students and how they learn best was lacking.” This theme was echoed by a similar assertion from a different source: “This teacher had great rapport with students but was instructionally very poor, especially in terms of setting objectives for learning and planning for ways to engage students in their own learning.” Another administrator indicated that the “Teacher was not well trained for the position. [The] teacher did not have the basic skills needed to create an environment conducive to learning. Instructional practices were weak. Classroom management was weak. Organization was weak.” These comments were further supported by an administrator who reported, “I had two coaches in this classroom the

second week of school and they took over instruction by the first of November. I don't know how she received her degree in education and passed the teachers' test."

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Data indicate that it is imperative that school districts be proactive in developing policies, programs, and procedures that provide the support necessary for teacher success. Clearly, for more of these teachers to experience success, school districts must examine the support they provide regarding classroom management. We must examine this problem from a diagnostic/prescriptive point of view so that each teacher's individual challenges and needs may be identified and addressed (Ehrgott, et al., 1993).

It is important that a continuous dialogue be developed between administrators, beginning teachers, and the teacher preparatory institutions. Such feedback will provide the universities the data they need to improve the knowledge and skill of their graduates. Universities that use such analysis as the basis for their program improvement efforts will increase the quality of the teachers they produce. In turn, this will allow school district personnel to focus their efforts on enhancing teacher effectiveness rather than instruction in basics of instruction and professionalism. It is important that, before a teacher is hired, steps have been taken to insure that only those with the prerequisite skills necessary to succeed are offered employment. In an effort to insure that only qualified staff is hired, particular attention should be given to several pre-employment areas.

Initially school districts should research the teacher preparation programs in colleges and university that routinely provide teaching candidates. Time should be taken to identify the programs that align with the instructional philosophies of the district and prove that students who graduate have the necessary knowledge and skill. These programs should be reviewed for entrance requirements, program course requirements, course syllabi, field experience requirements, staff qualifications, and record for producing quality teachers.

A specific process of advertising the opening, accepting applications, and screening candidates for interview should be developed. The district application should provide specific questions designed to gain an understanding of the applicant's knowledge and skill, particularly as it relates to classroom management issues. This not only includes specific resume data but provides scenarios that are aligned with the behavior management philosophy of the district. Transcripts of the student should be reviewed with special attention in the areas that often lead to nonrenewal. This information will provide the initial screening criteria that will be used to select those who may be offered an interview.

At this point, reference checks should be made. Specific questions that align with these management concerns should be asked. Answers to these questions should be recorded in a manner that provides individuals making the decision who to invite for an interview the information needed to make a knowledgeable choice.

Interview questions need to be designed that can help identify potential problems. Time should be spent developing a quality interview process. A list of specific questions should be developed for use that includes general questions on instructional philosophy, but also hypothetical situations that can develop insight into how potential teachers would deal with issues like classroom discipline, communicating with parents, and other areas identified as critical in this study.

When possible, a team of individuals should be involved in a multiple level process that includes, at a minimum, both teachers and administrators. In certain situations, groups of students and community stakeholders can be included for additional input. All individuals involved in the interview process must be provided with the training necessary to understand the legal aspects of the process. Each must understand that theirs is an advisory role and that the final decision still rests with administration and the board of education.

The candidate could also be provided the opportunity to actually teach a model lesson to a class of students in their grade level or subject area. Obviously this would be a challenge to design, but this would allow the interview team to see how the teacher interacts with students and how they deal with some of the typical misbehaviors that exist in all classrooms.





After a teacher is on the job, it is important that a quality staff development program is available that includes a multi-phase teacher induction program. The teacher induction program should have sections particularly developed to insure teachers have the knowledge and skill necessary to succeed in classroom management. The teacher induction program should provide group and individual training opportunities in a systematic ongoing manner.

It is important that a mentor that has a strong professional skill set in the areas of classroom management and instruction is assigned to the student. The mentor must also have a strong interest in supporting the new teacher's positive development to a level of competence. The mentor should be available to observe and direct the new employee, as well as to answer the multitude of organizational questions that invariably need to be addressed (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Although mentoring programs currently exist in many states, they vary greatly in quality and commitment. Only a few states are committed enough to the process to provide adequate funding to allow a skilled veteran teacher to have sufficient release time to effectively coach the teacher (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002).

The district should continually review and update their supervision and evaluation policies to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the district, school and employee. Employee work should be evaluated on an early and ongoing basis that provides the feedback necessary to reinforce quality performance while identifying areas in which improvement is needed. Quality assistance should be delivered in a positive, continuous improvement mode that will foster trust and professional conduct. Areas that are judged not be at a level necessary to ensure continued employment should be addressed through individually tailored improvement plans. These plans should be specific and on target with detailed action plans and evaluation components. The plans need to be developed by a team of knowledgeable teachers and administrators, but the evaluation portion should be the responsibility of the teacher's immediate supervisor.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A possibility for additional research links to the current requirement in many states that a passing score on the Praxis examination be achieved prior to an initial teaching license being issued. A correlation study that examined the items detailed in this study lead to teacher nonrenewal with specific items or sections on the Praxis examination that assess this knowledge could be valuable in designing beginning teacher mentor programs.

## CONCLUSIONS

As with any business, it is costly, inefficient, and counter-productive to be constantly going through a cycle of hiring, training, and either dismissing or losing teachers. In order to establish the shared vision that Boyer (1995) mentioned, a school must establish continuity over time and that becomes impossible if the district is suffering through up to 20% per year turnover. Our schools would benefit greatly if administrators would take the steps outlined in this study, thus making a strong effort to give each teacher the best possible chance to be successful. Successful teachers will very likely translate into successful students.

## APPENDIX A Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is designed to determine the professional shortcomings that resulted in teacher dismissal. Please examine each of the twenty-two aspects of quality teaching to determine which ones contributed to the dismissal. In the comments section, please describe specifically the problems identified as “a major factor in dismissal”.

Aspects of quality teaching	A major factor in dismissal	A contributing factor in dismissal	Not a factor in dismissal
Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy			
Demonstrating Knowledge of Students			
Setting Instructional Outcomes			
Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources			
Designing Coherent Instruction			
Designing Student Assessments			
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport			
Establishing a Culture for Learning			
Managing Classroom Procedures			
Managing Student Behavior			
Organizing Physical Space			
Communicating with Students			
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques			
Engaging Students in Learning			
Using Assessment in Instruction			
Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness			
Reflecting on Teaching			
Maintaining Accurate Records			
Communicating with Families			
Participating in a Professional Community			
Growing and Developing Professionally			
Showing Professionalism			



## APPENDIX B

### Principals' Responses to Open-ended Questions

*Principals who made "no comment" are not listed.*

#### Principal A

- Inability to implement a program or curriculum and refusal to accept coaching or feedback designed to improve said implementation. Also, inappropriate conversations with students and failure to maintain appropriate teacher-student boundaries.

#### Principal B

- Teacher used sarcasm and a my way or the highway approach to discipline of young children. Did not deal effectively with parents who voiced concerns.

#### Principal C

- Teacher was not making adequate progress in improving instruction.

#### Principal D

- This particular teacher did such a poor job of developing relationships with students, and sowing such a large amount of student distrust that any instructional strength was irrelevant. The culture of the classroom was such that learning did not occur at a very high rate.
- This teacher engaged in a series of behaviors that were not professional, despite documentation in their file directing them to refrain from such behavior. This behavior created too much of a continued safety factor for students, and the lack of reflection or planning to avoid these behaviors indicated that they would not stop.
- This teacher had great rapport with students but was instructionally very poor, especially in terms of setting objectives for learning and planning for ways to engage students in their own learning. The relationship building should have allowed this teacher to get kids to do anything, but there was no serious regard for the profession that indicated they wanted to get better.

#### Principal E

- Teacher was not well trained for the position. Teacher did not have the basic skills needed to create an environment conducive to learning. Instructional practices were weak. Classroom management was weak. Organization was weak.
- Teacher was not ready for the classroom. Teacher had been hired by a previous administrator. Several staff members tried to help this teacher, but the teacher refused to implement the suggestions.

#### Principal G

- As long as someone else planned it they could present it She would have been a very average teacher in 5 years
- I had two coaches in this classroom the second week of school and they took over instruction by the first of November. I don't know how she received her degree in education and passed the teachers test.

#### Principal H

- Teacher could not develop a rapport with students. Lacked discipline and regard for rules. Was defensive with parents and other staff members.

- Had a poor attendance record. No confidence in herself and lacked motivation.

## Principal K

- Lack of focus, too lax in her approach.

## Principal M

- This instructor did not have the respect of the students and could not control student behavior. Part of this is the teacher was not confident in his own teaching ability.
- This teacher was very immature even after having taught in another district and two years in mine. No control over student behavior and no personal growth as a professional.
- This person did not work well with the administration and the other teachers in the building. Was not a person who could find things on their own. Not very good at working with children.

## Principal N

- Teacher was not willing to grow professionally, and take suggestions intended to further the teacher's skills. Sarcasm was often used communicating with elementary students. Curriculum was not developmentally appropriate for the students being taught, nor was the teaching engaging students.

## Principal O

- Unfortunately, this nonrenewal is totally based on this teacher's non-ability to be a team player. Teacher liked to hide behind policy when possible, did not treat children or colleagues with respect as they should, and had a problem with authority figures. All this resulted in doubt as to the best interest of our students which resulted in nonrenewal.

## Principal S

- Teacher's means of managing students was unacceptable. Teacher demonstrated negative attitudes towards students repeatedly. Interactions were frequently inappropriate with students
- Teacher struggled with classroom management. Classroom was not conducive to learning.

## Principal U

- This instructor relied heavily on his grade level peers, great repose with kids but no classroom management which led to poor classroom instruction
- This individual did a wonderful job with the students in the classroom, but she taught what she wanted to teach, when she wanted to teach it. She was not a team player, and was not honest with administration.

## Principal V

- Has a lot of 'smarts' on the curriculum (mathematics), but very little knowledge and ability on how to impart that knowledge to the students in an effective manner. He tended to always have his 'back to the students (i.e. taught to the board)' and allowed one or two people per class period to 'drive the pace of instruction.' In other words, he only had the attention of one or two students; the rest were either watching passively or off-task completely.

## Principal W

- Lack of fit in the classroom, didn't get along well with students or parents, preparation was lacking in the



classroom.

- Typically if there was a problem in 5th or 6th grade, it involved this person's classroom - discipline-wise, potential bullying, didn't have things graded. It was a mess.

#### Principal X

- Basically there was no growth. Several suggestions were made, modeling was done, but there was not any follow through on the part of the educator. For this person dealing with people in general was difficult. No skills with parents, disrespectful towards colleagues and students.
- This person had a total lack of professionalism. Wanted to do their own thing instead of following the state and district guidelines.
- This educator was a very nice person; however, she was way too timid to be teaching students with special needs. She lacked the knowledge of how to interact with our students, write and carry out appropriate IEP goals, run an IEP meeting, and was just very unsure of herself.

#### Principal EE

- Content knowledge was strong, however knowledge of students and how they learn best was lacking. Was not at "team player" on the team assigned.

#### Principal GG

- Classroom control was the major factor. The inexperienced teacher did not follow through with discipline or expectations and lost her upper level classes.
- Without an established set of expectations, there was little opportunity to engage students in learning.

#### Principal HH

- There is only one teacher I have listed as a nonrenewal member of my staff. This teacher was tenured. This teacher resigned. The KNEA was helpful in this situation.

#### Principal JJ

- Not willing to do the work that was needed.

#### Principal LL

- Teacher had organizational, communicative, and instructional problems. A plan was set up and the teacher given input.

#### Principal MM

- Non-renewed teacher was unable to monitor and change her attitude towards students, specifically students who were not "model" students. There was no discipline with dignity. Many times she humiliated students to the point where they would cry.

#### Principal NN

- This individual was making inappropriate comments to students during the school setting. He was placed on a plan of improvement, but failed to abide by that plan. He seemed to want to be the students' friend as opposed to maintaining a student-teacher professional relationship. He lost the respect of students and staff as a result.

- This individual has been through two separate teaching assignments in our district and has been non-renewed twice. She was not able to handle secondary students effectively to create a quality learning environment. This caused problems with time on task and the students ran over her. She has the knowledge base, but can't control the kids.
- This teacher has many tools to work with in her toolbox, but she has difficulty relating to the students. She taught an elective, and frankly there were a very limited number of students wishing to enroll. No students equals no need for a teacher. We want to keep the program, so we opted to non-renew so we could find a teacher that can make connections with the students.

## Principal TT

- This teacher did not demonstrate any understanding of instructional purpose or expectations. She believed her purpose was custodial, in nature.
- This teacher had very little to draw from, he leaned heavily on his teammates.
- This teacher simply was not emotionally mature enough for a teaching position. His unprofessional behavior interfered with his ability to perform his duties effectively.

## REFERENCES

- Allington, R., & Cunningham, P. (2002). *Schools that work: Where all children read and write*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2005). *Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states*. Washington, DC.
- Alreck, P. L., & Settle, R. B. (1995). *The survey research handbook* (2nd ed.). NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Babbie, E. (2001). *The practice of social research* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Boyer, E. (1995). *The basic school: A community for learning* (1st ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Danielson, C., Axtell, D., Bevan, P., Cleland, B., McKay, C., Phillips, E. & Wright, K. (2009). *Implementing the framework for teaching in enhancing professional practice: An ASCD action tool*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Ehrgott, R., Henderson-Spark, J. & Sparks, R. (1993). *A study of the marginal teacher in California*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Gall, M. G., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Developing a questionnaire*. NY: Continuum.
- Hittleman, D. R., & Simon, A. J. (2002). *Interpreting educational research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.
- Ingersoll, R. (2002, August 15). High turnover plagues schools. *USA Today*, p. 13A.
- Ingersoll, R., & Smith, T. (2003, May). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 30-33.
- Kauchak, D. and Eggen, P. (2005). *Introduction to teaching: Becoming a professional*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Hall.



Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2002, August). *Unraveling the "teacher shortage" problem: Teacher retention is the key*. Washington, DC.

Schimmel, D., Stellman, L., & Fischer. (2011). *Teachers and the law*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Hall.

Thompson, G. (2007). *Up where we belong: Helping African American and Latino students rise in school and life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

*Steven W. Neill (sneill@emporia.edu) is currently teaching classroom management in both undergraduate and graduate programs at Emporia State University and is the Field Experience Coordinator for teacher preparation. He also teaches a graduate course in educational research and directs the scoring of the Teacher Work Sample. He received his BSED from Pittsburg State with a major in History, his MSED in Secondary Education from Wichita State and his ED.D. in Educational Administration from Wichita State. His previous experience includes nineteen years as a high school teacher at Hesston, Concordia, and Sumner Academy of Arts and Science and nine years as a building administrator at Burrton, Tonganoxiem and Douglass. He has written previously in the areas of bond issue campaigns and classroom management.*

*Paul Bland (pbland@emporia.edu) earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Fort Hays State University and was a teacher and coach for eleven years in Kansas public schools. He earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Kansas State University. He served as coordinator for secondary education at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky and Director of Teacher Education and Department Chair at Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas. Dr. Bland has been published in the areas of teacher education design and historical examination of the superintendency.*

*Edwin Church (echurch@emporia.edu) is a 1999 Ed.D. graduate from Wichita State University. He regularly presents on the topics of learning communities at the local, state and national level. He was the 1999 Kansas Rural Superintendent of the Year and received the 2003 Kansas Rural Schools Association Outstanding Practice Award. Dr. Church has published in the areas of high school dropouts and teacher perceptions of dropouts, adult learning, technology delivered instruction, alternative education programs, alternative school district pay systems, distance learning, learning organizations, and the survival of small schools and school districts.*

*Climetine Clayburn (cclaybur@emporia.edu) earned an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Kansas Wesleyan University. She received a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Kansas State University. Her Ed.D. degree was received from the University of Kansas. Dr. Clayburn joined the Emporia State University in 2007 after working in the public school arena as a teacher, principal and Equity Coordinator in Kansas, and as a supervisor in North Carolina. She teaches graduate level classes and supervises practicum students in the Kansas City metro area.*

*W. Michael Shimeall (wshimeal@emporia.edu) holds his baccalaureate degree in history from Sterling College and a masters degree in history from Emporia State University. His Ed.D. and Educational Specialist degrees are from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. In 2008 he was selected Region I Superintendent of the Year by the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the district was honored as a "Blue Ribbon School of Excellence" by the U.S. Department of Education. He is currently serving on the Nebraska Council for Teacher Education and is president of Southeast Nebraska Distant Learning Contract, a consortium of fifty-seven school districts and partners who work together to provide enhanced learning opportunities for their students.*