THE RESILIENCE CAPACITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Because teacher attrition has a negative influence on the educational system—especially in high-poverty schools, providing resources to build resilience in teachers is critical to their professional success and development. Identifying facilitators and barriers to physical education teacher resiliency are key components for informing the profession as how to best combat the issues of teacher attrition in high poverty schools. Though research has been conducted regarding the resilience capacity of general education teachers, studying the resilience capacity of physical educators is unique; therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to discover key-socializing agents associated with the resilience capacity of physical education teachers at varying career stages and the nature of the instructional settings in the high-poverty school contexts in which they teach. A sequence of methods, including formal and informal interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and observations of teaching, were combined to characterize the nature of physical education teacher resiliency during the academic year. During data analysis, quantitative data from the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 were used to triangulate emergent, qualitative themes. Results revealed the teachers identified, as being most resilient possessed individual dispositions that facilitated positive responses to barriers within the organizational environment that teachers identified as less resilient reacted negatively to. Additionally, students were considered to be influential members of organizational environment that influenced a teacher’s capacity for resilience. The teachers identified as being most resilient, worked in organizational environments that possessed a strong culture of unity among staff members. Proactive administrators that helped promote student, teacher, and community partnerships led these schools.
Dedication

For my wife and best friend, Katy Ellison

And my wonderful children, Jillian, Marie, and John “Mac”

“I was leaving the South to fling myself into the unknown…

I was taking a part of the South to transplant in alien soil,

To see if it could grow differently,

If it could drink of new and cool rains,

Bend in strange winds,

Respond to the warmth of other suns

And, perhaps, to bloom”

-Richard Wright
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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
Chapter 2: Review of Literature ............................................................................................... 7
Chapter 3: Method ..................................................................................................................... 54
Chapter 4: Manuscript One ....................................................................................................... 85
Chapter 5: Manuscript Two ..................................................................................................... 120
Chapter 6: Manuscript Three .................................................................................................. 164
Chapter 7: Limitations and Future Directions ........................................................................ 206
References .................................................................................................................................. 209
Figures and Tables ..................................................................................................................... 230
Appendix A: IRB Approval ........................................................................................................ 236
Appendix B: Teacher Informed Consent and Information Sheet .................................................. 237
Appendix C: Principal Informed Consent and Information Sheet ............................................... 240
Appendix D: Parent/Guardian Information Letter ...................................................................... 243
Appendix E: District Level Administrator Permission Email ...................................................... 244
Appendix F: Teacher Email Invitation for Participation in Interviews ........................................ 245
Appendix G: School-Level Administrator Permission Email .................................................... 246
Appendix H: Teacher Background Questionnaire ....................................................................... 247
Appendix I: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 Survey ...................................................... 249
Appendix J: Interview Guide for Teacher Participants ............................................................... 250
Appendix K: Interview Guide for Principal Participants ............................................................ 253
Chapter 1

Introduction

“To teach, and to teach to one’s best over time, requires resilience. Resilience is not an option. It is a necessary quality for all teachers” (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 156).

Teachers are no different than most people in that they seek joy over unhappiness in their personal and professional lives. Their visible emotions, however, may conceal their true feelings. This makes it nearly impossible for colleagues and school administrators, even those with great capacity for emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996), to understand and manage teachers’ true feelings towards their jobs. Nevertheless, school administrators may create environments that either support or impede teachers’ attitudes about their jobs by the organizational structures and cultures they establish in schools and through the relationships they promote. The short and long term consequences related to the emotional context of teachers’ lives in classrooms and schools may affect their self-efficacy, sense of professional identity, and ultimately their commitment and ability to teach their best (Day & Gu, 2010).

Increasingly, teaching has been rated as one of the most stressful professions (Kyriacou, 2000; Nash, 2005; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001), and, predictably, teacher attrition has increased substantially in U.S. public schools over the past three decades (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). The impact of this trend on student learning is pronounced, especially in high-poverty schools. Research is warranted that examines teachers working in high-poverty contexts and across different professional life phases. External and internal challenges teachers face and, any reduced sense of commitment experienced from working in high-poverty contexts is worthy of examination.
However, more importantly is studying the ways in which their resilience, commitment, self-efficacy and wellbeing, may be promoted, developed and sustained over time are all components that deserve further study (Day & Gu, 2010).

**Resilience Theory**

The concept of resiliency began in psychiatry and developmental psychology as a result of growing attention to personal characteristics or traits that helped children categorized as *being at risk of having negative life outcomes*, to adjust positively and flourish despite significant adversity (Block & Block, 1980; Howard et al., 1999; Waller, 2001). Resiliency is defined as the capacity to continue to “bounce back,” to recover strengths or spirits quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity (Day & Gu, 2010). Among teachers, it is closely linked to a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy, and motivation to teach, all of which are necessary in promoting student achievement. Resilience has become a construct that is relative, socially constructed and dynamically occurring within a social system of interrelationships (Howard et al., 1999; Luther et al., 2000; Rutter, 1990). The social constructed nature of teacher resilience recognizes, as the psychologically constructed does not, the significance of the combinations of personal, professional and situated factors on their capacities to maintain emotional wellbeing and professional commitment (Day & Gu, 2010).

As Higgins (1994) posits, the qualities of resilience can be learned or acquired and can be realized through providing relevant and practical protective factors, such as caring and attentive educational settings, high expectations, positive learning environments, an encouraging social community, and supportive peer relationships (Bernard, 1991, 1995; Glasser, 1965; Johnson et al., 1999; Oswald et al., 2003; Pence, 1998; Rutter et al., 1979; Wang, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1988). Ultimately, resilience is a product of personal and professional temperaments and values,
and is influenced by organizational and personal factors that are determined by individuals’
capacities to manage context-specific factors (Day & Gu, 2010).

The Need for Teacher Resiliency in Schools of Poverty

Most education professionals agree that the mission of schools is to provide students with
positive and productive learning experiences. The challenges children living in poverty face both
inside and outside of school prevent this mission from being easily attained. The teachers of
students living in poverty are oftentimes unprepared for the challenges that these students bring
to school. A teacher’s ability to deliver safe and effective instruction is minimized when s/he
fails to recognize the differences between students living in poverty and other students. Teachers
who understand the needs of students living in poverty and have an elevated capacity for
resilience are better able to stay the course in these settings. Staffing schools with teachers who
understand the issues related to poverty can encourage a supportive school culture that promotes
and sustains effective teaching.

Schools of Poverty

In 2012, almost 11.1 million school-aged children (5 to 17 years old) were in families
living in poverty. The percentage of school-aged children living in poverty in 2012 (21 percent)
was higher than it was two decades prior in 1990 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census
Bureau, 2012). Jensen (2009) defines poverty as a chronic and debilitating condition that results
from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul. Clearly,
poverty is complex and does not hold the same meaning for everyone as it involves a complex
range of risk factors that negatively affect people in a multitude of ways. The four primary risk
factors affecting families living in poverty are: emotional and social challenges; acute and
chronic stressors; cognitive delays, and health and safety issues (Jensen, 2009).
Studies of risk and resilience in children have shown that family income correlates significantly with children's academic success, especially during the preschool, kindergarten, and primary years (Van Ijzendoorn, Vereijken, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Riksen-Walraven, 2004). High tardy rates and truancy are common problems among poor students due to challenges such as transportation, health care, and family care. Inconsistent attendance sometimes suggests negative parental attitudes towards schooling. Parents who did poorly in school may have a negative attitude about their children’s schools and may even discourage their children from participating (Morrison-Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). Children living in poverty are also more likely than other children are to attend poorly maintained schools with less-qualified teachers (NCTAF, 2004). Low-achieving students commonly report a sense of isolation from their schools. They believe that no one cares and that their teachers do not like them, which may cause them to give up on academics (Mouton & Hawkins, 1996). Students raised in poverty are more likely to lack a caring, dependable adult in their lives, and it is often teachers to whom they look for that support (Jensen, 2009).

**Resiliency Through the Lens of Occupational Socialization Theory**

Occupational Socialization Theory (OST) describes the ways in which physical education recruits are recruited into the profession and socialized into the role of teacher (Richards, Templin, & Lux-Gaudreault, 2013). It attempts to explain the personal, contextual, and organizational factors that shape individuals’ alignments toward teaching through three phases: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. Occupational Socialization Theory has been labeled as dialectical because it accentuates teachers’ ability to determine what parts of their socialization they accept along with those parts they resist (Schempp & Graber, 1992).
The backgrounds and socialization experiences of teachers working in schools of poverty can have explicit implications for their ability to manage the demands and micro politics within the context in which they work (Grabner, 1998). Teachers who are unprepared for the structural and organizational aspects of teaching are more likely to experience burnout, role conflict, and ultimately leave the teaching profession (Liston et al., 2006). Guided by resiliency theory and occupational socialization theory, the purpose of this investigation is to discover key-socializing agents associated with the resilience capacity of physical education teachers at varying career stages and the nature of the instructional settings in the high-poverty school contexts in which they teach.

**Rationale and Purpose**

Minimal research has focused on the effective teachers who stay in such challenging settings and the personal, professional, and biographical influences that guide their decisions. The results of this investigation will inform key stakeholders (school administrators, PETE programs, and teachers) of the characteristics of resilient physical education teachers in high-poverty schools and the personal and professional strategies they utilize to enhance student learning and remain dedicated to their careers. Connor & Davidson (2003) suggest that resilience represents the personal qualities that enable one to succeed in the face of adversity. To retain committed and effective teachers in high-poverty schools, it is important to understand the characteristics that aid in building the resilience capacity of teachers. Therefore, the specific research questions that guided this study were:

1. What is the nature of instructional strategies, practices, and curricula in high-poverty settings?
2. How does the professional culture facilitate or hinder resiliency capacity?
   a. What extent do relationships with colleagues, students, and their communities enable or impede teachers’ resiliency?
   b. What strategies do teachers incorporate to aid in the resilience of internal and external organizational barriers?
   c. To what extent do early career socializing agents act as mechanisms for resilience?
3. How do resilient teachers attempt to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives?
4. What is the resilience capacity of these teachers, measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10)?
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

“Kids raised in poverty are more likely to lack—and need—a caring, dependable adult in their lives, and often it’s teachers to whom children look for that support” (Jensen, 2009, p. 11)

This chapter presents a review of literature that focuses on the nature of teaching in high-poverty schools, with specific consideration given to resilience theory and occupational socialization theory as the theoretical perspectives upon which this project is constructed. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the methods used to search the literature as well as a discussion of teacher resiliency, highlighting occupational socialization theory as one framework for understanding teacher socialization. Lastly, the review provides an overview of teacher career stages and the nature of teaching in high-poverty school settings as important factors that relate to teacher resiliency.

The Literature Review Methodology

The purpose of this study is to assess the resilience capacity of physical education teachers in high-poverty teaching contexts and the factors identified as significant to their levels of resilience. The review provides an overview of the theoretical framework including resilience theory, occupational socialization theory, teacher career phases, and the influence that poverty has on resilience capacity of teachers.

Different sources were found during the initial literature search. The conditions used to select books, articles, and reports for review included the following: materials related to resilience, teacher socialization, poverty, and professional life phases with a focus on both general education and physical education; major review articles; and materials describing resiliency, socialization theory, and poverty. Preference was given to recent publications when
possible, but consideration was also given to older, seminal pieces of literature that are considered foundational for this study. The following information represents the thoughts, findings and prevailing ideas as it relates to teacher resiliency in high-poverty school contexts.

**Resiliency Theory and Teaching**

Teaching is a demanding profession and as schools continue to change, the role of schoolteacher has become increasingly complicated. Undoubtedly, it is important for teachers to become resilient if they are to survive in the context of schools (Gu & Day, 2007). Resilience is the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003) and is seen as “the capacity to ‘bounce back,’ to recover strengths or spirit quickly, and efficiently in the face of adversity” (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 156). It is a multidimensional characteristic that varies with individuals’ personal contexts and biographical traits and is based on the life circumstances of the individual (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

**Conceptualization of Resilience**

Much discussion in the research literature relates to how resilience should be conceptualized, whether as a process that is developed over time or as an innate individual personality trait (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Yonezawa et al., 2011). Whereas initial studies of resilience examined the characteristics of resilient people (Masten & Gramezy, 1985), more recent analyses focus on the adaptive process that helps individuals develop resiliency (Sammons et al., 2007). This project classifies resilience as having innate qualities, but the degree to which individual resilience capacity is based, is partly due to the nature of the contexts in which teachers work, those with whom they interact, and their intrinsic motivation to overcome adversity (Gu & Day, 2007).
In their study, Yonezawa et al. (2011) defined resilience “as a dynamic construct that emerges within the interplay between individuals’ strengths and self-efficacy and social environments in which they live and work” (p. 916). They found that connections with external educator networks helped urban teachers become more caring, reflective, and resilient practitioners. Researcher’s utilized in-depth interviews to reveal how connections with educator networks such as the National Writing Project (NWP) helped teachers develop into resilient and reflective practitioners by providing them with technical expertise, cultural support, and leadership opportunities. Being associated with the NWP provided these teachers professional development opportunities that: (a) were interactive, (b) exposed teachers to a national network of colleagues, (c) provided opportunities for teachers to discuss challenges and triumphs that kept them “student-centered”, and (d) provided self-motivation to improve one’s teaching. They also found that the micro politics of teaching were impeding good pedagogy while participation in the NWP engaged and intellectually stimulated teachers. Through involvement with the NWP process, teachers’ developed a sense of resiliency that was not present prior to involvement with the NWP. Conceptualizing resilience as a process as opposed to an end product, allows it to be studied in relation to the ways in which teachers interact with one another and their environments (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). Therefore, certain environmental features related to the way in which teachers are socialized into and through the profession could have implications for the development of teacher resilience.

The view that certain elements of the work environment may influence or threaten teacher resilience has been supported in the literature (Benard, 2004; Tait, 2008). Resiliency can be reinforced in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial
relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). A beginning teacher named Norah in Pearce and Morrison’s (2011) narrative inquiry study was able to build resilience despite lack of access to a supportive and interactive environment with colleagues. The narrative was based on Norah’s: (a) reflections on personal identity, (b) her teaching philosophy, and (c) the accounts and interactions with significant others in her professional life (students, colleagues, and parents). Norah felt isolated and unable to develop into the teacher she wanted to be due to the fact that her colleagues did not share many of her views about teaching and student learning. By the end of her first year of teaching it became difficult for Norah to continue to learn and grow in a context of professional conflict. The extent to which she was able to come to terms with the dissonance between herself and her professional environment influenced her resilience capacity. Norah’s realization of her identity resulted in a sense of agency and contributed to her becoming resilient by strengthening her ability to cope with negative experiences like the isolation she experienced in her school.

Mansfield, Beltman, Price, and McConney (2012) investigated how graduating and early career teachers in Western Australia viewed teacher resilience. The study of the 259 (161 early career; 98 graduating) teachers was conducted in three phases and utilized open-ended surveys to measure constructs of resiliency (teacher efficacy, motivational goals for teaching, self-perceived competence, and satisfaction with the teacher preparation program). These researchers identified 23 aspects of resilience, with the most frequently reported description of a resilient teacher involving the capacity to “bounce back”. In phase two of the study, the 23 categories were examined based on Kumper’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience, which includes profession-related, social, emotional, and motivational factors as constructs that may boost or inhibit the development of teacher resilience. The dimensions that graduating teachers and early
career teachers identified most frequently as important to their thinking about a resilient teacher was the emotional (61%) followed by motivational (54%), professional related (42%), and social (34%). The multi-dimensional nature of resilience was evident in the data as eighty-percent of responses were coded in more than one of the four dimensions of resiliency. Differences between the groups were examined based upon the original 23 aspects of resiliency. The two aspects in which the between-group difference was greater than 10-percent were both in the emotional dimension. Approximately 14% more graduating teachers than early career teachers stated the ability to “bounce back” as a characteristic of resilient teachers; yet, early career teachers described the importance of taking care of self and maintaining a work-life balance 10% more frequently than graduating teachers. These results indicate that a teacher’s conception of resilience differs by career stage and experience.

The Importance of Resilience to Teacher Retention

The documentation of the stressors that teachers confront in their daily lives are well known, only recently, however, have researchers begun to inquire more about factors that help teachers succeed in the profession (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). Doney (2013), for example, examined the resilience building process in four novice secondary science teachers in order to understand how and why some novice science teachers remain in the profession, while others leave. Four females who had recently completed a secondary science teacher education program in the southeastern United States were participants in the two-year investigation. An interpretive case study approach utilized six interviews to gain an understanding of each individual and their experiences. Participants responded to a written prompt on resilience in nature that was used in the interviews. Additionally, participants completed relational maps for each year to gain an understanding of the changing stressors and protective factors in their lives.
Classroom observations were conducted each semester to provide an example of the participant’s contextual lives and each participant was shadowed for a full school day to obtain realistic job information. The information was then compiled and cross-case analysis was applied to the four-case studies to identify similarities and differences. The findings suggest that resilience is not an innate personality trait, but rather a process that is both internal and external resulting from positive adaptation to adversity. The interaction between adversities and protective factors occurs within the participants’ personal, professional, and contextual lives and includes the driving force behind the resilience building process. Individual skills that were identified include: (a) problem-solving, (b) maintaining a sense of purpose, (c) having a sense of humor, and (d) maintaining self-efficacy to counteract stress. The most frequently used protective factor was the relational support system (co-workers, family, friends, and others). To understand the resilience capacity of teacher’s it is important to discover the protective factors utilized in their personal and professional lives as a shift in research has begun, away from focusing on the aspects of teachers’ work considered stressful, and moving more toward the individual and contextual factors that help teachers survive and thrive in schools (Gu & Day, 2007).

**Managing teacher stress.** The study of teacher resiliency is emerging with some investigations highlighting the role of resilience in the management of teacher stress (Day & Gu, 2009, 2010; Le Cornu, 2009; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Nieto, 2003a). The work of Connor & Davidson (2003) has connected resilience to the interactive impact of personal, professional, and situated factors on teachers’ work and commitment. Nieto (2003a) reports that a higher level of resilience provides teachers with the positive energy needed to overcome stressful working conditions and hardship. This high level of resilience is an important variable in helping teachers overcome the challenges often associated with working in difficult contexts, such as low
socioeconomic environments (Yonezawa et al., 2011). In collaboration with seven highly respected and successful high school urban teachers in the Boston Public Schools, Nieto (2003b) found that the characteristics of love, hope, and engagement in an intellectual community increase a teachers’ ability to persevere despite the odds. In addition to responding to questions related to why they stayed in their jobs, this group of teachers read books together and wrote narratives, letters, and emails to one another. This community of practice allowed the teachers to articulate the characteristics that aided in their resiliency. Other often cited characteristics of resilient teachers include: Insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, morality, persistence, determination, optimism, and self-reflection (Gupton & Slick, 1996; Whatley, 1998; Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Quantifying resilience. The ability to quantify individuals’ resilience capacity is imperative to understanding the best way to strengthen teacher resiliency. By comparing an individuals’ resilience capacity to the variables present within his/her personal and organizational environment can provide valuable details as how best to enhance resiliency. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) is a commonly used instrument for measuring resilience in a variety of adult populations (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The original version of the CD-RISC consisted of 25-items that measured resilience in five interrelated domains: persistence/tenacity, self-efficacy, emotional and cognitive control under pressure, adaptability/ability to bounce back, control and meaning (Connor & Davidson, 2003). More recently other factor structures have been proposed in quantifying resilience, one of these structures, CD-RISC 10, includes ten of the original items and measures a single latent factor of resilience (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). The CD-RISC 10 is a unidimensional version of the CD-RISC and has been used with individuals from various occupations, including teachers.
(Wang, Shi, & Zhang, 2010). Both the CD-RISC and the CD-RISC 10 have demonstrated sound psychometric qualities in numerous investigations (Connor & Davidson, 2003; L. Wang et al., 2010). In the study by Wang et al. (2010) of 341 primary and secondary Chinese schoolteachers, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) and test-retest correlation was evaluated for the CD-RISC 10. The scale showed good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.91) and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.90$ for a two-week interval), these indicate that the measurement error of the scale is small. The current research utilizes the CD-RISC 10 as a measure of resilience.

**Teacher Resilience in Physical Education**

The literature on teacher resiliency in physical education is minimal, however, selected research on teacher’s careers in the field has highlighted the characteristics of the personal and professional supports required for physical education teachers to be resilient. For example in their work with teacher career cycles, Woods and Lynn (2001) used interviews with six physical education teachers (three current and three former teachers) and their teacher educators while also directly observing lessons to investigate factors that improved and inhibited teacher career development. In addition to the importance of outside support systems (families, professional network, etc.) to participant resiliency, those who were currently teaching possessed individual dispositions that kept them striving to get the most from their students and from their careers.

One participant, Everett, credited the influence from his teacher educators as motivation to do his best because he didn’t want to be “letting a lot of people down” (p. 224). The teachers also felt supported to some degree by their administrators; for example, Everett’s principal was a former physical education teacher and valued his contributions to students’ learning. These teachers also credited the importance of fair teaching loads and collegial relationships in their schools to their abilities in overcoming challenges. The teachers who left the profession did so
because they lacked the necessary organizational protective factors (administrative support, collegial relationships, individual dispositions, etc.,) that teachers like Everett experienced. Additionally, although Patsy and Everett were married to each other and credited this relationship to strong familial support system, another participant named Erika spoke of an illness to a family member as a critical factor in her leaving the profession. Ultimately, this study revealed that the teachers who were able to negotiate and overcome negative experiences in both their organizational and personal environments were more resilient and remained in the profession.

In her study examining how veteran physical education teachers negotiated their teacher lives within the cultural norms and expectations of the Irish educational system, O’Sullivan (2006) recruited thirty-four PETE graduates from an original cohort of sixty-six graduates who began teaching in Ireland in the mid-1970s. In an attempt to gain deeper understandings into how teachers negotiated their lives as teachers in Ireland, a twenty-six-item questionnaire addressing six aspects of the participants’ teaching careers were completed and individual interviews were conducted related to participant needs and interests, how they negotiated their teaching careers, and why they left teaching, if they had. From the interview data, themes of resiliency, respect, and resignation described how teachers negotiated schools and their teaching careers. An additional theme was related to the lack of professional development targeting teaching and learning in physical education.

The teachers in the O’Sullivan (2006) study were able to develop resilience although they endured teaching in poor facilities and a lack of professional development opportunities related to learning in physical education. The teachers were able to accomplish this in the following ways: (a) using space creatively, (b) revising content, such as moving away from traditional and
individual games, (c) distributing teacher burden by fundraising and co-opting teachers to help with extra tasks, and unique to Ireland, (d) utilizing career breaks that permit teachers to take up to five years off from their position and return to their jobs thereafter. Nine of the teachers in the study took advantage of this sabbatical opportunity. Over the years, teachers worked to create a more positive school climate for physical education at their schools. They built rapport with colleagues, were active in their communities, and advocated the importance of physical education to administration. Most of the teachers said the support of the principal and school had been critical and provided a kind of “protective shield” (p. 280), which motivated them to be creative with their curricula planning. For those who did not remain teaching physical education, the lack of facilities and support were credited for their leaving. For example, John who transitioned to teaching English left the gymnasium because of poor facilities and a lack of support for physical education. In addition to teaching English, he served as a counselor at his school, which provided him additional satisfaction while helping students in a different way than only teaching. Another teacher who moved from physical education to teach high-level science and chemistry credited the shift out of physical education to a lack of interest in teaching the material and suggested that many physical education teachers become stuck in a rut. An example of this was communicated by a teacher named Martin, who admitted that he had become unsatisfied with his job and, would go home most days frustrated and fed up with teaching and the amount of energy he had expended attempting to control students. To combat the lack of support experienced by these teachers, the researchers concluded that teachers in similar situations would benefit from participation in a community of practice for physical education teachers.
In her seminal work on the ways in which veteran urban secondary physical education teachers experience their careers, Henninger (2007) differentiated between: (a) lifers—those who were committed to teaching, expressed sustained enthusiasm for what they did, and believed they were making a difference; and (b) troupers—those who had lost their commitment and enthusiasm for teaching, and felt they were no longer making a difference. Data were collected for the nine participants from seven sources (demographic questionnaires, career timelines, Rainbow of Life Roles (Super, 1990), sentence stems, formal and informal interviews, and observations of teachers in their school environments). Although both groups were able to remain in teaching, the lifers demonstrated resilient qualities that enriched their careers and the troupers who became worn down in their contexts, lacked characteristics of resiliency. For example, lifers viewed passive administration support as positive affirmation of a job well done, whereas, troupers found administration as a barrier to teaching. When handling student behavior, troupers viewed students as barriers to teaching and held students to lower standards than lifers. The organizational factors affecting lifers and troupers were similar, however, the response to these factors was quite different. Henninger (2007) noted, “It was how teachers responded to their organizational contexts that had the most significant influence on differentiating between lifers and troupers” (p. 141).

In an attempt to study the organizational environment, Lux and McCullick (2011) analyzed how one exceptional elementary physical education teacher navigated her working environment. The selected participant, Grace, was a National Board Certified (NBC) elementary physical education teacher who had twenty-seven years of teaching experience in a close knit community in Georgia. Researchers spent eleven weeks collecting data three days each week, spending the entire day with Grace. Unstructured interviews intended to explore issues of
marginality, school structure, and Grace’s perspectives were used. Six structured interviews focused on teacher perceptions, personal biography and history, where physical education fits within school structure, and interactions with colleagues, administrators, and students.

Findings indicated that Grace used four strategies to navigate her working environment: (a) being one of their own—she nurtured close bonds with non-school personnel (parents, students, and the community), (b) acquiring and managing instructional currency—Grace actively pursued tools and resources to improve the quality of her program and strengthen the position of physical education within her school, (c) cultivating and nurturing kinship with a paraprofessional—she used this bond for comfort and reinforcement while also minimizing her workload, and (d) fostering diplomatic relations with colleagues—Grace aligned herself with individuals of similar perspectives and circumstances within her working environment. By creating a network of support, promoting interdisciplinary teaching, and deliberately placing herself into academic matters at her school, Grace took control over the organizational environment and without knowing, enacted key resilient promoting factors in her professional life. As important as studying early career teachers like Grace is to understanding resilience capacity, learning about the journeys of veteran teachers can provide a more holistic view of teacher resilience.

In their study of a single veteran teacher, Woods & Lynn (2014) examined Everett, who was part of a longitudinal project that examined six teachers’ journeys (Lynn & Woods, 2010; Woods & Earls, 1995; Woods & Lynn, 2001). They used Fessler and Christensen’s (1992) career cycle model to examine the career cycle movement of Everett and the environmental factors that both enhanced and constrained his career development. The researchers conducted eight formal interviews with Everett; formal interviews with his university teacher educators, student-teacher supervisor, principal, and spouse; informal interviews; field notes; and observations of his
teaching. Several factors highly influenced Everett's career movement, including: (a) his individual disposition, (b) the impact and continued influence of a professional preparation program, and (c) his school and community support. Everett was able to negotiate barriers to his personal and organizational environment that would prove difficult for many physical education teachers.

Fessler and Christensen (1992) refer to the competency-building stage of their model as being the period of time when teachers are working to improve their skills and abilities while being receptive to new ideas. Everett moved into this stage around year three of his career. He was exposed to several key resiliency factors during this time including: (a) highly supportive principal who promoted an atmosphere of trust, (b) good connections with colleagues, and (c) success as a softball coach. He also spent time mentoring student teachers and began a master’s degree program. Everett would eventually enter and experience what Fessler and Christensen (1992) refer to as the career frustration stage. In his twenty-second year of teaching the organizational environment began to diminish his positivity regarding teaching. He began experiencing a shift in the demographic of children who did not speak English as their first language and many children who lived in poverty. Everett contemplated seeking a new line of work but he felt trapped because of the number of years he had invested in the state retirement system. Demonstrating his resilience, Everett used the high-expectations he had for himself and his students to do the best for his students every day. Atypical to teachers in the career frustration stage, he pursued and achieved National Board Certification (NBC). Although his motives for achieving the certification were financial, he admitted that achieving NBC, “definitely gave me a sense of accomplishment” (p. 76). By creating a positive narrative to his professional life,
Everett was able to demonstrate resiliency and persevere despite experiencing many environmental barriers throughout his career.

**Summary of Teacher Resilience**

Teacher resilience can best be understood as the ability to bounce back and remain committed in the face of adversity. Although early conceptualizations viewed resilience as an innate, distinct characteristic, more recent research has viewed it as a process that is shaped through interactions with individuals and their environments. Many environmental factors influence teachers’ resilience and it is possible that school context and organizational support have important implications for understanding teachers’ ability to develop resilient capacities. Connor and Davidson (2003) created the CD-RISC, which has been adapted to the CD-RISC 10, and both instruments provide valid and reliable measures of resilience in a variety of occupations, including educators. The CD-RISC 10 will be used to measure resilience in the current research.

**Occupational Socialization Theory**

The ability to demonstrate resiliency during transitional periods in life can be difficult, and this is no different for those who train to become physical educators. Physical educators may experience a socialization process that influences their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and teaching philosophies (Hushmann & Napper-Owens, 2012). The process of becoming a teacher can be expressed as a developmental transition involving multiple identities as an emerging teacher self-interacts with an historical self. As a pre-service teacher encounters the emergence of multiple identities an opportunity arises that can lead to either a psychological developmental transformation or disequilibrium perceived as a threat (Brown, 2006). Britzmann (1986) suggests that disequilibrium is a “necessary condition of transformation, but the student teacher tends to deal with
disequilibrium as a threatening experience” (p. 452). Occupational socialization theory provides a lens through which to study the identity formation of a developing physical education teacher.

Veenman (1984) suggests when individuals enter the educational process they experience three phases of socialization: (a) recruitment socialization, (b) professional socialization, and (c) organizational socialization. Occupational socialization theory (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Templin & Schempp, 1989b) in the physical education literature explains “all of the kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers” (Lawson, 1986, p. 107). The theory examines socialization occurring across three phases: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. Socialization theory has been useful to examine the process of the struggle between a professional ideal and the individual natures and tendencies of becoming a teacher (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b). It has been particularly useful in examining the process as a negotiation between a social system and a person, in other words, as a dialectical process (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

**Acculturation Phase: Recruitment into the Physical Education Profession**

Acculturation refers to the recruitment phase of teacher socialization and is the 12-15 year period prior to entering college teacher education programs. During this phase individuals develop meanings for the knowledge, values, attitudes, beliefs, skills, and interests that are both particular to their school community and characteristic of teacher roles (Hutchinson, 1993). The recruitment phase of teacher socialization has primarily been examined from the teacher education students’ perspective after they have entered the professional phase of teacher socialization.

Lawson (1983a) synthesized the research findings of that time in an attempt to create a model of teacher socialization in physical education. He utilized four hypotheses in the development of his
model: (a) Students with extensive primary and secondary involvements in sport, physical activity, and physical education will be attracted to physical education; (b) students who actually enter physical education programs will display lower mean intellectual aptitudes and abilities than students in non-teaching majors; (c) students with extensive primary involvements and achievements in interschool sports will be attracted to coaching, not teaching, and (d) students with more primary and secondary involvements in physical activity and physical education than in sport will be attracted to teaching, not coaching. From this work, a relationship was established between the subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education.

In an attempt to obtain prospective teachers’ perspectives on teaching in physical education, Hutchinson (1993) studied ten high school students (all Caucasian; five girls and five boys) from three high schools who identified physical education as their chosen career path. She used reputational case selection to choose participants for the study based upon recommendations from physical educators, athletic coaches, and guidance counselors. The prospective teachers did not regard academic performance in school with the same enthusiasm as their sport participation. Sports experiences influenced the perspectives on teaching physical education. When participants were asked about alternative career choices, eight out of ten did not believe they had the ability to do work required of other occupations. Additionally, the prospective teachers’ perspectives were based on three common assumptions: (a) physical education accommodates athletics; (b) the goal of physical education is to have fun; and (c) everyone, if they try hard enough, can perform sport skills successfully. The typical physical education described by the participants was one in which students play; teachers referee, play, or do paperwork. Rarely mentioned was instruction based on learning motor skills, and all subscribed to multi-activity approach based upon their own personal experiences in physical education.
**Apprenticeship of observation.** Unlike professionals such as lawyers or doctors, student teachers begin their teacher education having spent many hours (as students) observing and evaluating what would be their chosen profession. Lortie (1975) coined the term the “apprenticeship of observation” to describe this period of teacher observation which amounts to thousands of hours. This apprenticeship, he argued, is largely responsible for many of the notions that pre-service teachers hold about teaching.

Dewar and Lawson (1984) refer to apprenticeship of observation in physical education as a period of time in which the subjective warrant is developed. The subjective warrant includes each person’s perceptions of the requirements for teacher education and for actual teaching in schools. The many hours spent in gymnasiums and on playing fields provide opportunities for a subjective warrant to be formed. Dewar and Lawson explain the significance of the subjective warrant as the profession’s otherwise invisible attempt to announce itself to new recruits through the years spent as students in physical education classrooms. They believe it provides an idea in which to link all of the factors that influence recruitment into the physical education profession. A strong subjective warrant for physical education means that the individuals believe they are prepared to meet the demands of the profession, however, those with a weak subjective warrant see physical education as a less likely option (Templin et al., 1982).

The pre-service teachers’ subjective warrants act as a screen to their beliefs about teaching. Pre-service teachers fail to realize that the aspects of teaching that they perceived as students represented only a partial view of the teacher's job. According to Joram and Gabrielle (1998), student teachers presume a causal relationship between their past teachers’ teaching methods and their own learning. With this in mind, professional planners as well as students need to assess continuously the previous experiences, as well as the attitudes and interests of recruits (Pooley, 1972).
Career contingency for coaching. Lawson (1983a) explained that teaching physical education is often not the primary motive of recruits entering a PETE program. For example, a four month study of teacher role identity in six pre-service physical educators conducted by Solomon, Worthy, Lee, and Carter (1990) utilized biographical-data questionnaires as well as formal and informal interviews as the primary data sources. Secondary data sources consisted of reflective journals, videotaped lessons, and interviews with cooperating teachers. They used frequency counts to determine the strength of each student teacher’s role identity (TRI), and used secondary data sources to validate negative and supporting cases of the TRI assessment and interactive analysis that were drawn from the primary data. They defined teacher role identity (TRI) as the perception of oneself in the role of the teacher; a personal perception based on biography that informs teacher thinking and guides teacher behavior. The authors used the following indicators to determine the strength and clarity of the teacher role identity image: (a) the ability to envision oneself in the teaching role and project a positive and definitive characterization of interactive teaching, (b) the confidence in sufficiency of preparation and readiness for teaching, and (c) the possession of personal attributes considered requisite to ideal teachers.

The results of the biographical-data questionnaire in the Solomon et al. (1990) study determined that five of the six participants identified high school coaches, teachers, and certain athletic experiences as being the most influential in their decision to become a teacher. When asked to describe the ideal teacher, all participants expressed the view that a physical education teacher should possess a level of skill and fitness to effectively explain and demonstrate a variety of sport and fitness activities. The participants believed that personal characteristics were more important than skill, knowledge and organization, and planning skills. This finding led the authors to suggest that these student teachers believe that teachers are born not made. In this
study common themes emerged about biography and experience as they relate to TRI. Three student teachers with well-defined teacher role identities began their student teaching experiences with high levels of confidence that were initially shaken by the reality of the school setting. The study showed student teachers with well-defined TRIs, although they experienced reality shock initially, were able to negotiate conflict by relying on their own abilities and problem solving strategies. The three student teachers with less defined TRIs tended to emulate their cooperating teachers, adopting their styles and using their class rules and routines. They attributed success they experienced to the cooperating teacher rather than to their own abilities. One participant Sue, had a strong teacher role identity, her primary goal in life was to coach. The orientation towards coaching that Sue demonstrated supports the facet of Lawson’s (1983a) model that teaching physical education is viewed as a contingency made necessary by her desire to coach.

In their study, Solomon et al. (1990) acknowledged that from an interactive perspective, the results are limited by the degree to which they can be generalized because of the uniqueness of each case. The findings of the study are consistent with the apprenticeship of observation outlined by Lortie (1975) and Lawson (1983a, 1983b) because the hours students spend in physical education classes had a great influence on the participants’ definitions of teacher role identity and their beliefs about what teachers should be and do. Teaching and coaching orientations most likely exist in a range from highly teaching oriented to highly coaching oriented (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008; Richards et al., 2014). According to Richards, Templin, and Graber (2014), individuals with a dominant coaching orientation who enter PETE programs that emphasize teaching over coaching will likely resist the socialization efforts during the professional socialization phase. This supports the conception that teacher education is a weak form of socialization among coaching-oriented recruits (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004).
Professional Socialization Phase

Dewar and Lawson (1984) suggest it is against the subjective warrant that each pre-service teacher tests aspirations, presumed competencies, and characteristics. Formed on the basis of personal biography, the effects of significant others, societal influences, and direct experiences in schools, the subjective warrant is as important to the understanding of identity-formation as it is to a career choice. Matanin and Collier (2003) explored the beliefs of three pre-service teachers as they evolved through a four-year teacher preparation program. Methods of data collection included formal interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and document analysis of reflective writings.

The results indicated that participants adapted program messages into their beliefs about teaching physical education relative to elementary content, teaching effectiveness, and the importance of planning. Participants were less likely to assimilate program messages about classroom management and the purpose of physical education due to the impact of their personal biographies. Participants rejected the program philosophy on assessment of student learning, instead, emphasizing the importance of effort and participation in assessment. Although all three participants’ initial views on classroom management differed, as they progressed through the PETE program they added technical pedagogical terms related to effective teaching to their beliefs, but the beliefs remained grounded in their personal experiences from their biographical experiences.

An interesting finding emerged regarding elementary school physical education experiences of the participants and the assimilation of the program beliefs. The participants came into the PETE program with no intense conception of (how or what?) should be taught in an elementary program. Participants exited the program demonstrating a sophisticated perspective of their instructional effectiveness as teachers by using pedagogical terms based on time efficiency and quality of skill demonstrations. In contrast, all three participants rejected the secondary content promoted in the
PETE program (Sport Education and Tactical Approach) in favor of their preferences of multi-activity and fitness-based models. These findings reinforce a previous finding that recruits favor a traditional approach to secondary curriculum (Hutchinson, 1993).

Background factors such as their own secondary physical education programs and field experiences, in which there was no distinct curricular model in place, apparently influenced their preferences concerning the secondary curriculum (Matanin & Collier, 2003). One participant, Mark, was a scholarship athlete at his University. He was influenced to become a physical educator by his high school football coach and by the positive impact that his high school physical education program had on him. He had a desire to coach as well as teach, but determined early on that his primary focus would be on becoming a teacher. This belief is inconsistent with Lawson’s (1983a) assertion that students with extensive primary involvements and achievements in interschool sports will be attracted to coaching, not teaching. Mark found the long hours necessary to be a coach a drawback as he progressed through his time at the university. The findings from this study support the beliefs of Dewar and Lawson (1984) and Lortie (1975) that participants’ K-12 school experiences as well as their lived experiences play a powerful role in the formation of their beliefs about teaching physical education.

Organizational Socialization Phase

Organizational socialization as viewed from the broad perspective introduced by Van Mannen and Schein (1979), has provided a lens for physical education researchers to view workplace socialization. Their view of organizational socialization is one in which the teacher is taught and learns the ropes of the organization. Important to this perspective that Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have provided is the idea that the socialization process is ongoing and shapes the teachers’ experience throughout their career. Regarding physical education teacher socialization,
Lawson (1983a) posited that, when teachers enter the workplace they take on more of a custodial approach to teaching that reflects the knowledge and behaviors that the school setting values.

**Socializing agents and the organizational context.** The influence of socializing agents on teacher’s daily lives in understanding their capacity to be resilient is valuable and can assist in understanding why teachers adopt particular approaches to teaching (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Important to the socialization process and resiliency capacity of teachers; colleagues, principals, and students operate as the main socializing agents in the organizational socialization phase.

Colleagues can be influential in the socialization of individuals within an organization (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1983). The *institutional press* is how teachers’ are taught about a schools’ culture and the knowledge and behaviors accepted by veteran colleagues in the specific context. Due to its emphasis on preserving the status quo in the school setting, the institutional press often contradicts professional socialization (Lawson, 1983a). Nevertheless, Templin et al. (2011) reinforce the dialectical nature of socialization and focus upon teacher agency when considering the institutional press. Teachers are not passively socialized within the institutional press, in fact, some teachers assert their sense of agency both overtly and covertly to alter the status quo of the organization. Yet, the institutional press is a strong force in schools and should not be ignored.

Physical educators have reported feeling pressured by colleagues to teach in ways that contradict their adopted beliefs (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Curtner-Smith et al., 2008; Graber, 1998). This can be intensified when teachers feel they are not able to cultivate effective relationships with their colleagues (Eldar et al., 2003).

In addition to colleagues, school principals as socializing agents has been highlighted in the literature (Watkins, 2005). When physical education teachers perceive they are supported from principals, the relationship is viewed as favorable (Eldar et al., 2003; Richards & Templin, 2011).
In contrast, when principals are viewed as non-supportive, teachers may become frustrated and their feelings of isolation may increase (Solmon et al., 1993). Williams (2003) found that long-term exemplary teachers credited administrators with creating a balance of challenge and support for doing their jobs, while providing opportunities for collaboration with their colleagues.

Perhaps the most central socializing agents are students, since teachers spend most of their time interacting with them each day (Lortie, 1975). In physical education this influence is important because research indicates that teachers make changes or concessions in their expectations and curricular goals in an attempt to align with student’s expectations (Curtner-Smith, 1997; Solomon et al., 1993). Educators view parents as important resources to student development, especially when they are supportive. O’Sullivan (1989) described that many physical education teachers viewed parents as unwilling to get involved or generally unsupportive of physical education. Unfortunately, in low-socioeconomic contexts this lack of support can be even more pronounced.

**Reality shock and the washout effect.** Reality shock, as defined by Veenman (1984), is “the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life” (p. 143). Reality shock can come in many forms, but most commonly a beginning teacher is confronted with inadequate facilities and equipment, severe behavioral issues, management struggles, and difficulties navigating the political system of school (Hushman & Napper-Owens, 2012). It arises from unrealistic expectations of beginning teachers combined with the general difficulties associated with teaching (O'Sullivan, 1989). Lawson (1989) distinguished that reality shock may also be related to the washout effect as it is strongest when beginning teachers become trapped between the contradictions of the practices promoted by teacher education programs and the accepted practices in the school context.
When reality shock is high, teachers are more likely to leave the profession; but research suggests that both reality shock and teacher attrition can be reduced through induction and mentoring programs (Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Also, reality shock is likely to be less severe when the setting in which beginning physical education teachers are inducted is similar to their personal backgrounds and conserve the values and messages associated with preservice training (Macdonald, 1995; Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995).

Associated with the idea of reality shock is the concept of the washout effect (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Reality shock leads to the abandonment of what beginning physical education teachers learned during teacher education. However, it is not an all or nothing process, some values may be abandoned; others may remain when ideas from teacher education programs are supported in schools. In other terms, washout is the incongruence of messages and values of the school culture where one is inducted with those that the teacher brings from their previous education-training program. When this occurs, beginning teachers can experience significant pressure to abandon the knowledge and skills formed during teacher training and acquire a more custodial orientation supported by the school. The result being “pedagogical practices and perspectives learned during PETE which are incompatible with a school’s culture are often washed out” by the realities of school life (Curtner-Smith, 2001, p. 82).

Research has revealed that the washout effect is not an all or nothing process and that certain parts of teacher training may be lost to the workplace while others are supported (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009; Graber, 1998; Macdonald, 1995). Explicitly, some scholars proposed that a combination of workplace, political and economic, situational, and personal-social factors determine the extent to which washout will occur. Research conducted by Richards and Templin (2011) found
that a supportive school environment that connected a beginning teacher with content she learned during professional socialization helped to prevent washout.

**Teacher Professional Life Phases**

Important to the process of teacher socialization is an understanding of how teachers can progress through the different professional life phases. The movement in and out of the professional life phases provides an important stimulus in teachers’ work lives and effectiveness (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kingston, & Gu, 2007). As Day et al. (2007) suggest, a teachers’ experience in schools is largely shaped by his/her response to both positive and challenging life events. They found that the differences in teachers’ perceived effectiveness can be understood by examining teachers and groups of teachers, within and between phases of their professional lives.

The socializing influences of the work context and teachers’ sense of agency are important when conceptualizing teachers’ professional life phases (Templin & Schempp, 1989b). Organizational contexts are significant in the teacher’s ability to develop. Supportive environments boost teachers as they work toward developing and implementing best practices, while unsupportive contexts make it challenging for teachers to apply the type of instruction they consider to be best for their students (Richards, Templin, & Gaudreault, 2013). Although the influence of socializing agents is substantial, it is important not to overlook teachers’ sense of agency in navigating their careers (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Additionally, understanding the dialectical relationship between agent and agency is imperative as an individual’s definition of their teacher self continuously changes over one’s career as some teachers resist the status quo while others uphold the expectations of colleagues and administrators regardless if the agree with them or not.

**Career stages.** Fessler and Christensen (1992) established a non-linear model of teachers’ career phases that outlines eight career stages through which teachers can move through
dynamically in response to factors in the personal and organizational environment. The preservice stage is the first stage of the model, and is considered the time that individuals spend learning to become teachers during formal teacher preparation. Next, during the induction stage teachers are hired into a position teaching in schools and begin the process of being socialized or inducted into the context in which they are working. In this stage it can take almost six years for teachers to become acclimated to the context and culture of the organization (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). Teachers might not pass through the entire eight career stages and may experience certain stages multiple times. In addition to the preservice and induction stages, the model includes the following stages: (a) competency building - the teacher is motivated to improve his/her teaching skills and abilities and pursue new teaching methods, (b) enthusiastic and growing - teacher has developed a high level of professional competence and is continuing to learn and grow, (c) career frustration—the teacher begins to question their career and becomes discouraged with teaching, (d) career stability – teacher fulfills the responsibilities associated with his/her job, but does not go beyond expectations, (e) career wind-down – teacher is preparing to retire or transition out of the profession, and (f) career exit – teacherretires or leaves the profession (Fessler & Christensen, 1992).

Teachers do not necessarily progress through phases linearly; they can move in and out of various career phases depending upon the personal and organizational factors that impact their life experiences (Burke et al., 1987; Woods & Lynn, 2014). For example, cumulative life experiences, critical incidents, and family are personal environmental factors that can influence a teacher’s career path. While management style, societal expectations, and public trust are examples of occurrences in the organizational environment. Nurturing and supportive incidents in teachers’ personal and professional lives can assist them in working toward more positive and supportive career progressions, while negative incidents can cause unfavorable turns in their career path.
(Fessler & Christensen, 1992). When viewed in these terms, the teacher career cycle model is a fluid, cyclical representation of teachers’ movement through the career phases.

Similar to the career cycle model proposed by Fessler and Christensen (1992), Day and colleagues (2007) presented a way in which to conceptualize teachers’ professional life phases. Specifically, they established that a teacher’s perceived effectiveness could be understood by studying teachers within and between six specific phases of their professional lives (0-3; 4-7; 8-15; 16-23; 24-30; 31+ years of teaching). A person’s workplace and personal life experiences interact in a non-linear way to create a variation in experience across life phases (Day & Gu, 2010; Day et al., 2007). This means that beginning teachers can experience comparable challenges to those of a mid-career or late-career teacher and vice versa. Incorporating the professional life phase model is important to this research, as it will help to reference the unpredictability associated with teaching in high-poverty contexts throughout teachers’ careers.

**Understanding Poverty**

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) defines the 2013 federal poverty threshold (FPT) as: $23,624 for a family of four with two children; $18,751 for a family of three with one child; and $16,057 for a family of two with one child (Jiang, Ekono, & Skinner, 2015). Research suggests that to meet their basic needs, families on average need an income equal to about two times the federal poverty threshold (Cauthen & Fass, 2008). According to the NCCP report, children under 18 years represent 23 percent of the population, but they encompass 33 percent of all people in poverty. Among all children, 44 percent live in low-income families and nearly 22 percent live in poor families. The condition of poverty is highly complex, and being a child in low-income is dependent upon several demographic, socio-economic, and geographic characteristics of children.
and their parents (Jiang et al., 2015). The circumstances of poverty are not left at home when
children attend school, making the task of educating children living in poverty challenging.

**The Culture of Poverty**

Nearly one in five children under the age of 18 live in poverty (Addy & Wright, 2012), and
according to the National Center for Children in Poverty report, the number of children living in
deep poverty (living 50% below the poverty line) is growing more rapidly than in past decades
(Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2010). This means that in the US almost 16 million young people
potentially come to school everyday less prepared to learn than ever before. Poverty can have a
lasting effect on the way in which children experience school (Milner, 2013a). Students from low-
income households are limited in access to medical care, possibly leading to issues with vision,
dental, hearing, and other serious conditions (like asthma) to be left untreated (Ullucci & Howard,
2015). These untreated conditions certainly influence students’ abilities to perform and achieve
academically.

Children growing up in disadvantaged communities are also more likely to be supported by
parents who are unemployed or who work low-wage jobs, leading to instability and often moving
from place to place seeking employment or lower rent payments. Additionally, with the awareness
that over a million students in the United States are homeless (National Center for Homeless
Education, 2012), these circumstances have the potential to influence the continuity of educational
opportunities available for children. The fact that communities of poverty are oftentimes riddled by
violence, crime, and drugs influences the social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of children
living in these communities. Copious research suggests that students from these communities are
more likely to have decreased educational outcomes, increased problems with social and emotional
development, and more challenges related to academic success (Barajas, Philipsen, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Lin & Harris, 2009; Noguera, 2010).

**The myths of being poor.** Being poor is not caused by a single element and is not one-dimensional in nature; however, there are several mythologies that claim otherwise. For example, in their paper describing the issues with poverty and the influences they have on schooling, Ullucci and Howard (2015) refer to the four most common myths regarding those who live in poverty: (a) anyone can pull themselves out of poverty (The Bootstraps Myth), (b) those who are in poverty are lazy, “welfare queens,” and/or irresponsible (The Individual Faults Myth), (c) poor children are not particularly smart or school-ready (The Educability Myth), and (d) people in poverty share a common “culture” (The Culture of Poverty Myth). These myths can influence teachers’ beliefs systems about the children they teach and their families who live in poverty. Several actualities can assist in debunking these myths regarding poverty in the United States.

As Berliner (2006) posits, the United States leads the world in failing to assist people in exiting poverty. Although wanting to rely on the “anyone-can-lift-themselves-up” attitude, generations of people have not been able to overcome poverty. Many factors such as a lack of access to adequate health care, low-wage jobs, neighborhood segregation, poor child care, and many other issues work together to impede the changes of people getting out of poverty (Anyon, 2005). And according to Baptist and Rehman (2011), the majority of poor people in the United States are not unemployed; they are actually poorly paid, underemployed, or working part-time. This means that the issue is not that people living in poverty are lazy but instead have a low-wage and a too-few-jobs issue (Anyon, 2005). The belief system that surrounds poverty casting those living in poverty as a large group that acts, thinks, speaks, and behaves similarly provides a distorted view of poverty and overlooks those who are resilient in the face of poverty (Ullucci & Howard, 2015).
**The impact of poverty on students’ lives.** Poverty is multi-dimensional and impacts students’ lives more deeply than simply the issues surrounding clothing, food, and housing (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Figure 2 shows an extensive view of ways in which students’ lives are impacted by poverty. The components of environmental, health, child labor, and community violence were taken from Books (2004), and Ullucci and Howard (2015) incorporated the additional components of the model. Providing detail on the realities of children living in poverty and how their struggles are not easily overcome has the potential to provide educators an understanding to better serve these students (Ullucci & Howard, 2015).

**Schools’ role in the culture of poverty.** Schools and teachers can further impair students’ feelings of deficiency by the assignments and experiences they provide. Haberman (1991) defined this further impairment as the “pedagogy of poverty”. The lowered expectations that are common in many schools of poverty are immersed in the belief that students are unable to learn. However, when students have teachers who have rich content knowledge and provide an engaging curriculum that brings stimulating instructional opportunities to students, they have a much better chance at success (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Although school and exposure to talented teachers can assist in providing greater educational opportunities to these students, it is only a small piece to a larger poverty puzzle and schools should not be expected to eliminate poverty on their own (Neumann, 2009). What is possible for schools to accomplish is providing access to meaningful and stimulating educational opportunities for students, while also educating teachers and school employees on the realities and the consequences poverty brings to their schools and communities.
The Challenges of Teacher Turnover in High-Poverty Schools

One of the major challenges with which school districts are tasked is retaining qualified teachers. Modest rates of turnover can have a positive effect on schools if those teachers who leave the field have been evaluated as ineffective. Chronic turnover, however, inflicts instructional, financial, and organizational costs that destabilize the learning environment (Simon & Johnson, 2015). In historically underserved communities, the problems caused by turnover impact the learning environment in much more significant ways (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Hemphill & Nauer, 2009). The National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007) estimated that nationally, $7.34 billion are spent each year replacing teachers. They found that on average in urban districts, individual schools spend $70,000 annually on costs associated with turnover. In contrast, non-urban schools spend $33,000 on average. These figures do not take into consideration the secondary costs associated with teacher turnover such as the problem created by employing a disproportionately large number of novice teachers. Researchers interested in the reasons that teachers leave their schools initially studied the relationship between teacher attrition and either the demographics of students or the individual characteristics of teachers (Simon & Johnson, 2015). While it is important to understand which teachers leave and which schools they depart, these studies do not fully explain the patterns and persistence of the problem of turnover in high-poverty schools.

Teachers’ personal characteristics. Teachers who are the most effective are most likely to leave the schools that need them the most (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2009).
This is of great importance because teachers influence students’ learning more than any other school-based factor (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Goldhaber and Hansen, (2009) found that teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are more likely to leave high-minority schools than those teachers who failed to obtain the certification. Generally, the least experienced teachers are most likely to leave and are then replaced by even less experienced teachers (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2005). This cycle of turnover indicates that the likelihood of low-income children being taught by untested teachers is higher than ever before (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012; Rice, 2013).

Research indicates that African-American and Latino teachers are more likely to stay in teaching and at schools that serve students with similar racial and socioeconomic backgrounds (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Hanushek et al., 2004; Marinell & Coca, 2013). This finding is valuable because data from Tennessee’s Project STAR research shows significant benefits in math and reading achievement for students who are taught by teachers of the same race (Dee, 2004; Dee, 2005). This suggests the importance of teachers’ personal characteristics in their decisions about where they teach and whether they leave.

**Student demographics.** In their paper investigating the factors that influence the probabilities that teachers switch schools or exit completely, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that when teachers transfer, they “seek out schools with fewer academically and economically disadvantaged students” (p. 340). They suggest that as teachers in difficult urban districts gain experience, they leave. This finding aligns with other research on attrition in schools of poverty (Raymond & Fletcher, 2002; Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001). Utilizing matched student/teacher panel data from Texas public elementary schools to better understand the ways in
which salary and other factors affect teacher transitions, Hanushek et al. (2004) found that the reasons teachers moved were based more on student race and achievement than on salary discrepancies. They found that the money needed to offset turnover effects of student characteristics “would be extraordinarily large,” and estimated the average salary differential to counter this trend would be 25%-40% above current pay rates. The authors suggest that, ultimately, if teachers prefer to work with a different type of student, policy can do little to change this. In similar work, Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner (2007) discovered that the “proportion of students that [sic] are black has strong relationships to virtually all of the exit reasons” (p. 158). They reported that teachers are more likely to leave high-poverty, high-minority schools because they potentially do not enjoy the organizational environment of these settings.

Organizational context. Recently, research on teacher attrition from high-poverty schools has shifted away from a focus on student or teacher demographics toward the challenges in schools that are unrelated to such demographics. In their statewide survey of working conditions in Massachusetts, Johnson, Kraft, & Papay (2012) focused on problems within the school organization and believe; “teachers who leave high-poverty, high-minority schools reject the dysfunctional contexts in which they work, rather than the students they teach” (p. 4). Their sample of 25,135 consisted of classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists. They suggest that to provide effective teachers for all students, the schools that students attend must become places that support effective teaching and learning in all classrooms. Using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Ingersoll (2001) controlled for school location, school level, and demographic characteristics of teachers and students he found that lack of administrative support, autonomous teacher decision-making, low salary, and aspects of school culture were associated with
higher rates of teacher turnover. In another study, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) in a longitudinal interview study of 50 new teachers in Massachusetts, found that new teachers who were provided with: opportunities for growth, appropriate teaching assignments, adequate resources, supportive collegial interactions, and school-wide structured support for student learning were more likely to remain in the profession compared to those teachers who did not receive similar supports.

Researchers at the Consortium on Chicago School Research (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009) found that in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), approximately 20% of schools lose over 30% of their staff annually. Almost all students in these schools are low-income Black or Latino. To understand the cause of this turnover, Allensworth et al. (2009) linked teachers’ personnel records with data from the teachers’ schools. They found that factors affecting the school climate and organization explained over 75% of the difference in teacher stability rates between elementary schools and almost all the variation amongst high schools. Among the organizational factors, collegial and trusting working relationships were most influential. Additionally, the quality of the principal also proved to be important, as stability rates were higher when teachers reported having high levels of influence over school decisions, “a strong instructional leader” as principal, and coherent instructional programming (Allensworth et al., 2009, p. 26). Data from North Carolina’s Teacher Working Conditions Survey found that teachers’ reports about their working conditions were highly predictive of their intentions to leave their schools, even when student race and socioeconomic status was controlled for (Ladd, 2011). The author found that the central factor predicting both intended and actual school turnover was teachers’ perceptions of school leadership. In schools where teachers viewed their principals positively, turnover was less than schools where teachers did not view their principals positively.
These studies shift the importance of the discussion of teacher turnover away from student or teacher characteristics and towards viewing the school as a workplace that can affect teacher decisions about whether to stay or leave.

**Strong Organizational Environments: A Must-Have in High-Poverty Schools**

Teacher satisfaction and intended career decisions are based on a combination of workplace factors—quality of principal leadership, collegial relationships, and aspects of the school culture. It is essential for practitioners and policy makers to understand these factors more clearly to improve teacher-working conditions and minimize turnover.

**Administrative support.** As leaders, principals are responsible for establishing strong work environments. They are accountable for hiring skilled teachers and support staff that is committed to a common vision and mission for the school (Johnson, 2003). Principals establish an atmosphere of trust and support when they shelter teachers from the external demands and mandates that distract teachers from classroom responsibilities (Achinstein et al., 2010; Richards & Templin, 2011). The relationships that principals establish with parents, students, and community organizations have the chance to maximize students’ opportunities to learn (Spillane et al., 2003; Warren, 2005).

According to Grissom and Loeb (2011), principals may be even more significant in high-poverty schools, which can be problematic as inexperienced principals lead many high-poverty schools. The primary data source in this study was an online survey completed by 314 principals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). The survey asked principals to rate their own effectiveness at conducting common job tasks in their current school. At the same time, they administered a similar survey to assistant principals ($N = 585$).
Finally, they surveyed M-DCPS teachers ($N = 15,842$) on the question of: “To what extent are you generally satisfied with being a teacher in this school?” The possible answers were: dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, and very satisfied. The descriptive analyses of teachers’ work environments, which included ratings of the effectiveness of the principal, revealed that principal ratings were generally lower in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students. Results from regression analysis demonstrated that principal effectiveness was associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher would leave the school within a year. These findings indicate that an effective principal could offset the issues of turnover in high-poverty schools.

In support of this concept, Simon and Johnson (2015) reviewed six studies that analyzed turnover as a function of school context rather than as a function of student demographics. They recommend that principals with strong organizational management skills be encouraged to work in high-poverty schools to address the income-achievement gaps. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that principals’ organizational management skills were important to teacher retention when interviewing new teachers in their study. One teacher, for example, had left the classroom altogether because of a principal whose leadership skills caused the school to “unravel” (p. 596). This is explained well by Bryk et al. (2010) as they stated that poor administrative management “undermines teachers’ classroom work by eating away the amount of effective instructional time” (p. 61). In schools that retain teachers, principals typically expect their teachers to be lifelong learners and are committed to supporting the learning process to ensure teachers are continually improving (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Principals in high-poverty schools who deliberately develop and maintain a professional culture that allows teachers to be an integral part of the change process
will be more likely to retain teachers than those principals who do not engage teachers as partners and criticize and maintain control over teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Bryk et al., 2010).

Collegial support. In the past, Lortie (1975) depicted teachers as appreciating to teach in isolation and away from the scrutiny of others. However, research now reports a distinct relationship between teachers’ experiences with their colleagues and their commitment to teaching at their schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2014). Principals can facilitate mutual relationships, but productive partnerships require investment from the teachers themselves (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Three areas have been identified by researchers as important factors for productive work with colleagues (Simon & Johnson, 2015). First, an inclusive environment characterized by respect and trust among colleagues. Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) work on school-based relationships revealed that trust was a condition for building learning communities where teachers count on one another. The second area was formal structures that foster collaboration. Johnson and colleagues (2014) interviewed ninety-five teachers in six urban schools and found that teachers valued collaboration when it was congruent with their individual needs as a teacher and with the larger agenda for improving the program or school. And finally, a shared mission among teachers is warranted. In high-poverty schools teachers oftentimes state that they have chosen to teach in these contexts because they are motivated to help low-income, minority students excel (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2014).

School culture. The quality of experiences in teachers’ work lives contributes to the overall sense of what matters in the school. Researchers have not agreed on a definition of school culture. For example, Johnson et al. (2012) used school culture as a way to predict teacher satisfaction and turnover. In their work, school culture referred to “the extent to which the school environment is characterized by mutual trust, respect, openness, and commitment to student achievement” (p. 14).
This current project will concentrate on school culture as described by Simon and Johnson (2015) who focused on factors that involve teachers’ interactions with students and parents because these interactions oftentimes surface as agents of teacher turnover in high-poverty schools.

**Student discipline in high-poverty schools.** Teachers leave schools where discipline prevents them from delivering meaningful instruction (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Ladd, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013). In high-poverty schools, especially those that serve large portions of minority students—reports of student discipline issues are more common than at wealthier schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Teachers have aspirations to work in schools that have a strong school-wide norm for behavior and consistent discipline policies (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kraft et al., 2015).

School employees who work in high-poverty contexts must recognize that students come to school with a narrower range of appropriate emotional responses than other students. A child who lives in a stressful home environment will likely channel that stress into disruptive behavior at school (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These emotional and social deficits are oftentimes misinterpreted as a lack of respect for teachers (Jensen, 2009). Children raised in poverty are more likely to demonstrate the following behaviors in school: “acting-out” behaviors, impatience and impulsivity, gaps in politeness and social graces, limited range of behavioral responses, inappropriate emotional responses, and less empathy for others’ misfortunes (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). Teachers who are unaccustomed to working with children raised in poverty will likely become surprised and discouraged by these behaviors.

It is important that teachers change their mindset when addressing inappropriate behavior such as impulsivity, inappropriate language, and disrespect. Until stronger social and emotional skills are taught and modeled, and the school culture shifts away from accepting these behaviors,
it will be nearly impossible to change students’ responses (Jensen, 2009). According to Jensen (2009), other than the six-hardwired emotions of joy, anger, surprise, disgust, sadness, and fear, all other emotions must be taught. When students lack these learned responses, interactions with teachers who are not aware of these facts can become problematic. To teach students the non-hardwired emotions, Jensen (2009) suggests “discipline through positive relationships, not by exerting power or authority. Avoid such negative directives as “Don’t be a wise-guy!” or “Sit down immediately!” Instead say, “We’ve got lots to do in class today. When you’re ready to learn, please have a seat.” (p. 21). It is imperative that teachers formally and informally incorporate classroom strategies that build relationships and strengthen social skills in class.

Parental involvement. Teachers’ satisfaction with their working conditions can be dependent upon the ongoing relationships they establish with parents (Allensworth et al., 2009). Parents can influence teachers’ commitment to their school and predict teacher turnover (Allensworth et al., 2009; Henkin & Holliman, 2009). Teachers and parents working together to jointly solve problems of student behavior are more predictive of teacher retention than other forms of parent involvement, such as helping with homework (Allensworth et al., 2009). Teachers in high-poverty schools often understand that the challenges related to poverty may prevent parents from being actively involved in their child’s education, but that does not prevent them from viewing these challenges as frustrating and overwhelming. Engaging parents with the school is vital for developing trust between teachers and parents in high-poverty schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The Importance of Physical Education in Schools of Poverty

Physical inactivity among children and its relation to increased occurrences of disease, such as childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes, has become a national health concern (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2000).
Inactivity impacts children from low socioeconomic communities in even greater ways than children in higher socioeconomic communities. For example, children in low-socioeconomic contexts spend less time playing outdoors and more time watching television and are less likely to participate in after-school activities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Almost half of young people, ages 12–21, are not vigorously active on a regular basis (USDHHS, 2000), yet physical activity offers a variety of benefits to those who participate regularly. In high-poverty schools these benefits can include: improved student health, increased cardiovascular capacity, increased muscle strength, improved academic outcomes, reduction of student behavior problems, and improved stress responses (Newman, 2005; Sibley & Etnier, 2003).

**Benefits of physical activity for children living in poverty.** According to Jensen (2009), stress is defined as the physiological response to the perception of loss of control resulting from an adverse situation. Children raised in poverty oftentimes experience acute and chronic stress that can be debilitating and severely impact their lives. Exposure to both acute and chronic stress influences children’s physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive functioning—areas that affect brain development, academic success, and social competence (Jensen, 2009). Students who are regularly exposed to these types of stress may lack the coping skills to handle stressful situations and may lead to behavioral and academic problems in school (Almeida, Neupert, Banks, & Serido, 2005).

Exercise can increase the release of a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) which aids in learning and memory function as well as the production of brain cells that are vital to establishing the connections the brain needs to learn (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008). Additional cognitive research has connected aerobic fitness to increases in neuroelectric and behavioral performance of children during a stimulus discrimination task (Hillman, Castelli, & Buck, 2005). These findings suggest that higher fit children displayed greater distribution of attentional resources.
to working memory, supporting previous research examining fitness and cognition in adult populations (Kramer & Hillman, 2006). Additionally, Sibley and Etnier (2003) found in their meta-analysis that a small but significant relationship between physical activity and cognitive performance among school-aged children, suggesting that physical activity might be favorable to children’s cognitive health, with the largest effects on IQ and academic achievement.

When students living in poverty are exposed to physical activity in high-quality physical education programs there is potential for increased self-concept (Strohle, 2009), and reduced stress and aggression (Wagner, 1997). Exercise has been shown to protect against the negative outcomes of stress and diseases as well as enhanced memory, focus, and brain function (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008). In their study on aerobic fitness and cognitive development, Hillman et al. (2005) discovered third and fifth graders who scored high on aerobic fitness and body-mass index (BMI) tests earned higher scores on state math and reading exams, even when controlling for the children’s socioeconomic status. Viadero (2008) established that a relationship existed between exercise doses and cognitive and academic benefits among overweight children. In this study, three groups of students were utilized, the first group participated in 40 minutes of physical activity every day after school, the second group participated in 20 minutes of physical activity, and the third group did not participate in any special physical activity sessions. After fourteen weeks, the children in group one (40 minutes daily) made the greatest improvements on both a standardized academic test and a test measuring executive function (thinking processes that involve planning, organizing, abstract thought, or self-control). The gains for group two (20 minutes daily) were half as large (Viadero, 2008).
The Value of Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility in Physical Education

In addition to offering opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate physical competencies, physical education has the potential to provide a setting in which natural opportunities to learn life skills are available to students. These opportunities are naturally present in the context of physical activity because it offers both individual and group interactions to take place while challenging students to respond to spur-of-the-moment situations that may occur (Martinek & Lee, 2012). During these situations, students are presented opportunities to make connections between previous life experiences and the moral repercussions of their actions in the moment (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). For students who live in poverty and are exposed to the many risk factors that cause physical, emotional, behavioral, and academic struggles (Moore, 2010), the physical activity setting provides significant opportunities to foster the attributes of personal and social responsibility to students (Martinek & Lee, 2012). Wright and Craig (2011) suggest that the outcomes and behaviors promoted in the TPSR framework align well with the national physical education content Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings (NASPE, 2004). The strength of the TPSR model is the value placed on transfer of affective skills outside of the physical activity setting, whereas NASPE’s Standard 5 places the emphasis on transfer to other physical activity settings (Wright & Craig, 2011). Although this difference is present, TPSR and the national standards connect in how they promote personal and social responsibility.

Teaching personal and social responsibility model (TPSR). The TPSR model was designed to provide a framework for promoting life skills within physical activity settings (Wright & Burton, 2008).
The model was originally intended to address the needs of underserved youth in physical activity settings and promote and teach life skills and responsible behaviors (Hellison, 2003). For students living in poverty who may not have been exposed to situations that allow them to acquire these skills, TPSR provides teachers a framework to specifically implement such skills in their curriculum to empower critical thinking and reflection skills in their students (Hellison, 2003; Morris, 1993, 2003).

The majority of research on TPSR programs has been conducted in extended-day contexts, sport camps, and alternative schools and few have been implemented through school-based physical education (Hellison, 2003). Wright and Burton (2008) explored the implementation and short-term outcomes of a responsibility-based Tai chi physical activity program integrated into a high school physical education class. Implementation proved difficult in the large physical education classes compared with the smaller alternative settings typically used for TPSR programs. As is common in large classes, motivation and engagement were problematic in this study. The students complained of being bored during the discussion and group processing sessions. One of the researchers reflected on the complaint of student boredom and determined that perhaps he/she was bargaining too much with students to alleviate their boredom, which ultimately frustrated the researcher with the process of teaching TPSR in a large class setting. The high-level of student apathy combined with teachers bargaining with students to motivate them may impact the resilience capacity of teachers in settings in which students display apathetic characteristics. TPSR’s progressive approach was also viewed as weak by the students as their regular instructor was a stern disciplinarian and the need for this structure was difficult for students to overcome. The main outcome of TPSR is to achieve transfer to student’s real lives; and students in this study offered several examples that demonstrated the ability to put the lessons they learned about stress reduction into practice.
The findings in the Wright and Burton (2008) study provide examples of both the challenges and successes of being a physical education teacher in high-poverty schools.

**Levels of the TPSR model.** According to Hellison (2011), the five levels of the TPSR model were not developed from theory; instead they came from trial and error, reflection, and a commitment to help children become better citizens. The levels of TPSR signify a loose progression of social and personal behaviors together with an appreciation for moral responsibility and become the cornerstones of a TPSR program’s development (Martinek & Lee, 2012). It is imperative that although a balance between personal social-moral responsibilities is desired in the levels, the progression should remain focused on the individual rather than the group taking responsibility (Hellison, 2011). The five responsibility levels or goals of TPSR are: (1) self-control and respect for the rights and feelings of others, (2) self-motivation, (3) self-direction, (4) caring, and (5) transfer/outside the gym (Escarti, Wright, Pascual, & Gutierrez, 2015: Hellison & Lee, 2012). The first four levels can be enacted directly within a physical activity program, and the fifth level, transfer/outside the gym, occurs when the first four levels are transferred to other settings like the classroom, playground, and community (Wright & Craig, 2011).

**A tool for measuring personal and social responsibility in physical education.** The national standards mandate that physical education teachers incorporate the promotion of personal and social responsible behavior in their curriculum plans (NASPE, 2004). The Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (TARE) Observation Instrument 2.0 is used to assess instruction aligned with Hellison’s (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (TPSR). The original version of the instrument, TARE (Wright & Craig, 2011), consists of three main sections: (1) Observable Teaching Strategies, (2) Personal-Social Responsibility Themes, and (3) Student Responsibility. Teaching strategies are measured using a 5-minute interval
during which appropriate codes on a scoring sheet are circled to indicate observed strategies during the interval. Personal-Social Responsibility themes and Student Responsibility are measured using a holistic rubric to provide overall ratings at the end of a class period.

The new version, TARE 2.0 consists of a 5-point rating scale that replaced the original binary scale used in the teacher observation section. In addition, the new scale allows observer ratings within each interval. The Likert scale is: 0 (absent), 1 (weak), 2 (moderate), 3 (strong), 4 (very strong). The observation time was decreased from five minutes to three minutes. The major change to the original TARE instrument was replacing the two general rating sections with a new section for observing student interactions using the same interval time sampling procedure as the teacher observation section (Escarti et al., 2015). The student observation section focuses on behaviors that would occur naturally in social settings, which includes group interactions rather than just focusing on students individually. The TARE 2.0 student behavior section includes the following categories: (1) Participation: Student is ‘on task’. (2) Engagement: Student has high level of interest and motivation evidenced by their active contribution to activity. (3) Showing Respect: Student is actively showing respect to others. (4) Cooperation: Student demonstrates social skills needed to work effectively with others. (5) Encouraging Others: Student offers social support in positive ways. (6) Helping Others: Student takes on helping roles. (7) Leading: Student takes on leadership role related to educational task. (8) Expressing Voice: Student makes suggestions, shares opinions, and reflects that expresses their personality and individuality. (9) Asking for Help: Student seeks out assistance and asks for help from teacher or peers (Escarti et al., 2015).
Teachers are vital to the promotion of learning environments that promote the principles of TPSR and the TARE 2.0 is a suitable instrument to assess the presence of the TPSR goals in physical education settings.

This investigation, grounded in resilience theory and occupational socialization theory (OST), seeks to explore the social-contextual factors involved in the resilience capacity of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools. Physical education teachers in schools of high poverty (free and/or reduced lunch data equal to or greater than 90%) will be observed and interviewed regarding key influential agents associated with the socialization process into and through schools of high-poverty and the types of personal and organizational support that influence their resiliency capacity. The specific research questions that will guide this study are:

1. What is the nature of instructional strategies, practices, and curricula in high-poverty settings?

2. How does the professional culture facilitate or hinder resiliency capacity?
   a. To what extent do relationships with colleagues, students, and their communities enable or impede teachers’ resiliency?
   b. What strategies do teachers incorporate to aid in the resilience of internal and external organizational barriers?
   c. To what extent do early career socializing agents act as mechanisms for resilience?

3. How do resilient teachers attempt to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives?
4. What is the resilience capacity of these teachers, measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10)?
Chapter 3

Method

The impact of teacher attrition on the lives of students, teachers, and administrators within communities of poverty calls for studying the resilience capacity of teachers in these settings. While teacher resiliency has been studied in general educational contexts, few studies have examined the concept within physical education. Therefore, the primary purpose of this investigation is to explore the factors involved in the resilience capacity of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools through the lens of Occupational Socialization Theory (OST) and Resilience Theory. The specific research questions that guided this study were:

1. What is the nature of instructional strategies, practices, and curricula in high-poverty settings?

2. How does the professional culture facilitate or hinder resiliency capacity?
   a. To what extent do relationships with colleagues, students, and their communities enable or impede teachers’ resiliency?
   b. What is the nature of strategies that teachers incorporate to aid in the resilience of internal and external organizational barriers?
   c. To what extent do early career socializing agents act as mechanisms for resilience?

3. How do resilient teachers attempt to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives?
4. What is the resilience capacity of these teachers, measured by the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC 10)?

Observations and interviews with physical education teachers, their colleagues, and supervisors provided insight into the experiences that influence the resilience capacity as physical education teachers in high-poverty schools. The goal of this investigation was to advance scholarly knowledge related to teachers, students, and administrators in high-poverty schools. In addition, the findings from this investigation have the potential to inform physical education teacher education (PETE) programs on the ways in which to best prepare the next generation of physical education teachers who will work in schools of poverty.

**Qualitative Inquiry**

A qualitative study design will be used to elicit perceptions and behaviors of participants related to teaching practices and teacher resiliency in high-poverty school settings. Teachers who are effective must be fundamentally committed and resilient within the context of their school community (Day & Gu, 2007). This is important in high-poverty school districts in which teachers generally have fewer resources and their students arrive with greater needs than in other, less impoverished schools.

Qualitative researchers explore people and events in natural settings to discover the nature of “real life” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Several characteristics establish a framework for qualitative researchers seeking to investigate people and events (Patton, 2002). For example, rather than attempting to control or predict outcomes, the qualitative investigator employs a discovery-oriented approach and allows the phenomenon to emerge *naturalistically* (Miles & Huberman, 1994: Patton, 2002). Another characteristic of qualitative investigations is related to *emergent design*, meaning that a naturalistic study unfolds over the
course of the investigation (Patton, 2002). A final characteristic, *purposeful sampling* indicates selecting cases to investigate that are information rich (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

As asserted by Patton (2002) using qualitative data, in the form of interview transcripts, direct observations, and document analysis, allows researchers the capacity to enter into the context under investigation in order to tell a story. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe qualitative data should produce a detailed, thick description of the phenomenon under study. The researcher conducts fieldwork, a primary activity of qualitative inquiry, to obtain a rich description of the investigated event. Consequently, the researcher has direct, *personal experience* and *engagement* with the people and situation being studied.

**Participants**

Ten physical education teachers in various career stages and grade levels were selected to participate in the current study through the incorporation of purposeful sampling. According to Patton (2002), there are no stipulations for sample size in qualitative investigations. The researcher should determine and justify the sample size based upon what s/he wants to know, the purpose of the investigations, what will be useful and credible, and what can be done with available time and resources. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest leaving the sample size open until emergent information becomes redundant. Participants were chosen from two different high-poverty (identified by having at least 90 percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch) school districts in Illinois. The importance of leadership in creating an environment that aids in teacher resiliency is prevalent in the literature, therefore, in addition to physical education teachers; a building administrator responsible for evaluation of each teacher participant was invited to participate. Upon agreeing to participate, each individual provided informed consent.
School Context

According to the Illinois State Board of Education (2014), the student population of Danville Community Consolidated School District was 6,140 students: 44.2% white, 39.5% black, 8.2% Hispanic, 1% Asian, .1% Native American, and 6.6% multiracial. Additionally, 78.3% of students in this district are identified as low-income, indicating that students are from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or receiving free or reduced-price lunches (ISBE, 2014). According to Illinois State Board of Education (2014), the student population of Rantoul City Schools was 1,635 students: 37.7% white, 32.1% black, 20.9% Hispanic, .8% Asian, .2% American Indian, and 7.8% multiracial. In addition, 98.7% of students in this school district were identified as low-income (ISBE, 2014).

Interviews

The study employed formal and informal interviews as the primary methods of data collection. Formal interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and were recorded and combined the use of standard open-ended interview and an interview guide approach (Patton, 2002). Informal interviews took place before, during, and after physical education classes in the gymnasium and other spaces frequently occupied by the teachers, administrators. This research technique allowed the researcher to pose questions that emerged from the context. The strength of this method is that it allows for flexibility, spontaneity, and opportunities to personalize a conversation with the participant(s) (Patton, 2002).

Interviews with Physical Education Teachers

Interviews with physical education teachers provided the opportunity to uncover relevant details to the context of high-poverty schools and influences this environment may have on their
resilience capacity and socialization. Teachers were formally interviewed once for approximately 45-60 minutes on each occasion. The top three teachers rated as being the most resilient were emailed one additional time. Each participant responded to questions from the interview guide grounded in occupational socialization theory and resilience theory. The interview questions focused on (a) influences on their decision to become a teacher, (b) critical influences embedded in the working conditions of schools, (c) ability of teachers to manage any changes in role(s) and identities, (d) work-life tensions related to motivation and commitment, (e) teachers’ self-efficacy, and (f) critical incidents that promote or detract from teachers’ resilience capacity.

The interview questions for the physical education teachers in this project were guided by the inseparable connection between teachers’ work and lives and resilience capacity throughout the many professional life phases (Day & Gu, 2010). The questions focused on the personal, professional, and contextual influences that promoted or impeded teacher’s capacities to be resilient in high-poverty schools (Appendix J). It was essential to consider the importance of all aspects of teachers’ lives in attempting to determine their capacities for resilience and establishing the critical incidents/influences that stimulate or obstruct this process.

**Interviews with School Supervisors**

Four school administrators (representing six teacher participants) were formally interviewed one time for approximately 45-60 minutes (Appendix K). Interview questions focused on: (a) available school and district opportunities for teacher support (b) their perceptions of the resilience capacity of the physical education teacher, and (c) their perceptions of the established organizational climate and its impact on teacher morale and resiliency. The support from school administration can be significant to the work lives of teachers. Conducting
interviews with an administrator responsible for evaluating each participant provided insight into another level that may influence the resilience capacity of the teachers in this study.

Observations

The researcher observed physical education teacher participants for at least one entire school day, recording field notes based on teacher and student behaviors, physical spaces, and other relevant physical education contextual factors. One purpose of observational data was to describe the setting, the activities within the setting, and those people involved to provide the reader context to understand the setting (Patton, 2002). By directly observing the context in these high-poverty schools, the researcher was provided the opportunity to witness events, patterns, and trends that may not be reported by participants during formal and informal interviews.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10)

Quantifying a teacher’s resiliency level allows for comparison with other variables that may promote or inhibit the individuals’ resilience capacity. In an effort to determine participants’ capacity for resilience, they were asked to complete the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10). Connor and Davidson (2003) created the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) as a measure of resilience. The CD-RISC is a commonly used instrument for measuring resilience in a variety of adult populations. The original 25-item version measured resilience in five areas: persistence/tenacity, self-efficacy, emotional and cognitive control under pressure, adaptability/ability to bounce back, control/meaning, and meaning (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The CD-RISC has since been adapted to the CD-RISC 10 to address other proposed factor structures. One of these structures included ten of the original items and measures a single latent factor of resilience (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007). This unidimensional version of the CD-RISC
is called the CD-RISC 10 and has been used with individuals from various occupations, including teachers (L. Wang, Shi, & Zhang, 2010).

Both the CD-RISC and the CD-RISC 10 have demonstrated sound psychometric qualities in numerous investigations (Connor & Davidson, 2003; L. Wang et al., 2010). For example, in the study by Wang et al. (2010) of 341 primary and secondary Chinese schoolteachers, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) and test-retest correlation was evaluated for the CD-RISC 10. The scale showed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.91) and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.90$ for a two-week interval), which indicate that the measurement error of the scale is small. The current project will utilize the CD-RISC 10 as a measure of teacher resilience. Teachers in this study were asked to complete the CD-RISC 10 survey prior to the research team arriving to observe.

**Document Analysis**

In an effort to provide data on the participants’ teaching context and the research setting, documents were analyzed and used as supplementary resources for analysis. For example, documents such as lesson plans, curriculum guides, and student work were accessed to verify findings from participant interviews and observations that could demonstrate the convergence of information and establish more trustworthiness in the research process (Patton, 2002). During the document analysis stage an attempt was made to identify pertinent information related to the central research questions and emerging themes of the project. The ultimate goal of document analysis within this research was to evaluate relevant documents that could add to the empirical knowledge of the resilience capacity of teachers in high-poverty schools.
Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews with teachers and administrators, as well as documents (lesson plans, curriculum guides, student work, etc.) and field notes were used to establish teacher and student behaviors, and other contextually relevant information that contributed to the physical education environment. All interviews were transcribed verbatim prior to data analysis.

Interview transcripts were coded individually and compared. Field notes supplemented the transcripts and aided in data interpretation. Inductive analysis was initially employed to identify themes and emerging patterns. Data was cross-checked using information gathered from the document analysis and recorded in the research notebook. Those data were then analyzed deductively with teacher effectiveness, career cycle, occupational socialization theory, poverty, and resiliency frameworks, in order to confirm the accuracy of the inductive content (Patton, 2002). Researchers collaborated during this process to build consensus regarding emergent themes and to provide reliability to the finalized themes.

Establishing Credibility and Data Trustworthiness

The nature of qualitative inquiry is such that the reliability and validity of findings cannot be supported in the same way as more traditional, quantitative approaches (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1995) state that trustworthiness involves convincing the audience, including the researcher, that the inquiry is worthy of attention and the results can be trusted. Several strategies were implemented in order to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Peer Debriefing

The researcher worked with a colleague familiar with qualitative research to review the data, and clarify interpretations in an attempt to prevent researcher bias. This process allowed the
researcher to be aware of his stance toward data and analysis and defend emergent hypotheses to the impartial debriefer.

**Negative Case Analysis**

Patterns and themes were analyzed to identify instances that did not align with previous findings. Patton (2002) explains that where patterns and trends have been identified, studying the cases that do not fit increases the understanding of those patterns and trends. He indicates that, “These may be exceptions that prove the rule. They may also broaden the “rule,” change the “rule,” or cast doubt on the “rule” altogether (Patton, 2002, p. 554).

**Member Checks**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that the most critical technique for establishing credibility is the use of member checks. It is essential that participants have an opportunity to react to and correct the researcher’s interpretations of the data. Copies of participants’ interview transcripts were provided to them with an opportunity to verify responses to insure the truthfulness and accuracy of information they provided. Additionally, participants were provided the results of the CD-RISC 10 and an explanation of their resilience capacity was provided.

**Triangulation**

In order to insure the dependability of the findings, document analysis of teachers’ lesson plans, curriculum materials, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) results, and observations were used. This information served to “provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behavior of those in the group under scrutiny, as well as to verify particular details that participants have supplied” (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).
Multiple researchers were utilized during the data analysis portions of this study. This aided in reducing potential biases while adding credibility of the findings by allowing the researchers to independently analyze the data and compare their analyses afterward (Patton, 2002).

**Establishing Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research is comparable to external validity in quantitative research. Where a quantitative researcher would use statistical analysis to seek a precise statement regarding external validity, a qualitative researcher provides a thick and rich description detailed enough so another scholar can decide whether a transfer of results is possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Adequate information is provided related to the instructional and non-instructional practices and the contextual settings in order for readers to make connections to similar situations with which they may be familiar.

**Establishing Dependability and Confirmability**

Dependability is a way in which to check for reliability, or in other terms, the quality of the study. The researcher attempted to establish neutrality and research objectivity, better known as confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher used three techniques to establish dependability and confirmability: investigator logs, an expert audit review, and a statement of personal bias.

**Investigator Logs**

To ensure dependability and confirmability of the qualitative research three types of investigator logs were maintained: method, theoretical, and observational. This method provided a platform through which the researcher reflected upon and revised the steps in the methodological process, examining emergent themes, and exploring field notes.
Method log. This log provided a daily overview of the schedule and logistics of the study and allowed the researcher opportunity to record the rationale for methodological decisions made throughout the study. Additionally, this log provided critical reflection opportunities linked to the methodological decisions made during the study.

Theoretical log. Utilizing this log allowed documentation of participants’ perceptions and experiences as they related to the occupational socialization theory framework. Member checks were conducted from this log to compare emergent themes with the OST framework.

Observational log. This log was maintained to identify the interactions between and among students and teachers within the physical education context. Also included in this log were the physical descriptions of the environment.

Expert Audit Review

The researcher met with his dissertation advisor and a peer debriefer to determine the quality of data collection and analysis in an effort to increase the dependability and confirmability of the data.

Investigator Bias

Ultimately, the trustworthiness of data is established by the expertise demonstrated by the investigator. Regardless of the methodology used, every researcher brings preconceived notions regarding the topic under investigation. The following is an examination of my personal bias written prior to data collection.

The preconceived notions that I have are related to my teaching experiences during my ten years of teaching health and physical education in high-poverty schools. My ability to relate to the participants’ experiences dealing with the pleasures and challenges of teaching in these contexts can be considered both a limitation and strength. As a limitation, my experiences have
the capacity to restrict my ability to fully immerse myself in the participants’ daily routines and interactions without imposing my own personal beliefs that were formed during my teaching career. Additionally, my ability to anticipate the nuances that occur in these settings may contribute to overlooking or inaccurately perceiving data during collection. My teaching experience is an asset in this investigation because it affords me the privilege of using my understanding of teaching in high-poverty contexts to inquire further into the interactions and influences of the teachers in this study. Having professional lived experiences similar to my participants can provide me instant credibility with them that may promote a trusting relationship, leading to the acquisition of valuable information that a researcher without my teaching experience would have difficulty obtaining. Additionally, establishing this relationship of trust will enable me to continue this project longitudinally over the career cycle of those teachers whom choose to participate in this capacity.
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Chapter 4

Manuscript One

Abstract

This study, which is part of a larger examination on physical education teacher resiliency, looked at how three resilient physical education teachers attempted to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives. Using Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience, which identifies specific constructs that may advance or impede the development of teacher resilience as a guide, data from multiple narrative research sources including interviews with teachers and school administrators, the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10) completed by teachers, and teacher observations were inductively and deductively analyzed to produce qualitative themes related to physical education teacher resiliency. Results indicated that the balance that participants were able to maintain between their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives proved to be the key to developing and maintaining their capacities for resilience. The three teacher’s identified as being the most resilient in this study possessed strong individual dispositions and were able to demonstrate behaviors that facilitated an elevated level of resilience in each of the areas related to the four dimensions of resilience that aided them in overcoming the constraints often associated with teaching in high-poverty schools. The teacher’s demonstrated a sustained commitment to self-improvement and student success by implementing effective teaching practices. Implications indicate a need for PETE programs to identify candidates with the individual dispositions that aid in resilience and provide those students experiences in high-poverty schools. This partnership may assist in minimizing the effects of reality shock oftentimes experienced by new teachers.

Keywords: resilience, physical education, teacher education, educational administration, poverty
Increasingly, teaching has been rated as one of the most stressful professions (Kyriacou, 2000; Nash, 2005; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001), and predictably, teacher attrition has increased substantially in U.S. public schools over the past three decades (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). The impact of this trend on student learning is evident, especially among high-poverty schools. The notion of resiliency began in psychiatry and developmental psychology as a result of growing attention to personal characteristics or traits that helped children classified as being at risk of having negative life outcomes, to adjust positively and flourish despite significant adversity (Block & Block, 1980; Howard et al., 1999; Waller, 2001). Considerable discussion in the research literature relates to the way in which resilience should be conceptualized, whether as a process that is developed over time or as an innate individual personality trait (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Yonezawa et al., 2011).

Resiliency is defined as the capacity to continue to “bounce back,” to recover strengths or spirits quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity (Day & Gu, 2010). Among teachers, resiliency is closely linked to a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy, and motivation to teach, all of which are necessary in promoting student achievement. Many environmental factors influence teachers’ resilience, and it is possible that school context and organizational support have important implications for understanding teachers’ ability to develop resilient capacities. Resiliency is a multidimensional characteristic that differs with individuals’ personal contexts and biographical traits, and is based on the life circumstances of the individual (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While initial studies of resilience examined the characteristics of resilient people (Masten & Gramezy, 1985), more recent analyses focus on the adaptive process that helps individuals develop resiliency (Sammons et al., 2007). The theory has become relative, socially constructed and dynamically occurring within a social system of interrelationships.
(Howard et al., 1999; Luther et al., 2000; Rutter, 1990). The socially constructed nature of teacher resilience recognizes, as the psychologically constructed does not, the significance of the combinations of personal, professional and situated factors on their capacities to maintain emotional wellbeing and professional commitment (Day & Gu, 2010). This study classified an individual’s resilience as being influenced by numerous, inter-related characteristics (Mansfield et al., 2012), but individual resilience capacity is based on the nature of the contexts in which teachers work, those with whom they interact, and their intrinsic motivation to overcome adversity (Gu & Day, 2007).

**Theoretical Framework**

Teaching is a demanding profession and as schools continue to change, the role of schoolteacher has become increasingly complicated. Undoubtedly, it is important for teachers who are not resilient to be provided opportunities to become so if they are to survive in the context of schools (Gu & Day, 2007). While teacher resiliency has been studied in general educational contexts, few studies have examined the concept within physical education. Therefore, this study, which is part of a larger investigation on physical education teacher resiliency, identified three physical education teachers from schools of high-poverty that demonstrated elevated resiliency based on Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience, which includes profession-related, social-related, emotional-related, and motivational-related factors as constructs that may advance or impede the development of teacher resilience.

**Profession-Related Dimension of Resilience**

Those who work in high-poverty schools must recognize that students arrive with a narrower range of appropriate emotional responses than their middle and upper class counterparts. A child who lives in a stressful home environment tends to channel that stress into disruptive
behavior at school (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These emotional and social deficits are oftentimes misinterpreted as a lack of respect for teachers (Jensen, 2009). Teachers who are unaccustomed to working with children raised in poverty are likely to be surprised and discouraged by these behaviors. It is important that teachers change their mindset when addressing inappropriate behavior such as impulsivity, inappropriate language, and disrespect (Jensen, 2009). The profession-related dimension of resilience involves aspects associated with teaching practices. The teaching practices included within this dimension are associated with: organization and preparation, effective teaching strategies, and a commitment to students.

**Social Dimension of Resilience**

The primary focus within this dimension is related to how participants interacted socially within their work environments. In the past, Lortie (1975) depicted teachers as valuing the opportunity to teach in isolation and away from the scrutiny of others. Research now, however, reports a distinct relationship between teachers’ experiences with their colleagues and the commitment they have to teaching in schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2014). According to Grissom and Loeb (2011), principals may be even more important in high-poverty schools, as their results demonstrated that principal effectiveness was associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher would leave the school within a year. Data from North Carolina’s Teacher Working Conditions Survey found that teachers’ reports about their working conditions were highly predictive of their intentions to leave their schools, even when controlling for student race and socioeconomic status (Ladd, 2011). The central factor predicting both intended and actual school turnover was teachers’ perceptions of school leadership. In schools in which teachers perceived their principals positively, turnover was less than schools in which teachers did not view their principals positively. Principals can facilitate mutual relationships, but
productive partnerships require investment from the teachers themselves (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Researchers have identified three important factors for productive work with colleagues: an inclusive environment; formal structures for collaboration; and a shared mission (Simon & Johnson, 2015). First, an inclusive environment is characterized by respect and trust among colleagues. Research on school-based relationships revealed that trust was a condition for building learning communities where teachers count on one another (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The second area required for a productive work environment is formal structures that foster collaboration. In a study conducted with ninety-five teachers in six urban schools, researchers found that teachers valued collaboration when it was congruent with their individual needs as a teacher and with the larger agenda for improving the program or school (Johnson et al., 2014). Finally, the third area required for a productive work environment is a shared mission among teachers. In high-poverty schools teachers oftentimes state that they have chosen to teach in these contexts because they are motivated to help low-income, minority students excel (Achinstein et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2014).

**Emotional Dimension of Resilience**

According to Kumpfer (1999), the emotional dimension of resilience is concerned with emotional responses to the experiences of teaching. The main focus is on how teachers cope with stress and manage their emotions. Children raised in poverty are more likely to demonstrate the following behaviors in school: “acting-out” behaviors, impatience and impulsivity, gaps in politeness and social graces, limited range of behavioral responses, inappropriate emotional responses, and less empathy for others’ misfortunes (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). Teachers who are unaccustomed to working with children raised in poverty are often surprised and discouraged by
these behaviors. The ability to cope with the emotional demands of working in high-poverty schools is vital to longevity in these settings. Equally important to staying the course is the ability to remain motivated despite the unique challenges presented by teaching high-poverty schools.

**Motivational Dimension of Resilience**

Teachers who demonstrate resilience in the motivational dimension are able to remain positive and optimistic, persist, remain confident, and continually focus on learning and self-improvement. In a statewide survey of working conditions in Massachusetts, Johnson, Kraft, & Papay (2012) focused on problems within the school organization and found “teachers who leave high-poverty, high-minority schools reject the dysfunctional contexts in which they work, rather than the students they teach” (p. 4). School leadership that expects teachers to be lifelong learners and is committed to supporting the learning process of teachers retains teachers at a greater level (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Research is necessary that examines teachers working in high-poverty contexts and the external and internal challenges they may face. More importantly, however, is studying the ways in which their resilience, commitment, self-efficacy and wellbeing, may be fostered, advanced and sustained over time (Day & Gu, 2010). Therefore, the specific research question that guided this study was: How do resilient physical education teachers attempt to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives?
Methods

Participants and Settings

After Institutional Review Board approval was secured, multiple narrative research data sources were used in this study including interviews with teachers and school administrators, the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10) completed by teachers, and teacher observations. The participants were identified from a group of 10 physical education teachers from two school districts (one rural and one urban) in a Midwestern state during the 2015-2016 school year. Three teachers were selected (see Table 1) as well as each individual teacher’s building administrator (two males and one female) responsible for assessing the respective teacher. Sean a white male in his late thirties had six years of teaching experience. He earned a master’s degree in school administration and also served as the varsity baseball coach at the local high school. His principal was named Mr. Campbell. Gary was a white male in his mid-to-late thirties with eleven years of teaching experience in high-poverty schools who held a master’s degree in physical education. Gary was born and raised in Southeastern Europe where both of his parents were teachers. He was married and had two young children under the age of five years old. Gary’s administrator was named Mrs. Rupple. John a white male in his late-thirties was married to an elementary school teacher and had two children under the age of three. John had taught at his current school for fifteen years. He held National Board certification as well as a master’s degree in physical education and had recently completed a certification program in school administration. Mr. Hupfer served as John’s principal.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify participants who taught in schools facing extreme poverty (90% or higher free and/or reduced lunch numbers), were considered to be
resilient based on analysis of Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience; the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10); and teacher observation data (see Table 2).

### Table 1  Participant and School Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Grades served</th>
<th>Number of students in school</th>
<th>% Of students served free and/or reduced lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2  Resiliency Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (total out of 40)</th>
<th>Teacher Self-Rating (total out of 10)</th>
<th>Principal’s Teacher Rating (total out of 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Sources

**Interviews with Teachers.** Teachers were interviewed both formally and informally as the primary methods of data collection. Formal recorded interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and included the use of an open-ended interview guide approach. The semi-structured interview guide was used during the formal interview process (Patton, 2002) to elicit data related to the teacher’s individual resilience capacity. These 60-min to 90-min interviews were conducted and audio-recorded after the school day in the participants’ school settings. Interviews with physical education teachers provided opportunities to uncover relevant details to the context of high-poverty schools and the influence the environment may have had on teacher’s resilience capacity. Each participant responded to questions from the interview guide grounded in resilience theory. The interview guide focused on (a) critical influences embedded in the working conditions of schools, (b) work-life tensions related to motivation and commitment, and (c) critical incidents that promote or detract from teachers’ resilience capacity. Informal conversational interviews occurred on numerous occasions, including, but not limited to, during teacher shadowing visits when the researchers spoke with teacher’s before, during, and after physical education classes in the gymnasium and other spaces frequently occupied by the teachers. Follow-up interviews were conducted through telephone conversations between the primary researcher and each of the teachers to gain clarification on initial data and develop a further understanding of each participant’s context. This research technique allowed the investigators to pose questions that emerged from the data. The strength of this method was that it allowed for flexibility, spontaneity, and opportunities to personalize the conversation with the participant(s) (Patton, 2002). All interviews were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Additionally, documents (lesson plans, curriculum guides, student work, etc.) were used to
establish teacher behaviors and other contextually relevant information that contributed to the physical education environment and the resilience capacity of participants.

**Interviews with Administrators.** School administrators were formally interviewed one time for approximately 45-60 minutes. The three administrators had experience in schools of poverty that ranged between 3 and 12 years ($M = 8.66, SD = 4.93$). An interview guide was used to structure the formal interview process focusing on: (a) professional culture of the school, (b) the professional support systems available to teachers, and, (c) the facilitators and barriers to teacher resiliency present in the organizational environment. Formal interviews occurred through phone conversations and email communications. Brief follow-up interviews were conducted for clarification on initial responses and to gain a deeper understanding of the organizational context described by administrators.

**Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10).** In an effort to determine teacher participants’ capacity for resilience, each completed the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10) prior to the shadowing and interview process. The CD-RISC is an instrument used for quantifying resilience in a variety of adult populations. For example, in the study by Wang et al. (2010) of 341 primary and secondary Chinese schoolteachers, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) and test-retest correlation was calculated for the CD-RISC 10. The scale showed adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.91) and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.90$ for a two-week interval), which indicate that the measurement error of the scale is small. Participants responded to 10 items by identifying the relevance of items to their lives over the past month. Responses were arranged on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time). Example items included: “I am able to adapt when changes
occur,” “I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships,” and “under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.”

**Teacher Shadowing.** The shadowing technique was developed to reveal not only the structure of a participant’s day in terms of his or her job duties, but also reveal the details of perspective and purpose influencing those activities in the concurrent context of an organization (McDonald, 2005). Given this, the researcher(s) spent one entire school day, beginning when the teacher arrived at school and ending when teacher left the school building at the end of the day, writing continuous field notes that revealed the time, actions, and content of important conversations and interactions within the school environment. Detailed notes were taken and a running commentary was established regarding teacher-student interactions, teacher-colleague interactions, and the body language and mood of the participant(s). This technique enabled the researcher(s) to examine participants’ job responsibilities holistically, while soliciting opinions and behaviors simultaneously to generate a narrative that provided insight into the role of a teacher in a high-poverty school. In addition to the full-day observation, the researchers returned to each participant’s school for a half-day to conduct follow-up observations and informal interviews. The second observation and informal interview provided additional field notes and opportunities to clarify prior data collection.

**Researcher with a unique perspective.** Ultimately, the trustworthiness of data is established by the expertise demonstrated by the researcher. Regardless of the methodology used, every researcher brings preconceived notions regarding the topic under investigation. A noteworthy problem associated with conducting qualitative shadowing is known as the Hawthorne (Shipman, 1997: 99) or observer effect. This occurs when the researcher has an effect on the situation they are researching (McDonald, 2005). Several strategies have been identified
to lessen the observer effect: one of those strategies for example, is to ask participants to discuss how ‘normal’ their day has been and checking whether they are persistent or recurrent with the notes taken (McDonald, 2005).

The primary investigator spent ten years as a National Board Certified physical education teacher in high-poverty schools. The ability to relate to the participants’ experiences dealing with the joys and challenges of teaching in these contexts can be considered a strength that permitted the researcher to ‘go native’ during data collection (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992), lessening the influence of the observer effect. Additionally, the primary researchers’ experience afforded him the privilege of using his understanding of teaching in high-poverty contexts to inquire further into the interactions and influences of the teachers in this study. Having professional lived experiences similar to the participants provided instant credibility with them that promoted a trusting relationship, leading to the acquisition of valuable information that a researcher without similar teaching experience would have difficulty obtaining.

**Data Analysis and Trustworthiness**

Multiple techniques were used to ensure the thoroughness of data analysis, thus establishing trustworthiness: (a) cross-checking multiple data sources for consistency to uncover negative cases that could test emerging themes; for example, the researchers carefully examined and made comparisons between and among interviews; (b) researchers worked as a team increasing the credibility of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and (c) member-checking, by asking the participant to verify researchers’ findings. All individuals who were interviewed were given the opportunity to provide feedback on content and accuracy of the final manuscript.

Qualitative data from interviews with teachers and administrators, as well as documents (lesson plans, curriculum guides, student work, etc.) and field notes were used to establish
teacher behaviors and other contextually relevant information that contributed to the physical education environment. All field notes and interviews were transcribed verbatim after data collection. Constant comparative inductive analysis enabled researchers to identify themes and emerging patterns in the data. Interview transcripts were coded individually and compared, while field notes were used to supplement interview transcripts. Data were then analyzed deductively with teacher effectiveness, poverty, and resiliency frameworks, in order to confirm the accuracy of the inductive content (Patton, 2002). Researchers collaborated during this process to build consensus regarding emergent themes and to provide reliability to the finalized themes. Participants were provided copies of interview transcripts to verify responses and insure the truthfulness and accuracy of information they provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to insure the dependability of the findings, document analysis of teachers’ lesson plans and curriculum materials were used to “provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behavior of those in the group under scrutiny, as well as to verify particular details that participants have supplied” (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).

**Findings**

This paper, which is part of a larger study, provides examples of three physical education teachers’ who work in high-poverty schools and demonstrate an elevated capacity for resilience in their personal and professional lives. The findings of this study are presented in sections aligned with Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience: (1) profession-related dimension, (2) emotional dimension, (3) social-related dimension, and (4) the motivational-related dimension. These dimensions outline key areas that may potentially influence the ability for teachers to remain resilient, especially those who teach in high-poverty schools.
In all three cases, the teacher participants in this study were able to demonstrate behaviors that facilitated an elevated level of resilience in each of the areas of Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience.

**Profession-Related Dimension of Resilience**

The teacher participants in this study exhibited high-levels of commitment to the profession-related dimensions of resilience including: organization and preparation, effective teaching strategies, and a commitment to students (Kumpfer, 1999). The gymnasiums where all three teachers taught were organized and structured. The activities for the day were posted on whiteboards and equipment for class was prepared prior to student arrival. On the whiteboard in Sean’s gymnasium were objectives and rules for the day’s activity (Chain Reaction game). Gary used an “I Can Board” labeling what the students would accomplish for that day: (1) stretch and improve flexibility, (2) learn the volleyball bump pass, (3) learn major bones of the body, and (4) identify classroom rules and procedures.

There was little to no time wasted distributing equipment, which allowed maximum student participation and smooth transitions between activities. John, for example utilizes the Sport Education Model (Siedentop et al., 2004) in his lesson planning, through which he designated that students serve as the equipment managers—responsible for dispersing equipment appropriately during activities. John provided the researchers the outline of the floor hockey unit in which his class was participating. As suggested with the Sport Education Model, he separated the unit into a pre-season, regular-season, post-season, and finished the unit with a skills competition and awards ceremony. It was evident that John had established protocols and the students understood their roles related to Sport Education and the floor hockey unit. During the initial observation, upon completing the exercise routine for the day, John’s students
immediately took control of the lesson—equipment managers gathered the hockey sticks and pucks for their teams; team captains checked the posted schedule sheet and led their teams to the appropriate courts; and the referees quickly organized and started the hockey games. Sean acknowledged that it takes time to establish the learning environment, “it’s a process from day one, you have to establish routines and rules early on, reteach them constantly the first two months of school, and then it works itself out.” His commitment to organization and planning allowed Sean to take ownership of the gymnasium in the beginning, which created a more productive learning environment for students in the end. He stated, “I am a nitpicker in the beginning, I point out everything that goes wrong, and then kind of back off as the year goes on.”

In addition to established rules and procedures, the participants provide visual maps of their curriculum for the entire school year. On the wall in his office, Gary has a curriculum displayed with all activities that will be covered in his classes. He explained, “I divide my school year into weeks, this is the first semester it has 18 weeks, so I know each week what I will do.” Additionally, John mentioned planning with standards in mind, “we basically map out our semester and when we’re choosing activities we pick activities based on which standards they are going to meet.” The planning and organization demonstrated by the participants’ facilitated opportunities for effective teaching to occur in their gymnasiums.

The lowered expectations that are common in many schools of poverty are immersed in the idea that students are unable to learn. Haberman (1991) referred to this as the “pedagogy of poverty.” When students have teachers who have rich content knowledge and provide engaging curricula that brings stimulating instructional opportunities to students, however, they have much better chances at success (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). The common theme among participants was the high expectations that they held for students.
According to John,

I’m big on being fair and holding students to high expectations behaviorally and academically…I see all the students the same and I would think of myself as being discriminatory if I were to treat them any differently than I would treat another student who came from a different socio-economic background.

Gary discussing his goals when teaching fitness skills stated, “I tell them you can do more than you think you can. I believe that with all my heart.” During observations, his actions supported this belief as witnessed by his conversations, demonstrations, and overall enthusiasm for students to be successful and promotion of beliefs in their own abilities. When asked how Gary handles relationships with students, his administrator, Mrs. Rupple, stated, “He is compassionate about his job and our students, and is quick to give suggestions and to support them. He is a staple in our building.”

Although participants demonstrated high expectations for students, they communicated during formal and informal conversations that it took time to understand and develop approaches that were most appropriate for their contexts. John explained that the best strategy for him was, “building relationships by talking with them (students) and asking them questions so that we (they) have a good relationship—makes them (students) willing to meet my expectations.” In a similar way, Sean described his approach by saying, “You gotta know every student. It’s my job to know the personality of each individual one.” This was evident when he was outside greeting students during his morning duty. Students gave him high-fives, hugs, and several stopped to talk with him about their extracurricular activities. According to Gary, he believed that the high fitness expectations he established were preparing his students to break the cycle of poverty to which they were accustomed. He mentioned:
They (students) come from an environment and they are beaten down. They think they cannot do higher than that (initial fitness goal), and I try to show them they are stronger than they think they are, smarter than they think they are, and that they can do everything they want if they put their minds to it. If they start believing they can do it.

Physical education has the potential to provide a setting in which opportunities to learn life skills are available to students. These opportunities are naturally present in the context of physical activity because it offers both individual and group interactions to take place while challenging students to respond to spur-of-the-moment situations that may occur (Martinek & Lee, 2012). During such situations, students are offered opportunities to make connections between previous life experiences and the moral consequences of their actions in the moment (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). For students who live in poverty, and are exposed to the many risk factors that cause physical, emotional, behavioral, and academic struggles (Moore, 2010), the physical activity setting provides significant opportunities to foster the attributes of personal and social responsibility to students (Martinek & Lee, 2012). Sean’s principal, Mr. Campbell, provided an example of how his school utilizes the choice language initiative when communicating with students:

If you (student) choose not to come into the classroom, then you choose to give up five minutes of your recess…you put that on the student and sometimes it’s positive—like showing up on time, we get to have extra playing time in the gym.

During a fifth grade class, Sean was observed enacting such communication when he rewarded students for the sportsmanship they demonstrated earlier in the week by offering them the opportunity to use newly acquired plank walk equipment before they returned to their classroom. It became evident that the participants were committed to student success in profound ways and used course content to extend learning from the physical education environment into student’s
lives away from school. John and his colleagues utilize the Sport Education Model (Siedentop et al., 2004) in an effort to transfer skills outside of the gymnasium, “That’s something we’ve really embraced…they (students) are able to problem-solve much better than before we were using that model.” The participants emphasized the importance for their students to develop skills in the affective domain during physical education. Sean explained that his goals for student learning were, “I want to make PE fun. I want to make sure they are learning multiple skills, and to increase their confidence in their ability levels. I also want them to learn to cooperate with others.” Sean’s administrator, Mr. Campbell described his perceptions of the relationship Sean has with students, “He connects with the kids. He’ll pull a kid over during recess to hang out with him or pull them into the gym at the end of the day to shoot hoops and connect with them.” Gary described how he used fitness to change the mindset of his students who lived in poverty:

I started this because my goal as a whole was to change their mindset about who they are you know. They are not these poor kids that have no future. They are wonderful kids. They are strong kids. They are smart kids. They can do anything they want if they put their mind to it.

By demonstrating the ability to be flexible, adaptable, and reflective in their professional practice the participants in this study were able to increase their capacity for resilience.

Social Dimension of Resilience

The main items in this dimension focused on how the teachers built their support networks and the ability of each individual teacher to communicate with those in the education profession. According to Sean, at his school, “we (teachers) get along pretty well together. There’s a lot of communication and we handle discipline issues regardless if it’s our student or not.” He also revealed, “We all look out for each other, so that helps out a lot with camaraderie.”
John discussed the relationship he had with his principal, “there is a mutual respect, I’ll do the best job that I can—and we allow each other to do our jobs.” John’s administrator, Mr. Hupfer, corroborated this sentiment by saying, “It’s an honest relationship—if he has an issue he lets us know in a way that is professional.” Gary reiterated this concept of professional trust as he reflected on the importance of a collegial support system:

Everybody is working hard to be positive in spite of the problems we encounter each day with these kids…I’m happy to say that I think all of our staff are really in this job for good reasons and they care for the kids.

The distinct difference among the participants in this study as opposed to their less resilient contemporaries was the ability and willingness to collaborate within their schools. Sean stated, for example, “I like doing cross-curricular activities—if we’re doing a spelling activity in PE, I work with the classroom teacher to find out what spelling words they are doing that week.” Gary was involved with a voluntary book study at his school. “The majority of the staff are excited about it (book study), they read the book and then we meet—it’s a very practical book and it is something that we can apply to our jobs.” Establishing trust and support in high-poverty schools are instrumental in creating a strong organizational environment. The willingness to seek out opportunities to collaborate by the participants in this study facilitated an environment in which trust and support among colleagues could be realized.

John considered himself a mentor or parent figure to his students, “I view my role as a parent for the students when they are at school—teaching them both the easy lessons and the hard lessons.” His principal, Mr. Hupfer, described the times that John came to him for assistance, “It comes off as it’s his (John’s) mission to make the school a better place, not just to make his life easier at the school.”
The importance of a mission and vision to a school appears to be important to the resilience of the teachers in this study. Gary believed that the vision his principal had established was the key to his school’s success:

We are working towards a common goal and that is to help these kids. We created a goal—‘how do we envision our school in five years’? And everyone here tries to look at the goal, and what we can do now to accomplish it.

Gary’s principal, Mrs. Rupple stated:

We have been trained through the Nurtured Heart Approach, and have been working together through a book study. Our goal is to solve issues in a positive manner. We work to find out what the student is looking for: acceptance, love, someone to listen, etcetera.

We work with students in a positive way, making sure students are valued is the key.

Sean reiterated this message of leadership when discussing the mission and vision of his school, “It starts with the administration, and it has to—we have to know who the top dog is.” The findings from the current study, similar to those in Grissom and Loeb (2011), indicate that an effective principal could offset the issues of turnover in high-poverty schools.

**Emotional Dimension of Resilience**

Teachers in the current study were mostly able to positively manage their emotions and deal with stress present in the organizational environment. For example, they did not become dejected when students exhibited negative behaviors as when Gary mentioned, “They (students) get mad but they don’t get mad at me, and I don’t ever take it personally.” When speaking Mrs. Rupple, Gary’s principal, mentioned that their school includes students with emotional disabilities who will easily “explode” and begin “screaming, kicking, hitting, throwing items, etc.—Gary doesn’t get upset or react negatively, but instead works with the student(s) to calm them down, figure out the problem
and create a solution.” Observations of Gary’s teaching showed that to build student self-esteem and establish a positive learning environment, he ended every class with an activity that called upon students to recognize three positive behaviors that the day’s “Student Star” demonstrated during class. Gary asked for student volunteers to provide specific and detailed accounts of when the Student Star exhibited positive behaviors during the class period. At times, Gary had to reinforce what a positive behavior was if a student identified a behavior that did not fit this criteria. It was evident by the smiles and excitement present that the Student Star’s appreciated this recognition from their peers. During an informal conversation, Sean mentioned that “life became easier” when he realized he should not take student behavior personally. When asked about where he draws strength from at school, he stated, “from the kids mostly, they are positive, they have energy—from their hugs and smiling faces.” The participants demonstrated the importance of a student-centered learning environment to the success of their programs. It was clear from observations that the caring and composed demeanor Sean upheld throughout his day was key to maintaining a calming environment where student learning could occur. Likewise, John discussed his outlook on students who arrive to him exhibiting behavioral issues:

    It’s a slow process because they’re in middle school and they have established behaviors and habits, I usually try to look at how the student came in and how they are progressing overall—are they better than when they came here”?

    Sean’s principal, Mr. Campbell, mentioned that student apathy was the biggest issue present in their school. He advises the teachers in his building to “teach with the end in mind.” Describing Sean’s approach to student apathy, his principal said:

    There is no gray area. The students know they are expected to participate, and if they’re not going to participate it’s not going to be a way out of something—they will have an
alternative assignment and when the student realizes the alternative is not better than the original plan, they don’t deviate as much from participating. He (Sean) meets them on their level but doesn’t give them an escape route from physical education.

The teachers not only handled student issues positively, but they said/explained that they thoroughly enjoyed their jobs as teachers. During observations this was evident by the many high-fives that were witnessed being given and received, the positive interactions with colleagues, the high level of energy the teachers maintained throughout the day, and the many playful remarks with students. For example, Sean light-heartedly remarked to a male student who had a spikey hairstyle during a team-building activity, “Hey buddy, watch the Mohawk.” The boy evidently enjoyed Sean’s comment about his hair as was apparent by the smile on the student’s face after the comment was made.

In addition to the passion these teacher’s displayed for their teaching, all three mentioned the importance of physical activity to their overall mental wellness. For example, Gary said, “I like exercising, I work out by myself at home with push-ups and things like that—I like running, I try to do that a couple times each week.” The participant’s comments seem to demonstrate the value they find in maintaining personal wellness as a key component to their resilience capacity. John, for instance, provided advice for those who cannot compartmentalize teaching from their personal lives:

I go to the gym probably four or five times a week—I always say to anyone in education that I think that’s the best way to de-stress, and if I really have any stress during the day that is carried over, if I go to the gym it’s usually gone after the first five minutes in there. The emotional fortitude that these teachers possessed assisted them in overcoming the stressors present in the organizational environment.
Motivational Dimension of Resilience

Despite encountering issues early in their careers, the three teachers in this study were able to remain persistent, optimistic, and confident, while continually focusing on learning and self-improvement. Gary reflected on his growth in dealing with students from the early stages of his career:

In the beginning it was totally different because I was not very flexible. I just knew my expectations (for students) and I expected them to do it regardless of how they felt—I was a lot stricter. I eventually realized that when you go against them, they go against you and there was much more conflict…I understand much better where they come from and I know back then I put gas on the fire—now I know how to calm down if that happens now.

He added that learning how to adapt was the key to his growth, “Had I had this interview nine years ago it would have been totally different, but now, because I’ve experienced these things, you know I became better as a teacher myself, I can say that I can adapt pretty well.”

The participants in the current study displayed a great passion for the students they taught and were able to persist in their jobs regardless of the organizational context. For example, discussing the professional culture of his school John said:

There are things that could be better, but at the same time it’s not going to have an impact on my motivation. I’m still going to come to work and do a good job and be the best I can be—that comes from within.

John’s principal revealed, “He is consistent in the way he approaches school—whatever is going on he handles it the same. You would never know if there are other factors contributing to his mood that day. His teaching is the same.” Similar to John, Sean was observed demonstrating a calm demeanor during his interactions with students and colleagues. For example, at recess there was a
conflict between two students that had the potential to be unsafe. Sean was able to diffuse the situation by remaining calm and effectively separated the students without using physical force; his ability to control his emotions prevented the situation from escalating and potentially making the situation unsafe for himself and the students. Sean’s sense of motivation for teaching appears to be related to his first career where he worked for his state’s Department of Transportation prior to becoming a teacher:

I hated every day, loved the paycheck but knew I had to do what my calling was—teaching. It was going to be $30,000 less per year, I didn’t care, and I’m happy I did it because every morning I wake up, my feet hit the floor, I’m happy to get going.

Sean’s ability to keep the drudgery of his first career present in his mind promoted calmness to his teaching despite what others may perceive as difficult circumstances and undoubtedly facilitated his elevated capacity for resilience.

The teachers in this study were required to be a part of school-wide and district-wide professional development opportunities, but none were specifically tailored towards physical education content. For example, Gary’s administrator commented, “We have early release for students every other week which allows each building to create professional development based on individual building needs.” Sean’s principal, Mr. Campbell, when asked about applicability of the professional development opportunities for physical education mentioned, “They’re often not applicable to his role—yeah, physical education teachers are definitely left out of most professional development.” The teachers in the current study relied on individual choice when selecting professional development opportunities partially due to lack of school district funds for conference travel.” Sean noted, “Over the past couple years, they’ve (administration) shot down the conferences due to the budget…a lot of the teachers, we really care about our profession, but your
gonna have to spend money out of your own pocket.” Gary found it difficult to attend his state
cconference because of the time required to be away from his family, “I will not be going this year,
it’s hard with kids. I didn’t go last year either.” Although these teachers encountered barriers to
formal, organized professional development opportunities specifically focused on physical
education, they sought out opportunities to grow in their field.

Sean, Gary, and John all demonstrate an individual sense of motivation related to improving
as physical education professionals, and their principals reinforced this notion. Gary’s
administrator, Mrs. Rupple for example, indicated, “He (Gary) works to learn the best strategies and
he implements them daily—this is huge”. Sean’s principal discussed how other teachers view
Sean’s dedication—“I don’t know a teacher at school that (sic) doesn’t appreciate what he does for
the school.” All three teachers mentioned accessing several physical education websites, such as PE
universe and PE Central, for assistance with curriculum and other related inquiries. Sean mentioned:

I read a lot, try to get as many ideas from other people as I can—I go to Barnes and Noble
almost every weekend and try to dive into a couple of books for a half-hour, just to get some
ideas.

Sean believes that, “effective teachers, coaches, whatever, it doesn't matter what profession you’re
in—if you fail to stop learning, or if you think you’ve learned it all, then that’s when you become
unsuccessful.” Sean’s beliefs provide valuable insight regarding the potential motivational qualities
necessary to succeed and be resilient in high-poverty schools.

Discussion

This study sought to answer one primary research question framed around a four-
dimensional framework of resilience (Kumpfer, 1999). The question focused on how resilient
teachers attempted to balance their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives. The
balance the participants were able to maintain between their professional, emotional, social, and motivational lives proved to be the key to developing and maintaining their capacities for resilience. Within the general education literature, it has been suggested that resilience is a multi-dimensional concept that includes the personal qualities of teachers (Brunetti, 2006), the ability to rely on strategies during times of adversity (Castro et al., 2010) and the ability to rebound during adverse situations (Sammons et al., 2007). Organizing the multiple aspects of resilience into four distinct dimensions provided an authentic and holistic view of physical education teacher resilience. The three teacher’s in this study possessed strong individual dispositions related to the four dimensions of resilience as outlined by Kumpfer (1999) that aided them in overcoming the constraints often associated with teaching in high-poverty schools.

The literature on teacher resiliency in physical education is minimal, however, selected research on teacher’s careers in the field has underscored the features of the personal and professional supports required for physical education teachers to be resilient. For example in their work with teacher career cycles, Woods and Lynn (2001) used interviews with physical education teachers and their teacher educators while also directly observing lessons to investigate factors that improved and inhibited teacher career development. In addition to the importance of outside support systems, such as families and professional networks, to participant’s resiliency, those who were currently teaching possessed individual dispositions that kept them striving to get the most from their students and from their careers. The individual dispositions of Sean, Gary, and John in this study set them apart and facilitated their ability to be resilient in their schools.

The view that certain elements of the work environment may influence or threaten teacher resilience has been supported in the literature (Benard, 2003; Tait, 2008). Resiliency can
be reinforced in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). Research has revealed that teachers have aspirations to work in schools that have a strong school-wide norm for behavior and consistent discipline policies (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kraft et al., 2015). Planning for and teaching class procedures is invaluable as research tells us that teachers leave schools where discipline prevents them from delivering meaningful instruction (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Ladd, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013). This practice is most important in high-poverty schools, especially those serving large portions of minority students—where reports of student discipline issues are more common than at more affluent schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). All three participants in this study emphasized the importance of establishing and practicing class procedures and routines early in the school year above all else. This emphasis on establishing a collegial professional environment was evident during our observations in the respectful interactions between teachers and students, orderly class activities, and the overall productive learning environments that Sean, Gary, and John established.

Physical educators who work in high-poverty contexts must understand that students may come to school with a narrower range of appropriate emotional responses than those who are not raised in poverty. Children raised in poverty are more likely to demonstrate the following behaviors in school: “acting-out” behaviors, impatience and impulsivity, gaps in politeness and social graces, limited range of behavioral responses, inappropriate emotional responses, and less empathy for others’ misfortunes (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). Teachers who are unfamiliar with working with children raised in poverty will likely become surprised and discouraged by these behaviors. In their work related to culturally relevant physical education in urban schools, Flory and McCaughtry (2011)
insisted that teachers connect with students by understanding the specific dynamics within the community. They identified the issues of care, respect, language and communication, and curricular content as important ways in which teachers can enact the cultural relevance cycle. The ability to draw upon culturally relevant strategies like using hip-hop music, and merging real stories from the community with theory and research can transform the physical education learning environment for students who may otherwise withdraw from the school environment (Emdin, 2016).

Undoubtedly, the participants in this study worked in an organizational environment where the constraints of poverty were present. However, the organizational environment was supportive, and when threats to their professional, emotional, social, and/or motivational lives were encountered, the individual dispositions of Sean, Gary, and John facilitated a positive response that aided in their ability to bounce back and be resilient. The individual disposition of participants draws attention to the interconnectedness of the dimensions in Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional resiliency framework. The teacher’s demonstrated a sustained commitment to self-improvement and student success by implementing effective teaching practices, continually seeking ways in which to improve teaching effectiveness, and by their ability to positively cope with stressors and manage their emotions effectively in interactions with colleagues and students.

Although this study identified the importance of possessing strong individual dispositions as central to remaining resilient in high-poverty schools, it was not without limitations. Expanding the study to involve more teachers from additional high-poverty communities, or comparing teachers of different resiliency levels may have uncovered additional findings. Further exploration into how resilient physical education teachers possessing individual dispositions for resilience were socialized into the profession is also warranted. The findings of
this study, however, have shed light on valuable characteristics of resilient physical education teachers in high-poverty schools and the ability to remain balanced when threats to an individuals’ professional, emotional, social, and motivational life are present. Understanding these elements that have helped teachers in high-poverty schools remain resilient, despite encountering the barriers that exist can offer tremendous information on identifying teachers with the individual dispositions to succeed in high-poverty schools. Specific to the findings in this study, PETE programs can begin identifying candidates with the individual dispositions that aid in resilience and provide those students experiences in high-poverty schools. This partnership not only would provide PETE students valuable opportunities that can assist in minimizing the effects of reality shock oftentimes experienced by new teachers, but would also provide in-service teachers in high-poverty schools the opportunity to partner with universities and create valuable partnerships between these entities. Not all organizational contexts in high-poverty schools are as supportive as the ones in which Sean, Gary, and John worked; they are oftentimes riddled with challenges unlike other educational settings.

The ability to identify ways in which to increase the resilience capacity of physical education teachers has the potential to decrease the issues surrounding teacher attrition and increase job satisfaction for those working in high-poverty schools.
References for Manuscript One


Chapter 5

Manuscript Two

Abstract

This study examined the resilience capacity of 10 physical educators in two high-poverty school districts (one urban, one rural). Using the social-dimension from Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework for resilience an attempt was made to understand the aspects of the organizational environment that facilitate or impede teacher resiliency. Data were collected through observations, questionnaires, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10, and interviews with physical education teachers and four school administrators (representing six-teacher participants). Constant comparative methods were used to identify emergent themes. Three main themes surfaced: (a) an inconsistency in perceived leadership and support, (b) teacher-student interactions in the organizational environment influenced teacher’s capacity for resilience, and (c) the elevated teacher turnover in the participant’s schools was influential to the teacher’s resilience capacity. Implications signify that in addition to hiring teachers with the individual dispositions to succeed in high-poverty schools, administrators must be identified who possess strong organizational management skills that will facilitate effective leadership in these settings. Additionally, because appropriate pedagogical practices and strategies appear to be possessed by teachers with elevated resiliency, continued professional development opportunities specific to physical education should be provided to those who teach in high-poverty school settings.

Keywords: resiliency, physical education, teacher turnover, educational administration, poverty
Teaching is a challenging profession and as schools continue to change, the role of teacher has become progressively complex. Undoubtedly, it is important for teachers to become resilient if they are to endure in the context of schools today (Gu & Day, 2007). Resilience is defined as the personal qualities that permit one to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003), and is seen as “the capacity to ‘bounce back,’ to recover strengths or spirit quickly, and efficiently in the face of adversity” (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 156). Resilience is a multidimensional characteristic that varies with individuals’ personal contexts and biographical traits that is centered on the life events of the individual (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The literature on teacher resiliency in physical education is nominal, however, selected research on teacher’s careers in the field has underscored the characteristics of the personal and professional supports necessary for physical education teachers to be resilient. For example, in their work with teacher career cycles, Woods and Lynn (2001) used interviews with six physical education teachers and their teacher educators while also directly observing lessons to examine factors that enhanced and constrained teacher career development. The significance of outside support systems (families, professional network, etc.) and individual dispositions to get the most from their students and from their careers allowed several participants to remain motivated and demonstrate elevated resilience. Additionally, environmental factors influence teachers’ resilience and school context and organizational support may have important implications for understanding a teachers’ ability to acquire resilient capacities.

**Theoretical Framework**

Considerable discussion in the research literature relates to the way in which resilience should be conceptualized, whether as a process that is developed over time or as an inherent individual personality trait (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Yonezawa et al., 2011).
While initial studies of resilience examined the characteristics of resilient people (Masten & Gramezy, 1985), more recent analyses focus on the adaptive process that helps individuals develop resiliency (Sammons et al., 2007). This study conceptualizes resilience as having innate qualities, but acknowledges that individual resilience capacity is based, in part on the nature of the contexts in which teachers work, those with whom they interact, and their intrinsic motivation to overcome adversity (Gu & Day, 2007).

In their study, Yonezawa et al. (2011) defined resilience “as a dynamic construct that emerges within the interplay between individuals’ strengths and self-efficacy and social environments in which they live and work” (p. 916). Conceptualizing resilience as a process as opposed to an end product, allows it to be reviewed in relation to the ways in which teachers interact with one another and their environments (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). The interpretation that certain elements of the work environment may influence or threaten teacher resilience has been reinforced in the literature (Benard, 2004; Tait, 2008). Resiliency can be strengthened in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). In Pearce and Morrison’s (2011) narrative inquiry study a beginning teacher named Norah was able to construct resilience despite lack of access to a supportive and collaborative environment with colleagues. The narrative was based on Norah’s: (a) reflections on personal identity, (b) her teaching philosophy, and (c) the accounts and interactions with significant others in her professional life (students, colleagues, and parents). Norah felt secluded and unable to develop into the teacher she wanted to become because her colleagues did not share many of her views about teaching and the importance student learning. By the end of her first year of teaching it
became challenging for Norah to continue to learn and grow in a context of professional conflict. Her ability to come to terms with the dissonance between herself and her professional environment influenced her resilience capacity. Norah’s recognition of her identity, however, resulted in a sense of agency and contributed to her becoming resilient by reinforcing her ability to cope with negative experiences, such as the isolation she experienced in her school.

In an investigation focusing on views of teacher resilience among graduating and early career teachers in Western Australia, Mansfield, Beltman, Price, and McConney (2012) identified 23 aspects of resilience, with the most frequently reported description of a resilient teacher involving the capacity to “bounce back”. In the second phase of the study, the 23 categories were examined based on Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience, which includes profession-related, social, emotional, and motivational factors as constructs that may boost or inhibit the development of teacher resilience. The dimensions that graduating teachers and early career teachers acknowledged most frequently as important to their thinking about teacher resilience was the emotional dimension (61%) followed by motivational dimension (54%), professional related dimension (42%), and social dimension (34%). The multi-dimensional nature of resilience was apparent in the data as 80% of responses were coded in more than one of the four dimensions of resiliency. Differences between the groups were examined based upon the original 23 aspects of resiliency. The two features in which the between-group difference was greater than 10% were both in the emotional dimension. Approximately 14% more graduating teachers, than early career teachers, indicated the ability to “bounce back” as a characteristic of resilient teachers; yet, early career teachers described the significance of taking care of self and maintaining a work-life balance 10% more frequently than graduating teachers. These results suggest that a teacher’s conception of resilience differs by
career stage and experience. Teacher satisfaction and future career decisions are based on a combination of workplace factors—quality of principal leadership, collegial relationships, and aspects of the school culture. Clearly, practitioners and policy makers should come to understand these factors more clearly to improve teacher-working conditions and lessen turnover.

**Four-dimensional framework for resilience.** In an attempt to understand the aspects of the organizational environment that facilitate or impede teacher resiliency, specific attention was paid to the social-related dimension of Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework for resilience. Interactions within this dimension relate to how participants interact socially within their work environments. Examples of the social-dimension include the ways in which teachers develop a support network, collaborate, interact with students, and seek advice in the organizational environment. Resilient teachers within this dimension are adept at solving problems and possess strong interpersonal communication skills that promote resiliency when adverse situations in the work environment are present (Mansfield et al., 2012). The literature suggests that resilience is multi-dimensional (Brunetti, 2006; Castro et al., 2010) and this paper is not attempting to imply that the social-dimension is more valuable to the development of an individual’s resilience capacity than any of the other dimensions in Kumpfer’s (1999) framework. The intent behind focusing on a single dimension of resilience is to develop a better understanding of the potential facilitators and barriers present in high-poverty schools related to physical education teacher resilience.

**Critical in High-Poverty Schools: Strong Organizational Environments**

As leaders, principals are responsible for the establishment of supportive work environments. They are accountable for hiring proficient teachers and support staffs that are committed to a shared vision and mission for the school (Johnson, 2003). Principals create an
atmosphere of trust and support when they shelter teachers from the external burdens and mandates that distract teachers from classroom responsibilities (Achinstein et al., 2010; Richards & Templin, 2011). The relationships that principals establish with parents, students, and community organizations have the chance to expand students’ opportunities to learn (Spillane et al., 2003; Warren, 2005). According to Grissom and Loeb (2011) who surveyed 314 principals and 15,842 teachers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), principals’ roles may be even more significant in high-poverty schools, which is problematic as inexperienced principals often lead high-poverty schools. The survey invited principals to rate their own effectiveness at leading common job tasks in their current schools. Teachers were surveyed on the question of: “To what extent are you generally satisfied with being a teacher in this school?” The potential responses were: dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, and very satisfied. The descriptive analyses of teachers’ work environments, which included ratings of the effectiveness of the principal, revealed that principal ratings were mostly lower in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students. Results from regression analysis demonstrated that principal effectiveness was linked with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher would leave the school within a year. These findings suggest that an effective principal might perhaps offset issues of turnover in high-poverty schools.

In support of this view, Simon and Johnson (2015) examined six studies that analyzed turnover as a function of school context rather than as a function of student demographics. They recommend that principals with strong organizational management skills be encouraged to work in high-poverty schools to address the income-achievement gaps. Principals of schools that retain teachers expect their staff to be lifelong learners who are dedicated to their own personal learning process (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Principals in high-poverty schools who
purposefully develop and maintain a professional culture that allows teachers to be an essential part of the change process are more likely to retain teachers than those principals who do not involve teachers as partners and disparage and maintain control over teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Bryk et al., 2010).

**Collegial support.** Years ago, Lortie (1975) described teachers as having an appreciation for teaching in isolation and away from the scrutiny of others. Research now, however, reports a clear relationship between teachers’ experiences with their colleagues and their commitment to teaching at their schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2014). To this end, principals can support mutual relationships, but productive partnerships require investment from the teachers themselves (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Researchers have identified three factors as essential for productive work with colleagues (Simon & Johnson, 2015). First, an inclusive environment characterized by respect and trust among colleagues. Second, are formal structures that promote collaboration, which is vital because teacher’s value collaboration when it corresponds with their individual needs as a teacher and with the larger plan for improving the program or school (Johnson et al., 2014). And finally, a united mission among teachers is needed for effective collegiality. In high-poverty schools, for instance, teachers oftentimes indicate that they have elected to teach in these contexts because they are determined to help low-income, minority students excel (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2014).

**School culture.** Scholars have not established consensus on the definition of school culture. For example, Johnson et al. (2012) used school culture as a way to forecast teacher satisfaction and turnover. In their work, school culture signified “the extent to which the school environment is characterized by mutual trust, respect, openness, and commitment to student
achievement” (p. 14). The current study concentrated on school culture as explained by Simon and Johnson (2015) who focused on influences that involve teachers’ interactions with students and parents because these interactions oftentimes surface as agents of teacher turnover in high-poverty schools.

**Student discipline in high-poverty schools.** Teachers leave schools in which discipline inhibits them from delivering meaningful instruction (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Ladd, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013). In high-poverty schools, specifically those who serve large portions of minority students, reports of student discipline issues are more common than in wealthier schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). School personnel who work in high-poverty contexts must acknowledge that students come to school with a narrower range of suitable emotional responses than other students. A child who lives in a stressful home environment will likely channel that stress into disruptive behavior at school (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These emotional and social shortfalls are oftentimes mistaken as a lack of respect for teachers (Jensen, 2009). Children raised in poverty are more likely to display the following behaviors in school: “acting-out” behaviors, impatience and impulsivity, gaps in politeness and social graces, limited range of behavioral responses, inappropriate emotional responses, and less empathy for others’ misfortunes (Jensen, 2009, p. 19).

The current study, categorizes an individual’s resilience as being influenced by various, inter-related characteristics (Mansfield et al., 2012), and individual resilience capacity is based on the nature of the contexts in which teachers work, those with whom they interact, and their intrinsic motivation to overcome adversity (Gu & Day, 2007). The teacher participants (N=10) in this study worked in schools of high-poverty and were categorized into two levels of resilience (high-resiliency and low-resiliency). Specific focus in the current study was placed on the
physical context, student and colleague interactions, and the organizational context. In addition, to the physical education teachers, four school administrators (representing six-teacher participants) agreed to formal interviews regarding the resilience capacity of the physical educator(s) in their school. The specific research questions that guided this study were: (a) what are the ways in which the professional culture facilitate or hinder teachers’ capacity for resilience? And, (b) to what extent do relationships with colleagues, students, and their communities enable or impede a teachers’ resilience?

**Methods**

**Participants and Settings**

After Institutional Review Board approval was obtained, multiple narrative research data sources were used in this study including interviews with teachers and school administrators, teachers completion of the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10), and observations of teachers during the school day. The participants (Table 1) included 10 physical education teachers and four school administrators (representing six of the physical education teachers) from two school districts (one rural and one urban) in a Midwestern state during the 2015-2016 school year. The participants included eight male physical education teachers (five elementary, three middle school), two female physical education teachers (one elementary, one middle school), and four building administrators (three elementary, one middle school) responsible for evaluating their respective teacher(s). Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify participants who taught in schools facing extreme poverty (90% or higher free and/or reduced lunch numbers). The teaching experience for the participants in schools facing extreme poverty varied between 1 and 16 years ($M = 7.6$, $SD = 5.56$). The administrators experience in schools of poverty ranged between 3 and 12 years ($M = 7.75$, $SD = 4.43$).
Table 3: Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants (T=Teacher)</th>
<th>Years of Experience in Current Role</th>
<th>School Type (ES= Elementary, MS= Middle School)</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Receiving Free and/or Reduced Lunch at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean (T)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary (T)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (T)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne (T)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan (T)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike (T)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delee (T)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wes (T)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janene (T)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis (T)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Campbell (Sean)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rupple (Gary)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hupfer (John, Janene, Dan)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Cash (Delee)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$M=6.36$
Data Sources

**Teacher Interviews.** The primary method of data collection consisted of both formal and informal interviews with the physical education teachers. The formal interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and utilized an open-ended, semi-structured interview guide to elicit participant responses (Patton, 2002). These interviews were conducted and audio-recorded after the school day in the participants’ school settings. Interviews with physical education teachers offered opportunities to uncover relevant details related to the context of high-poverty schools and the influence that the environment may have on teacher’s resilience capacity. Each participant responded to questions from the interview guide grounded in resilience theory. The interview guide focused on the potential influence that the professional culture might have on teacher’s resilience capacity. The following are examples from the interview guide: (a) *Describe any influence the professional culture has on your ability to remain motivated in your job,* (b) *Describe professional support systems in place within your school and/or district available for you to access for support,* and (c) *Explain whether the professional culture influences your ability to teach students in your school.* In addition to these questions, the interview guide elicited responses regarding specific physical education resources provided by the participant’s school and district. Also, participants were prompted to describe the relationship(s) they have with their colleagues.

Informal conversational interviews occurred on several occasions, including, but not limited to, during teacher shadowing visits when the researchers spoke with teachers before, during, and after physical education classes in the gymnasium and other spaces regularly occupied by the teachers. Follow-up interviews were conducted with each teacher participant through a combination of telephone conversations, emails, and school-site visits to gain
clarification on primary data and cultivate a further understanding of each participant’s context. This research technique permitted the investigators to pose questions that emerged from the previously collected data. The strength of this method was its promotion for flexibility, spontaneity, and opportunities to individualize the conversation with the participant(s) (Patton, 2002). All interviews were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Additionally, documents (lesson plans, curriculum guides, student work, etc.) were used to determine teacher behaviors and other contextually relevant information that make up the physical education environment.

**Teacher Shadowing.** The qualitative shadowing technique was established as a method to reveal not only the structure of a participant’s job duties, but also the details influencing those activities in the corresponding context of an organization (McDonald, 2005). Consequently, the researcher(s) spent one entire school day, beginning when the teacher arrived at school and ending when teacher left the building for the day. During this time continuous field notes were composed that exposed the time, actions, and content of important discourse and exchanges within the school environment. Comprehensive notes were recorded and a sequential commentary was established regarding school context, teacher-student interactions, teacher-colleague interactions, and the body language and mood of the participant(s). This technique facilitated the researcher(s) examination of participant’s job responsibilities more holistically. Additionally, shadowing allowed simultaneous solicitation of opinions and behaviors that produced a narrative delivering insight into the role of a teacher in a high-poverty school.

**Administrator Interviews.** School administrators were formally interviewed for approximately 45-60 minutes. Because of the administrator’s time constraints, phone interviews and email communication were the primary forms of data collection. Interview questions focused on: (a) perceptions of the resilience capacity of the physical education teacher(s), and (b)
perceptions of the established organizational climate and the potential impact on teacher morale and resiliency. Brief follow-up interviews took place to gain a richer understanding of the organizational context described by administrators and for interpretation on initial responses.

**Researcher with a unique perspective.** A significant problem associated with conducting qualitative shadowing is the Hawthorne (Shipman, 1997: 99) or observer effect. This arises when the researcher has an effect on the situation she/he is researching (McDonald, 2005). One strategy identified to lessen the observer effect is to ask participants to discuss how normal their day has been and checking whether participant responses are recurrent with the notes taken (McDonald, 2005). Trustworthiness of data is established by the expertise demonstrated by the researcher. Regardless of the methodology used, every researcher brings preconceived notions regarding the topic under investigation. The primary investigator in the present study had an understanding of what a normal day entailed given that he had previously been employed as a teacher in high-poverty schools.

The capacity to relate to the participants in this study emerged from the primary investigator’s ten years as a National Board Certified physical education teacher in high-poverty schools. The ability to relate to the participants’ experiences can be considered a strength that permitted the researcher to go native during data collection (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992), decreasing the influence of the observer effect. Additionally, the researchers’ experience and understanding of teaching in high-poverty schools permitted further probing into the interactions and influences of the schoolteachers in this study. The professional lived experiences of the primary investigator provided tended to provide immediate credibility with participants that fostered a trusting relationship which promoted the acquisition of valuable information that a researcher without similar experience could have difficulty obtaining.
**Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10).** In an attempt to determine participants’ capacity for resilience, they completed the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC 10) prior to observational data collection. The CD-RISC is a commonly used instrument for measuring resilience in a variety of adult populations. This one-dimensional version has been used with individuals from various occupations, including teachers (Wang, Shi, & Zhang, 2010). For example, in the study by Wang et al. (2010) of 341 primary and secondary Chinese schoolteachers, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) and test-retest correlation was evaluated for the CD-RISC 10. The scale showed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.91) and test-retest reliability ($r = 0.90$ for a two-week interval), which indicate that the measurement error of the scale is small. Participants responded to 10 items by identifying to what extent the items pertained to them over the last month. Responses were arranged on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time). Example items included: “I am able to adapt when changes occur,” “I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships,” and “under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.” According to the scale, when a participants’ total score approaches the number 40, they are identified as more resilient.

**Perceptions of Resilience.** As part of the formal interview, teachers rated their resiliency on a scale of 1-10 (one being low resiliency and ten being high resiliency) and provided an open-ended justification for their rating. Additionally, administrators described the physical education teacher’s resiliency on the same scale. These data (Table 2) combined with the field notes from observations and the professional experience of the primary researcher permitted the research team to determine inferences regarding a teacher’s perceived and actual capacity for resilience. This technique enabled a holistic view of the physical education teacher’s capacity for resilience.
Table 4: Teacher Resiliency Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher (H=High Resiliency; L=Low Resiliency)</th>
<th>Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (Converted to percentage)</th>
<th>Teacher Self-Rating (Percentage)</th>
<th>Combined Percentage (CD RISC-10; Teacher self-rating)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean (H)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary (H)</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne (H)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan (H)</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (H)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike (H)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delee (L)</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wes (L)</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janene (L)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis (L)</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>73.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ M= 83.75 \quad 79 \quad 81.375 \]

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Several techniques were used to ensure the thoroughness of data analysis, thus establishing trustworthiness: (a) cross-checking multiple data sources for consistency to uncover negative cases that could test emerging themes; for example, the researchers carefully inspected and made evaluations between and among interviews; (b) researchers worked as a team increasing the credibility of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and (c) member-checking, by
requesting the participant’s confirm researchers’ findings. All individuals who were interviewed were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on content and accuracy of the final transcript. Qualitative data from interviews with teachers and administrators, as well as documents (lesson plans, curriculum guides, student work, etc.) and field notes, were utilized to determine teacher behaviors and other contextually related information that contributed to the physical education environment. Subsequent to data collection the field notes and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Constant comparative inductive analysis permitted researchers to identify themes and emerging patterns within the data. Interview transcripts were coded individually and compared, and field notes were used to supplement participant responses from the interview data. Data were then analyzed deductively with Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience in order to confirm the accuracy of the inductive content (Patton, 2002). Participants were provided copies of interview transcripts to verify responses and insure the truthfulness and accuracy of information they provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to protect the dependability of the findings, document analysis of teachers’ lesson plans and curricular materials were used to “provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behavior of those in the group under scrutiny, as well as to verify particular details that participants have supplied” (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).

The resiliency data from the CD-RISC 10, as well as the teacher and administrator’s perceptions of resiliency, were used as a tool for triangulation. The CD-RISC 10 data and teacher self-rating scores were converted into percentages and compared (Table 2). After these data were analyzed, the CD-RISC 10 and teacher self-rating percentages were combined to create an overall teacher resiliency score ($M = 81.37\%$), which was utilized to rank teachers in one of two categories (high resiliency, and low resiliency). The administrator’s perceptions of teacher
resiliency data were analyzed and compared to the overall teacher resiliency score, which created a holistic view of physical education teacher resiliency. Finally, the entire research process was shared with peer debriefers who are expert qualitative researchers.

**Findings**

Findings indicate that the structure of schools’ organizational environments can serve as an indicator of elevated or decreased resilience capacity among physical education teachers. The findings identify influences that promote or inhibit physical education teacher resiliency based upon the organizational context of physical education teachers’ working in high-poverty schools. The three main themes are: (a) inconsistency in perceived leadership and support, (b) teacher-student interactions in the organizational environment influence teacher’s capacity for resilience, and (c) the high rate of teacher turnover in participants’ schools influenced their resilience capacity.

**Organizational Context as an Indicator of Resilience**

Although each school represented in this study included students living in extreme levels of poverty, the organizational environments in which the participant’s worked varied based upon the physical settings, school culture, and student and collegial interactions. These differences combined with each teacher’s individual dispositions served as indicators of his/her capacities for resiliency. The following sections outline key areas within schools’ organizational environments that influenced the ability for teachers to remain resilient in high-poverty schools.

**Well-Maintained Physical Spaces**

*High-resilient teachers.* Most participants’ functioned in physical settings that were clean and inviting. The spaces in which the participants taught were conducive to promoting effective teaching and student learning. For example, in Sean’s gym the facilities were large and
immaculately clean. He mentioned during an informal interview that the custodian is a former student at the elementary school who takes tremendous pride in the gym’s appearance. In Sean’s gymnasium students had access to a climbing wall, Safari Jungle Gym, stereo, and a vast amount of equipment neatly organized in a storage closet. Two large whiteboards listed classroom rules along with daily learning objectives and activities. In addition, a PE Student of the Month wall recognized those who exceeded Sean’s expectations for physical education. The walls in Sean’s gym were covered with posters related to health and physical education. When asked about the map of the United States on his gym walls, Sean explained that the map was used for a States Lingo Bingo game. When the researcher inquired about his extensive equipment, Sean explained, “I get about $700 per year. I get grants from my district and Jump Rope for Heart…there is money available, other teachers are just too lazy to go get it.” Sean referenced the large number of “lazy” teachers that work in his district several times during informal conversations.

The gym in high-resilient teacher Gary’s elementary school, had the feel of a scene from the movie Hoosiers—with old, wood-stained bleachers on one side and a large stage on the opposite side, separated by a small, but well maintained basketball court. Gary’s gym was not as clean as Sean’s, but Gary’s had a similar inviting aura that was unmistakable. There were numerous posters on the walls including: the systems of the body, Presidential Fitness Test benchmarks, the local high school football team schedule, problem solving steps, United States and World maps, multiplication tables, and a poster with the school’s Three B’s initiative (Be respectful, Be responsible, Be safe). To begin each class period, Gary pointed to a specific muscle group on the muscular system chart and students performed the appropriate stretch for the identified muscle group.
**Low-resilient teachers.** In Wes’s elementary gymnasium, the area was clean and filled with natural light. He had a climbing wall; an acceptable amount of equipment, and the gym walls had posters representing regional amateur and professional sports teams. Wes used a word wall as a focal point for teaching personal and social behavior. The following words appeared on the wall: leadership, cooperation, sportsmanship, kindness, sharing, improvement, and respect. Although the word wall had the potential for impactful teaching and learning to occur, Wes’s implementation was not consistent between classes and his efforts fell short of accomplishing the goal of promoting the behaviors listed on the word wall. Additionally, Wes had a stereo system available but did not utilize it during any observed classes during entire school day that the researcher was present.

Curtis’ middle school gym was large with bleachers on both sides of the clean, well-maintained basketball court. The walls had just been painted in the school colors and a large cutout of the school’s mascot was on one sidewall of the gym. The school had recently installed an in-wall stereo system located in the spacious equipment closet. Although the equipment closet was spacious, there was little-to-no equipment and what was available seemed old and in need of replacing. Students in Curtis’ classes participate in Sport Education activities, therefore, posted near the exit door were several separate papers in sheet protectors that listed: team rosters, season schedule, and class standings.

**Influence of Students in the Physical Space on Resilience Capacity**

An additional theme related to the influence of the physical settings on teacher’s resiliency was their students. Students living in poverty are more likely to be deprived of a caring, dependable adult in their lives, and it is frequently teachers to whom they look for that help (Jensen, 2009). The teachers of students living in poverty are oftentimes ill equipped for the
challenges that these students bring to school. Schools and teachers can further impair students’ feelings of deficiency by the tasks and experiences they provide. This additional deficiency is defined as the “pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991). The lowered expectations that are commonplace in many schools of poverty are rooted in the belief that students are incapable of learning. However, when students have teachers who have elevated content knowledge and deliver an engaging curriculum that brings stimulating instructional opportunities to students, they have a much better chance at success (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). An inconsistency existed among teachers of different resiliency levels and the types of student interactions in which they engaged.

Three major themes reflecting highly resilient teachers, as opposed to lower resilient teachers, related to their interactions with students, they: (1) held high expectations for students, (2) created a fun and engaging learning environment, and (3) demonstrated a willingness to change to benefit student learning. Sean, Gary, Wayne, Dane, John, and Mike clearly held high expectations for their students. Sean’s students consistently entered the gym quietly and reported to the designated line to hear the objectives for the class period. He explained that he is vigilant with his classes the first three weeks of school—his strategy apparently works as every observed class was on task and focused on the lesson objectives. Sean’s principal, Mr. Campbell said about him, “He’s one of three males in the building and is probably more authoritative than I am, he has to correct students and that is just his nature—but the students have a healthy respect for that.” Sean explained his reason for creating a mutually respectful environment between the students and himself, “You have to establish routines and rules early on, reteach them constantly for the first two months of school and then it works itself out—just be consistent and fair.”
also emphasized the importance of “being fair and holding students to high expectations behaviorally and academically.” His principal, Mr. Hupfer revealed:

He’s (John) consistent. He doesn’t waiver or change his stance, so the students know what to expect. There is no gray area—the students know that they are expected to participate and typically the student’s won’t look for a way out of activities.

In Gary’s school, staff members are determined to change students’ perspectives on life. For example, Gary mentioned, “My goal is to change their mindset about who they are. They are not these poor kids that have no future—they are strong, smart, and can do anything if they put their mind to it.” He added, “The main problem is that if they think that they are poor and dumb then they are going to act like that. But if they start thinking they are smart, then maybe they can accomplish something.” Evidence of this pedagogical approach was present in Gary’s classes. In his gym is an “I Can” board that lists goals for which the students will strive during the class period. During the first visit to his classes, the board listed the following: stretch and improve flexibility, learn the volleyball bump pass, learn the major bones of the body, and identify rules and procedures. Another example was observed with the way in which Gary ends each class period. He chose one student and asked the others to name at least three positive things that the selected student accomplished during class. The activity was successful because both the students providing the compliments took their task seriously and the individual’s receiving praise were receptive to the compliments.

The importance of teachers holding high expectations is critical, but also important is the teachers’ demonstration of a genuine understanding of students’ needs while creating a fun and engaging learning environment. The highly resilient teachers established learning environments in which students appeared to feel safe to explore the space in ways that would fit their
individual needs. Gary said, “It might be a bit more work for me but I do different things according to their (students) needs not mine.” Gary was observed being very positive and involved with the students throughout the day, inquiring into student’s lives when he saw them in common areas throughout the school. When asked about how he engages students throughout the day, he said, “I try to say, ‘hi’ and smile at them, give them a high-five or just pull their hat over their eyes—do something goofy.” He added that during class, “I try to keep a friendly relationship with them. I joke with them, and sometimes even play a tag game with them.”

In a similar way, Sean’s goal is for his students to have a positive overall experience. The research team witnessed this during observations, as students were smiling, and willing to help each other be successful during activities. Sean said, “I want to make PE fun. I want to make sure they’re learning multiple skills, increasing their confidence in their abilities, and learn to cooperate with others.” At the middle school level, John wanted to ensure that his lessons promoted student success by creating a comfortable learning environment. In his formal interview he said, “I try to increase their comfort level where they feel more inclined to participate at a higher level.” The researchers noted that John structured his classes with more of an individual focus and less large-group oriented activities. By playing music and engaging in small-sided games and activities, John created an environment in which less-confident students were unlikely to sense that they were in the spotlight. He verified this observation when he said, “I try to make it so they’re (lower skilled students) not worried about whether or not they’re going to fail at the next task—rather that they’re participating at a high level and giving maximum effort.” John, Sean, and Gary showed a dedication within their approach to learning by differentiating instruction and creating an environment in which all students had equal access to knowledge based upon individual needs.
The idea of change can be difficult, especially for teachers who have taught for many years. During informal and formal conversations, Sean, Gary, and John all stressed the importance of making changes not only to their programs, but also to their individual approaches to teaching over the years. For example, Sean stated, “My whole philosophy changed once I met a couple of people. I realized I didn’t have to do six-week units anymore—let’s make this fun and get kids moving and provide a positive experience for them.” Regarding ways in which his instruction has changed to benefit student learning, John noted, “I use a more differentiated approach, my overall goal is to try to meet students at their level.” He added:

In the beginning (of career) I catered towards the athlete’s in my classes, attempting to be more technical in my instruction. I still am able to use that strategy with those students, but now I am also able to make cues simpler for the students who need that approach.

When discussing how he had changed his approaches to teaching to increase his students learning, Gary reflected on the adjustments he made in handling discipline issues in the past:

I was not very flexible. I had my expectations (for students) and I expected them to do it regardless of how they felt. I was a lot stricter back then. I would engage in yelling and took their behavior personally—I would put gas on the fire, which created a bad environment. Now I focus on the larger group of students who are following procedures and calmly separate, then work individually with those who are disrupting. This has been a much better approach.

Gary’s approach to discipline was observed multiple times when he separated students who were not following class procedures. He proceeded to direct the larger group of students’ participation in an activity and then he individually addressed the students with behavior issues. They ultimately returned to the activity when they were focused and ready to participate. When
discussing this practice, Gary said, “There are more instances of disrespect and defiance than in the past, but I actually help my students manage their behavior better, and that makes it easier to control.”

Although Dan, who was within the high resilience level, discussed the importance of student exploration in his classes, saying, “Kids don’t necessarily like to be instructed, they like to discover and sometimes I’ll just give them the basics and let them work to build on the basics.” This teaching approach, however, was not observed. The students were instead given a “free day” in which they could either play indoor soccer, basketball, or walk around the outside of the basketball court. Additionally, Dan’s grading procedures were not consistent with the objectives of physical education. He explained his grading procedures:

It says on the rubric to earn all four points for participation they have to respect their classmates, the equipment and me. So, if they aren’t listening to me or if they’re pushing other students, bad mouthing, or trying to break stuff, I deduct points. Honestly, there have been some kids that talk throughout my entire instruction time and they don’t get any points—so times like that I hit them really hard with deductions.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the ways in which the teachers in the high-resiliency category including Sean, Gary, John, and Mike, attempt to create a learning environment that promotes resiliency and the approach taken by Dan and Wayne, who seem to be outliers within the high-resiliency category. Wayne discussed his difficulty in dealing with student discipline by saying, “I don’t know how to deal with the kids that will literally sprint out of the gym at any point.” The observation of Wayne would support this as he became frantic when two boys in his kindergarten class constantly attempted to leave the gym without permission.
Student interactions and resilience levels. The primary difference between highly resilient teachers and the low resilient teachers was the inconsistency that was present with the lower resilience level teachers in their procedures, instructions, and interactions with students. During the formal interview with Wes, a low-resilience teacher, who had transitioned from middle school to the elementary level in an attempt to get away from the student discipline struggles, mentioned, “If the school is not in order to a certain level, that would wear you out. It’d wear you out.” This was puzzling because among the entire group of teachers in this study; Wes had the least organization and structure in his classes. The environment that Wes established was a breeding ground for chaos. For example, during a first grade class, students left the gym without permission, played on the climbing wall without supervision, and many were tripping and kicking each other. When a girl began crying during class, Wes never assisted her, instead he told the researcher, “She cries about three times a class.” Rather than addressing student misbehavior, Wes told a member of the research team, “We’re about ready to get rid of these (students).” He commented about his struggles in dealing with student behavior during the formal interview saying, “I’ve got to get better, but I just got lazy and I’m tired. The first graders are pretty challenging but I need to find a way to get a second wind.” It became apparent during observations and from the formal interview, that Wes’s lack of planning, organization and his inconsistency in dealing with student discipline were influenced by his level of resilience. Teachers who understand the needs of students living in poverty and have an elevated capacity for resilience are better able to stay the course in these contexts. Overall, when examined as an independent source of teacher resilience, the physical setting, which includes students, was not deemed to be a significant facilitator or barrier to a teachers’ capacity for resilience. Although the culture in many of the gymnasiums in this study were positive and
influenced a teacher’s resilience minimally, the overall culture of schools had a more significant impact.

**School Culture**

The damaging effect that teacher attrition brings to schools of poverty directly influences the lives of students, teachers, and administrators in these contexts. In their work, Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner (2007) described that teachers are more likely to leave high-poverty, high-minority schools because they possibly do not enjoy the organizational environment of these settings. Therefore, understanding the type of school culture that exists can help explain the types of organizational environments that are present at each resilience level. Two primary themes emerged related to the school culture and its influence on teacher resiliency: (a) The extreme amount of teacher turnover in the participants’ schools created an inconsistency that influenced teacher resiliency, especially for those teachers identified as having lower resilience, and (b) teacher perceptions of the leadership and support by administration was a key indicator of teacher resilience.

The main theme related to school culture was the instability of the teaching staff at their schools. For example, although identified as a high resilient teacher, Wayne mentioned, “There’s been a lot of turnover and the school district has eliminated several teaching aide positions.” Dan, another high resilient teacher mentioned, “Over fifty-percent of our teaching staff is brand new to the school this year.” Mike who is a high-resilient teacher, actually referenced Dan’s school during his interview while discussing the issue of teacher turnover, “When I first started there was a high turnover rate in this district. At my school it wasn’t too bad this year compared to the middle school (Dan’s school).” Discussing the issue of turnover in his school, Curtis, a low-resilient teacher, stated, “I would say about fifty-percent of teachers like their jobs. There is
so much turnover every year with teachers and administrators it’s hard to have any stability—not just for the faculty but for the students as well.” He added, “I don’t feel everyone on staff shares the vision of administration and I can’t say I blame them because more than likely they (administration) will be gone sooner than later.” Low-resilient teacher Delee echoed Curtis’ frustration with regards to the turnover of administration at her school by saying, “We had a really strong principal during my first three years, but they moved her. The district keeps juggling them (principals) from school-to-school and it influences the staff and students.”

Delee’s frustration with the issues of turnover at her school was not related to how it influenced her capacity for resilience but rather the impact it had on the students, she said, “The students are the ones that suffer the most; it frustrates me that the higher-ups (district officials) can’t see this when they are making their decisions.”

Similar to the issue of teacher turnover, as teachers moved further down the resilience rating scale from high to low resilience, the perceived lack of administration leadership and support was a key indicator of lower teacher resilience. For example, when discussing the professional culture in his school, high resilience teacher Gary described, “We have a really good group of teachers and staff.” When question about the extent to which the professional culture influenced his ability to teach students, he added, “It doesn’t influence my ability to teach, but it influences my approach because I know what’s going on in the neighborhood.” Prior to the start of each school year, the teacher’s at Gary’s school visited students in their neighborhoods to introduce themselves to families and establish a partnership. His principal, Ms. Rupple, established a voluntary book club in which staff members read The Energy Bus, by Jon Gordon. The book provides rules for life, work, and provides examples of how to build positive energy within a team. Gary explained, “It’s all about being positive. It’s very practical and everybody is
excited because we are working towards a common goal to help these kids.” Additionally, two churches in the vicinity of the school provide teachers at Gary’s school with support such as catered luncheons and funds for classrooms supplies and materials. Principal Rupple stated, “We have worked for seven years to get the right people in the right places and we finally feel like we made it.” On several occasions during the formal interview Principal Rupple referred to the large amount of time and effort it took to get teachers and support staff in place that believed in her mission and vision for the school.

John, a high resilience teacher, referred to the professional culture at his school as a “mixed bag.” He explained, “there is a wide variety of teachers that are there because there is nothing else for them to do, and then there are teacher’s that are there because they love what they do.” In relation to the influence of the professional culture on his teaching, John said that he does his “own thing” and the “best” that he could in teaching his classes. He described a change in the professional culture of his school due to the constant change in administrative leadership, “The leader right now is kind of out of touch with what being a classroom teacher is because of their lack of experience as a teacher prior to becoming a principal.” John explained that he sensed resentment among the teachers within his school, “…because teachers don’t take it (teaching) as serious as they would if they believed the principal knew what they were going through and understood the challenges they were facing on a daily basis.” John felt supported by his principal, Mr. Hupfer, because of “mutual respect”…“We respect each other and allow each other to do their jobs.” John’s principal, believed the professional culture influenced morale:

If a teacher is consistently late for work, or consistently absent on Fridays in the spring—in situations like those it wears down the staff and can splinter them. Teachers begin to resent others and may become less willing to work as a team.
Overall, John was complimentary of the individuals with whom he worked, “There are colleagues here who are my friends—my wife and I went through a really tough situation a few years back and people reached out and were supportive of us and our situation.” The camaraderie of John’s fellow teachers was observed during their lunch period as they ate together and seemed to genuinely enjoy each other’s company as witnessed by the many smiles and hearty laughter among the teachers. Mr. Hupfer discussed administrative efforts to keep the teachers at John’s school engaged and feeling supported, “We don’t want them (teachers) to get burned out. We know their time is limited and it’s a frustrating job with budget cuts and other external factors that we can’t control.” He added,

There are things we can do here to reward them. We established a point system for teachers that meet the school’s expectations. Whether it’s completing a school survey, turning in professional development plans, or other tasks they are expected to do. Teachers earn points and then we reward the top earners.

Mr. Hupfer referenced the following as possible rewards: permitted absence from a staff meeting, or administrators providing class coverage for 30 minutes. John explained the support he sensed,

I have a lot of support within this community; a lot of children have gone through here (his class). They appreciate what I do because there have been a lot of PE teachers whom have damaged our profession by just rolling out the balls.

When high-resilient teacher Sean was asked about school culture he said, “It begins with the administration.” His principal, Mr. Campbell described the professional culture of the school as being at a high-level. He stated, “it’s well balanced, we are continually trying to be nurturing and caring and focused on the students…everyone at school keeps the students in the front of their
mind when they are approaching their work.” Regarding his colleagues, Sean mentioned, “We get along pretty well together. There’s a lot of communication, and we handle discipline issues with students regardless of which class the students may be in—we look out for each other, so that helps out a lot.” Principal Campbell reinforced this sentiment, “They (teachers) are all very professional and they get the job done.”

The administration’s expectations were troublesome in high-resilient teacher Wayne’s view, and impacted his resilience capacity because he feels overworked. For example, “The administration expects us (teachers) to do every possible thing, every single day.” He added, “I kind of bring it on myself because I’m willing to do it, but certain days are really—just nonstop.”

The frustration that came with high-resilience level teacher Dan was in the way his administration seemed to marginalize physical education and prioritize other school activities more. He said, “Last week we had a clinic come in to do dental work and that was done during PE time, all the incentive days, and bus evacuation was done during PE time.” Dan added, “It makes sense because a large group of students are centralized, but it’s just like, guys (administration) we’ve gotta teach too. Right?” Despite this frustration, Dan felt supported by his administrators. He said, “The principals have been extremely open to talking with me and giving me feedback.” Mr. Hupfer, (his principal), was a former physical education teacher, so Dan mentioned, “It’s good to get information from him.” Although the inconsistency associated with high-turnover rate was evident in highly resilient teacher Mike’s school, he referenced the importance of schools having one “common language” to create a conducive working and learning environment. In his school this took time, for example, he said:

When we’re walking in the hallways all students in the school know to walk on the right side of the silver line. When we first started we had some teachers that asked what’s this
silver line—so we as a teaching staff took a step back to ensure everyone understood our common language.

The value of a consistent mission, vision, and an established environment of collegial support appear to be important to the development and maintenance of resilience capacity.

**Perceptions of school culture and low-resilient teachers.** All three teachers with lower levels of high-resiliency spoke of a generally supportive environments in which they worked towards a common goal. Mike emphasized, “Everyone is working towards a common goal here, and I feel lucky because talking to other teachers in other districts, it’s not the same.” Dan reiterated that at his school, “We all may have our differences but at the same time we have a common goal to make sure the students are getting the best education possible.” Dan’s principal Mr. Hupfer agrees, “It’s really a family here, the teachers are very close.” When discussing whether or the professional culture influences his ability to teach, Wayne said, “I feel like if I’m having a bad day, usually the teachers can pick me up a little bit—we all get along really well here as a staff.” Although there seemed to be a good connection among teachers, the views of Wayne and Dan shifted more negatively when discussing the administration at their schools.

The teacher’s with lower resiliency demonstrated a wide range of responses in terms of the cultures of their schools. The teachers within this level: Delee, Wes, Janene, and Curtis did not experience completely different facilitators and barriers than those teachers in the high level of resiliency; the differences however, were in the lowered perception of support from their administration and the low-resilient teacher’s responses to situations in the school culture that had potential to influence their capacities for resilience. For example, Delee stated, “We try to be like family because the students might not go home and have family per se, so we try to be their family.” She gave an example of how they accomplish this, “If I’m talking to a student about a
colleague, I’ll refer to the colleague as my family—just because they’re not your real brother or sister doesn’t mean you can’t care for and look after each other.” Delee was observed speaking with a fifth grade teacher and referred to her as being her sister.

Although Delee supported the notion of family, she was observed to be frustrated when a second grade teacher was late to pick her class up from the gym. The manner and tone in which she used to address her frustration to the second grade teacher in front of the students was not a good example of a proper way to treat a family member. When speaking with Delee’s principal, Ms. Cash, about the professional culture at the school she said, “The morale was good at first but sometimes you hear about the staff complaining—like teacher’s aren’t doing their part and as the administrator you can see teachers getting burned out around October or November.” When asked what she was doing to change this, she said, “Teachers just want to be heard, so a lot of time it’s just listening to the teacher.” Principal Cash also gave examples of other initiatives to help with morale, “I partnered with the social committee and we have things in place each month to recognize staff members for various things and offer them gift cards. I’ll buy them breakfast or lunch sometimes also.”

Janene felt that the teaching staff was “pretty close knit” even though half of the staff was brand new. She explained, “It’s a very upbeat kind of family type of culture.” Janene viewed the administration as more problematic, “They are new to the building so they’re struggling with different things and they are not one-hundred percent sure how to run it—they treat the staff like children and are very inconsistent with their expectations of us (teachers).” She also said that the lack of consistency from her administration was the biggest threat to her resiliency. For example, “With the support not always being there and the inconsistency in expectations is probably the biggest threat to my resiliency because it’s like this isn’t acceptable today but tomorrow it might
be.” Interestingly, Wes who formerly worked at Janene’s school discussed the culture at his current elementary school, “The culture is good, and I’ve worked in other cultures (Janene’s school) that are not good and you don’t know whom to trust, and that’s not good. Here I feel comfortable with my coworkers and the administration.” The primary issue with this lower resilient level group of teacher’s involves the inconsistency in dealing with the elements in the school’s culture. This is due in part to the amount of teacher and principal turnover experienced as well as the inconsistency in expectations and communication at these teacher’s schools.

**The Fine Line Between Resilience Capacity: Sean and Delee**

The following comparison demonstrates the minimal separation existing between being a highly resilient teacher like Sean and a low-resilient teacher like Delee. Delee’s low score on the resiliency measures were unexpected; however, it was not surprising from data collection that Sean would be rated as a highly resilient teacher. During observations both Sean and Delee seemed to be important members of their faculty to both students and the principal. A few days prior to the research team visiting Delee’s school, a situation involving a parent threatening the lives of faculty members occurred. While the research team was observing, the principal, Ms. Cash, called Delee into a private meeting to discuss how best to communicate the development of the situation with the rest of the faculty. In a formal interview, Ms. Cash reinforced the importance of Delee to the school saying, “I rely on her more than I do other staff just because she’s so outgoing and willing to help out. She does a lot for me.” Discussing Delee’s ability to manage students, Ms. Cash continued:

She doesn’t make small issues into big issues—she’s proactive and not reactive, that’s what makes her strong. She builds really good relationships with her students and to me that’s so important and it goes a long way with student behavior. When behavior issues
do arise, she’s really calm and gives them a break if needed. She’s really flexible because she understands their background.

The sentiments that Principal Cash expressed about Delee were confirmed during observations. She (Delee) was observed taking the time to tie student’s shoes, never raised her voice but was stern, and she held students accountable—refocusing them when necessary. When asked about her personal resiliency, Delee, showing the dedication she has for her students, turned the discussion to how resilient they are which in turn makes her resilient, she explained, “We send food home on Fridays with about sixty children because we know on the weekends they don’t have anything to eat or don’t have the power to cook food.” She continued discussing how her student’s resiliency builds her own:

And then to see them (students) walk into school in the morning in the same clothes they had on the day before, I think it’s amazing how resilient they are because then a half hour later I see them with their friends doing normal, everyday things and I wonder what their evening was like and where they slept . . . and am just amazed by it. So when I go through struggles in life, I come here (school) and my problems are gone because these kids are here and I’m amazed at what they have gone through.

Although both Sean and Delee were very strong in their care and concern for students’ wellbeing, the threats to Delee’s resiliency were related to her lack of organization and structure within her lessons and the physical conditions and impediments present in the gymnasium.

Whereas Sean had ample space and access to equipment in a clean, and well-lit gym, Delee’s gym was by far the smallest of any teachers in the study. Perhaps what made the circumstances most difficult for Delee, however, was the fact that her gym doubled as the cafeteria. Two large freezers were protruding onto the gym floor; other miscellaneous cafeteria equipment and stacks
of folding chairs were near areas where students participated in activities—presenting serious safety concerns for the students. During a class activity, a gator skin ball rolled into the area where lunch was being served and became stuck on a rattrap. Additionally, the rear door to the gym was the location for cafeteria. Unfortunately, when it is cold outside it is impossible to keep the gym at a comfortable temperature due to the traffic in and out of the gym door. During the formal interview when Delee was asked about her ideal instructional context, she said, “A huge field house with everything (laughter)…a nice sized gym with no distractions for the kids and no freezers in my way, no random tables, no trashcans, a clean floor, and limitless equipment.” When responding to a similar question, Sean had a difficult time thinking about what he would change about his current situation. Obviously, there was disconnect from the context in which Delee taught and the context she desired, potentially influencing her capacity for resilience negatively.

The other potential influence on Delee’s capacity to be resilient, that was not observed with Sean, was that although both possessed great ability to teach students in the affective domain, Delee’s developmentally inappropriate selection of physical education games and activities led to student safety concerns and behavior issues during observed lessons. All grade levels (K-5) played Pinball, which is a form of dodge ball. During an informal conversation with Delee she mentioned that her classes had been playing versions of Pinball for two weeks. The only semblance of instruction that Delee made to the classes was when she stated, “No one should get hit in the face with the ball.” Although this was her only direction, several students throughout the day were hit in the face and many seemed intentional, including a second grade student who was brought to tears with little concern for the situation showed by Delee.
Another alarming observation was the amount of negative competition that Pinball promoted which led to student confrontations regarding cheating and fights for the few dodge balls that were used in the game. Delee demonstrated a concern for the safety and wellbeing of her students outside of her class, but her lack of commitment to providing a safe physical education environment created many tense moments throughout the day that required her intervention. Handling these issues repeatedly over time could be what led to Delee’s low level of resiliency. The detailed planning, organization, and delivery of instruction that Sean demonstrated were far different from Delee’s. Whereas Delee played the same activity (Pinball) across all grade levels, Sean changed activities from grade level-to-grade level and differentiated instruction when necessary and based upon the needs of the students in his class. Many similarities exist between Sean and Delee related to their value to their schools and their ability to engage student learning in the affective domain. The data uncovered that the fine line that appears to separate a highly resilient teacher like Sean from a low level resilient teacher like Delee is the utilization of appropriate instructional practices.

**Discussion**

This study pursued an understanding of the type of influence that the social dimension of resilience (Kumpfer, 1999) has on physical education teacher resilience in high-poverty schools within the organizational environment. The specific research questions that guided this study were: (a) how does the professional culture facilitate or hinder teachers’ capacity for resilience? And, (b) to what extent do relationships with colleagues, students, and their communities enable or impede a teachers’ resilience? The physical education teachers who worked in schools in which the principal worked to develop and maintain a professional culture possessed higher
levels of resiliency. The most resilient teacher’s in this study all had had experiences with colleagues that promoted a commitment to student learning and development as a teacher.

Principals’ organizational management skills are important to teacher retention (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). In Johnson and Birkeland’s (2003) work, one teacher had left the classroom altogether because of a principal whose leadership skills caused the school to “unravel” (p. 596). Poor administrative management has shown to destabilize teachers’ classroom work by diminishing the amount of effective instructional time (Bryk et al., 2010). In the current study the three teachers’ who were most resilient worked within supportive leadership that created a positive working environment.

All participants in this study worked in an organizational environment in which the constraints of poverty were present. The difference between the supportive organizational environments and those that were less supportive, was that the most resilient teachers worked in environments where formal structures were in place that promoted collaboration, respect and trust, and maintained a united mission and vision for student learning amongst teachers. These findings are similar to Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) work on school-based relationships that revealed trust to be a condition for building learning communities where teachers count on one another. The schools in the present study that had a sustained commitment to teacher improvement and student success employed physical education teachers that implemented effective teaching practices, continued to seek ways in which to improve teaching effectiveness, and were able manage their emotions effectively in interactions with colleagues and students.

The variations in size, cleanliness, and access to equipment were not consistent among teachers at any single level of resiliency making it difficult to determine a teacher’s capacity for resilience based solely on the physical space in which he/she teaches. This fact was evident when
examining John, Dan, and Janene whom all possess differing levels of resiliency and share a gym at the same middle school. The physical setting in their middle school gym although large and filled with natural light, had an atmosphere that was musty and old. The dreary nature of the gym felt more institutional than educational and did not represent a source of motivation for students to become excited about being physically active. Highly resilient teacher John was observed elevating student energy with his approaches to student interaction and instruction unlike fellow high-resilient teacher Dan and low-resilient teacher Janene, both of whom spent minimal time interacting with students and were more rigid in their approach to instruction. It became evident that the individual dispositions of the teacher’s in this study were more impactful on teacher resilience than the physical settings in which they taught.

The most resilient teachers in this study demonstrated the ability to create a fun and engaging learning environment while maintaining high expectations for their students. For example, located on the walls of the gym entrance in high resilient teacher Wayne’s gym were posters of motivational quotes for physical education, one poster stated, Physical Education—“Every child is a winner when they try their best.” During class activities, music played from the stereo system and although Wayne had the class routine oriented, the students’ smiles indicated they were enjoying the class atmosphere. The resilient teachers also demonstrated a willingness to change to benefit student learning. This was demonstrated by their flexibility in adapting their lessons when necessary, including before, during, and after classes. The highly resilient teachers were observed making both small adjustments to rules and procedures of a class activity and also making larger changes to the entire structure of lessons when necessary.

Although this study identified the importance of schools possessing a strong organizational environment as central to physical education teachers developing and maintaining
resilience in high-poverty schools, the current study was not without limitations. Expanding the study to involve more teachers from additional high-poverty communities is warranted. Further exploration into the individual dispositions of resilient physical education teachers who work in less than ideal organizational contexts could add valuable insight to the true importance of a school’s organizational context. Gaining additional insight into the realities and perceptions of physical education teachers who work in high-poverty schools can provide additional perspective about the importance of supportive organizational environments. Additionally, continuing to study any changes to the resilience capacity of participants longitudinally has the potential to provide valuable information to the field of education. The findings of this study, however, have shed light on valuable similarities and differences between resilient and less resilient physical education teachers in high-poverty schools. Understanding these variables can offer tremendous information on how school leadership can create organizational environments that facilitate teacher resiliency. Specific to the findings in this study, in addition to hiring teachers with the individual dispositions to succeed in high-poverty schools, administrators must be identified who possess strong organizational management skills that will facilitate effective leadership in these settings. Additionally, because appropriate pedagogical practices and strategies appear to be valuable in teachers with elevated resiliency, continued professional development opportunities specific to physical education should be provided to those who teach in high-poverty school settings. The use of Kumpfer’s (1999) framework for resilience to examine the influence of the organizational environment in high-poverty schools on physical education teacher resilience has potential implications for physical education teacher education (PETE) programs and professional development. Because resiliency is multi-dimensional and dynamic, PETE
programs that seek to facilitate the development of teachers’ resilience should address each of the four-dimensions of Kumpfer’s (1999) framework at designated times during teacher training.

**References For Manuscript Two**


Chapter 6

Manuscript Three

Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to explain the importance of recruiting, training, and retaining resilient physical education teachers in urban schools that experience the constraints of poverty. The content of physical education provides the potential to empower students to learn and develop skills necessary to take ownership of their lives physically, emotionally, and socially. The applicable research literature and the experiences of physical education teachers throughout the socialization process provides the base for future research to be conducted in urban school contexts facing severe poverty to enhance physical education teacher education (PETE) programs, school policy reform, and pre-service/in-service teacher support programs. Resiliency can be reinforced in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). The capacity to discover features of the personal and professional supports required for physical education teachers to be resilient is essential.

Keywords: socialization, resiliency, urban education, poverty, teaching, teacher education
Teaching is a demanding profession and as schools continue to change, the role of schoolteacher has become increasingly complicated. Undoubtedly, the importance of being resilient is fundamental to a teacher’s ability to survive in the context of schools (Gu & Day, 2007). Resilience is the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003) and is seen as “the capacity to ‘bounce back,’ to recover strengths or spirit quickly, and efficiently in the face of adversity” (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 156). It is a multidimensional characteristic that varies with individuals’ personal contexts and biographical traits and is based on the life circumstances of the individual (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Teachers are no different than most people in that they seek joy over unhappiness in their personal and professional lives. Their visible emotions, however, may conceal their true feelings. This makes it nearly impossible for colleagues and school administrators, even those with great capacity for emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996), to understand and manage teachers’ true feelings towards their jobs. Nevertheless, school administrators may create environments that either support or impede teachers’ attitudes about their jobs by the organizational structures and cultures they establish in schools and through the relationships they promote. The short and long term consequences related to the emotional context of teachers’ lives in classrooms and schools may affect their self-efficacy, sense of professional identity, and ultimately their commitment and ability to teach their best (Day & Gu, 2010).

The purpose of this literature review is to demonstrate the importance of recruiting, training, and retaining resilient physical education teachers in urban schools that endure the constraints of poverty. Milner (2012) asserts, urban schools can be classified as: (a) urban intensive—these schools are near large metropolitan areas, (b) urban emergent—located in large
cities but not as large as the urban intensive areas, and (c) urban characteristic—schools are beginning to experience some of the challenges of urban schools in larger areas. The literature has shown there is discrepancies in the ways that schools prepare students for their futures. For example, in urban high-poverty environments, schools have been shown to prepare students to simply follow orders, whereas, in suburban and independent schools students are being prepared to develop a more authoritative and independent style of thinking (Haberman, 2000; Milner, 2010). The content of physical education provides opportunities to empower students to learn and develop skills necessary to take ownership of their lives physically, emotionally, and socially. The relevant research literature and the experiences of physical education teachers throughout the socialization process provides the foundation for future research to be conducted in urban school contexts facing extreme poverty to enhance physical education teacher education (PETE) programs, school policy reform, and pre-service/in-service teacher support programs.

**Schools of Poverty**

In 2012, the percentage of school-aged children living in poverty (21 percent) was higher than it was two decades prior in 1990 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2012). Jensen (2009) defines poverty as a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul. According to Milner (2013a) poverty is difficult to be defined—and has been explained in the following ways: (a) based on the federal government’s formula, (b) based on free and reduced lunch numbers that can vary state to state, and (c) based on the personal characteristics and situations that people are found based upon monetary and material possessions they may or may not have. Clearly, poverty is complex and does not hold the same meaning for everyone as it involves a complex range of risk factors that negatively affect people in a multitude of ways. Children living in poverty are
more likely than other children are to attend poorly maintained schools with less-qualified teachers (NCTAF, 2004). Low-achieving students commonly report a sense of isolation from their schools. They believe that no one cares and that their teachers do not like them, which may cause them to give up on academics (Mouton & Hawkins, 1996). Students raised in poverty are more likely to lack a caring, dependable adult in their lives, and it is often teachers to whom they look for that support.

**The Challenges of Teacher Turnover in High-Poverty Schools**

Retaining qualified teachers is one of the major challenges with which school districts are tasked is. Modest rates of turnover can have a positive effect on schools if those teachers who leave the field have been evaluated as ineffective. Chronic turnover, however, inflicts instructional, financial, and organizational costs that destabilize the learning environment (Simon & Johnson, 2015). In historically underserved communities, the problems caused by turnover impact the learning environment in much more significant ways (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Hemphill & Nauer, 2009). The National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007) estimated that nationally, $7.34 billion are spent each year replacing teachers. They found that on average in urban districts, individual schools spend $70,000 annually on costs associated with turnover. In contrast, non-urban schools spend $33,000 on average. These figures do not take into consideration the secondary costs associated with teacher turnover such as the problem created by employing a disproportionately large number of novice teachers. While it is important to understand which teachers leave and which schools they depart, these studies do not fully explain the patterns and persistence of the problem of turnover in high-poverty schools.
**Teachers' personal characteristics.** Teachers who are the most effective are most likely to leave the schools that need them the most (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2009). This is of great importance because teachers influence students’ learning more than any other school-based factor (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Goldhaber and Hansen, (2009) found that teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are more likely to leave high-minority schools than those teachers who failed to obtain the certification. Generally, the least experienced teachers are most likely to leave and are then replaced by even less experienced teachers (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004). This cycle of turnover indicates that the likelihood of low-income children being taught by untested teachers is higher than ever before (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012; Rice, 2013).

**Student demographics.** In their work investigating the factors that influence the probabilities that teachers switch schools or exit completely, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that when teachers transfer, they “seek out schools with fewer academically and economically disadvantaged students” (p. 340). They suggest that as teachers in difficult urban districts gain experience, they leave. This finding aligns with other research on attrition in schools of poverty (Raymond & Fletcher, 2002; Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001). Utilizing matched student/teacher panel data from Texas public elementary schools to better understand the ways in which salary and other factors affect teacher transitions, Hanushek et al. (2004) found that the reasons teachers moved were based more on student race and achievement than on salary discrepancies. They found that the money needed to offset turnover effects of student characteristics “would be extraordinarily large,” and estimated the average salary differential to counter this trend would be 25%-40% above current pay rates. The authors suggest that, ultimately, if teachers prefer
to work with a different type of student, policy can do little to change this. In similar work, Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner (2007) discovered that the “proportion of students that [sic] are black has strong relationships to virtually all of the exit reasons” (p. 158). They reported that teachers are more likely to leave high-poverty, high-minority schools because they potentially do not enjoy the organizational environment of these settings.

**Organizational context.** Recently, research on teacher attrition from high-poverty schools has shifted away from a focus on student or teacher demographics toward the challenges in schools that are unrelated to such demographics. In their statewide survey of working conditions in Massachusetts, Johnson, Kraft, & Papay (2012) focused on problems within the school organization and believe; “teachers who leave high-poverty, high-minority schools reject the dysfunctional contexts in which they work, rather than the students they teach” (p. 4). Their sample of 25,135 consisted of classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists. They suggest that to provide effective teachers for all students, the schools that students attend must become places that support effective teaching and learning in all classrooms.

Using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Ingersoll (2001) controlled for school location, school level, and demographic characteristics of teachers and students he found that lack of administrative support, autonomous teacher decision-making, low salary, and aspects of school culture were associated with higher rates of teacher turnover. In another study, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) in a longitudinal interview study of 50 new teachers in Massachusetts, found that new teachers who were provided with: opportunities for growth, appropriate teaching assignments, adequate resources, supportive collegial interactions, and school-wide structured support for student
learning were more likely to remain in the profession compared to those teachers who did not receive similar supports.

By linking teachers’ personnel records with data from teachers’ schools, Allensworth et al. (2009) found that factors affecting the school climate and organization explained over 75% of the difference in teacher stability rates between elementary schools and almost all the variation amongst high schools. Among the organizational factors, collegial and trusting working relationships were most influential. Additionally, the quality of the principal also proved to be important, as stability rates were higher when teachers reported having high levels of influence over school decisions, “a strong instructional leader” as principal, and coherent instructional programming (Allensworth et al., 2009, p. 26). Data from North Carolina’s Teacher Working Conditions Survey found that teachers’ reports about their working conditions were highly predictive of their intentions to leave their schools, even when student race and socioeconomic status was controlled for (Ladd, 2011). The author found that the central factor predicting both intended and actual school turnover was teachers’ perceptions of school leadership. In schools where teachers viewed their principals positively, turnover was less than schools where teachers did not view their principals positively. These studies shift the importance of the discussion of teacher turnover away from student or teacher characteristics and towards viewing the school as a workplace that can affect teacher decisions about whether to stay or leave.

**Resilience Theory**

The concept of resiliency began in psychiatry and developmental psychology as a result of growing attention to personal characteristics or traits that helped children categorized as being at risk of having negative life outcomes, to adjust positively and flourish despite significant adversity (Block & Block, 1980; Howard et al., 1999; Waller, 2001).
Among teachers, it is closely linked to a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy, and motivation to teach, all of which are necessary in promoting student achievement. Resilience has become a construct that is relative, socially constructed and dynamically occurring within a social system of interrelationships (Howard et al., 1999; Luther et al., 2000; Rutter, 1990). The social constructed nature of teacher resilience recognizes, as the psychologically constructed does not, the significance of the combinations of personal, professional and situated factors on their capacities to maintain emotional wellbeing and professional commitment (Day & Gu, 2010). Ultimately, resilience is a product of personal and professional temperaments and values, and is influenced by organizational and personal factors that are determined by individuals’ capacities to manage context-specific factors (Day & Gu, 2010). The context-specific factors associated with poverty provide teachers additional challenges to overcome and may inhibit their capacity to be resilient.

Conceptualization of Resilience

Much discussion in the research literature relates to how resilience should be conceptualized, whether as a process that is developed over time or as an innate individual personality trait (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Yonezawa et al., 2011). Whereas initial studies of resilience examined the characteristics of resilient people (Masten & Gramezy, 1985), more recent analyses focus on the adaptive process that helps individuals develop resiliency (Sammons et al., 2007). This review classifies resilience as having innate qualities, but the degree to which individual resilience capacity is based, is partly due to the nature of the contexts in which teachers work, those with whom they interact, and their intrinsic motivation to overcome adversity (Gu & Day, 2007).
In their study, Yonezawa et al. (2011) defined resilience “as a dynamic construct that emerges within the interplay between individuals’ strengths and self-efficacy and social environments in which they live and work” (p. 916). They found that connections with external educator networks helped urban teachers become more caring, reflective, and resilient practitioners. Researcher’s utilized in-depth interviews to reveal how connections with educator networks such as the National Writing Project (NWP) helped teachers develop into resilient and reflective practitioners by providing them with technical expertise, cultural support, and leadership opportunities. Being associated with the NWP provided these teachers professional development opportunities that: (a) were interactive, (b) exposed teachers to a national network of colleagues, (c) provided opportunities for teachers to discuss challenges and triumphs that kept them “student-centered”, and (d) provided self-motivation to improve one’s teaching. They also found that the micropolitics of teaching were impeding good pedagogy while participation in the NWP engaged and intellectually stimulated teachers. Through involvement with the NWP process, teachers’ developed a sense of resiliency that was not present prior to involvement with the NWP. Conceptualizing resilience as a process as opposed to an end product, allows it to be studied in relation to the ways in which teachers interact with one another and their environments (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). Therefore, certain environmental features related to the way in which teachers are socialized into and through the profession could have implications for the development of teacher resiliency.

Resiliency can be reinforced in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). A beginning teacher named Norah in Pearce and Morrison’s (2011)
narrative inquiry study was able to build resilience despite lack of access to a supportive and interactive environment with colleagues. The narrative was based on Norah’s: (a) reflections on personal identity, (b) her teaching philosophy, and (c) the accounts and interactions with significant others in her professional life (students, colleagues, and parents). Norah felt isolated and unable to develop into the teacher she wanted to be due to the fact that her colleagues did not share many of her views about teaching and student learning. By the end of her first year of teaching it became difficult for Norah to continue to learn and grow in a context of professional conflict. The extent to which she was able to come to terms with the dissonance between herself and her professional environment influenced her resilience capacity. Norah’s realization of her identity resulted in a sense of agency and contributed to her becoming resilient by strengthening her ability to cope with negative experiences like the isolation she experienced in her school.

Mansfield, Beltman, Price, and McConney (2012) investigated how graduating and early career teachers in Western Australia viewed teacher resilience. The study of the 259 (161 early career; 98 graduating) teachers was conducted in three phases and utilized open-ended surveys to measure constructs of resiliency (teacher efficacy, motivational goals for teaching, self-perceived competence, and satisfaction with the teacher preparation program). These researchers identified 23 aspects of resilience, with the most frequently reported description of a resilient teacher involving the capacity to “bounce back”. In phase two of the study, the 23 categories were examined based on Kumpfer’s (1999) four-dimensional framework of resilience, which includes profession-related, social, emotional, and motivational factors as constructs that may boost or inhibit the development of teacher resilience. The dimensions that graduating teachers and early career teachers identified most frequently as important to their thinking about a resilient teacher was the emotional (61%) followed by motivational (54%), professional related (42%), and social
(34%). The multi-dimensional nature of resilience was evident in the data as eighty-percent of responses were coded in more than one of the four dimensions of resiliency. Differences between the groups were examined based upon the original 23 aspects of resiliency. The two aspects in which the between-group difference was greater than 10-percent were both in the emotional dimension. Approximately 14% more graduating teachers than early career teachers stated the ability to “bounce back” as a characteristic of resilient teachers; yet, early career teachers described the importance of taking care of self and maintaining a work-life balance 10% more frequently than graduating teachers. These results indicate that a teacher’s conception of resilience differs by career stage and experience.

The Importance of Resilience to Teacher Retention

The documentation of the stressors that teachers confront in their daily lives are well known, only recently, however, have researchers begun to inquire more about factors that help teachers succeed in the profession (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). Doney (2013), for example, examined the resilience building process in four novice secondary science teachers in order to understand how and why some novice science teachers remain in the profession, while others leave. Four females who had recently completed a secondary science teacher education program in the southeastern United States were participants in the two-year investigation. An interpretive case study approach utilized six interviews to gain an understanding of each individual and their experiences. Participants responded to a written prompt on resilience in nature that was used in the interviews. Additionally, participants completed relational maps for each year to gain an understanding of the changing stressors and protective factors in their lives. Classroom observations were conducted each semester to provide an example of the participant’s contextual lives and each participant was shadowed for a full school day to obtain realistic job
information. The findings suggest that resilience is not an innate personality trait, but rather a process that is both internal and external resulting from positive adaptation to adversity. The interaction between adversities and protective factors occurs within the participants’ personal, professional, and contextual lives and includes the driving force behind the resilience building process. The most frequently used protective factor was the relational support system (coworkers, family, friends, and others). To understand the resilience capacity of teacher’s it is important to discover the protective factors utilized in their personal and professional lives as a shift in research has begun, away from focusing on the aspects of teachers’ work considered stressful, and moving more toward the individual and contextual factors that help teachers survive and thrive in schools (Gu & Day, 2007).

**Managing teacher stress.** The study of teacher resiliency is emerging with some investigations highlighting the role of resilience in the management of teacher stress (Day & Gu, 2009, 2010; Le Cornu, 2009; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Nieto, 2003a). The work of Connor and Davidson (2003) has connected resilience to the interactive impact of personal, professional, and situated factors on teachers’ work and commitment. Nieto (2003a) reports that a higher level of resilience provides teachers with the positive energy needed to overcome stressful working conditions and hardship. This high level of resilience is an important variable in helping teachers overcome the challenges often associated with working in difficult contexts, such as low socioeconomic environments (Yonezawa et al., 2011).

In collaboration with seven highly respected and successful high school urban teachers in the Boston Public Schools, Nieto (2003b) found that the characteristics of love, hope, and engagement in an intellectual community increase a teachers’ ability to persevere despite the odds. In addition to responding to questions related to why they stayed in their jobs, this group of
teachers read books together and wrote narratives, letters, and emails to one another. This community of practice allowed the teachers to articulate the characteristics that aided in their resiliency.

**Teacher Resilience in Physical Education**

The literature on teacher resiliency in physical education is minimal, however, selected research on teacher’s careers in the field has highlighted the characteristics of the personal and professional supports required for physical education teachers to be resilient. For example in their work with teacher career cycles, Author Citation (2001) used interviews with six physical education teachers (three current and three former teachers) and their teacher educators while also directly observing lessons to investigate factors that improved and inhibited teacher career development. In addition to the importance of outside support systems (families, professional network, etc.) to participant resiliency, those who were currently teaching possessed individual dispositions that kept them striving to get the most from their students and from their careers.

One participant, Everett, credited the influence from his teacher educators as motivation to do his best because he didn’t want to be “letting a lot of people down” (p. 224). The teachers also felt supported to some degree by their administrators; for example, Everett’s principal was a former physical education teacher and valued his contributions to students’ learning. These teachers also credited the importance of fair teaching loads and collegial relationships in their schools to their abilities in overcoming challenges. The teachers who left the profession did so because they lacked the necessary organizational protective factors (administrative support, collegial relationships, individual dispositions, etc.,) that teachers like Everett experienced. Ultimately, this study revealed that the teachers who were able to negotiate and overcome
negative experiences in both their organizational and personal environments were more resilient and remained in the profession.

In her study examining how veteran physical education teachers negotiated their teacher lives within the cultural norms and expectations of the Irish educational system, O’Sullivan (2006) recruited thirty-four PETE graduates from an original cohort of sixty-six graduates who began teaching in Ireland in the mid-1970s. In an attempt to gain deeper understandings into how teachers negotiated their lives as teachers in Ireland, a twenty-six-item questionnaire addressing six aspects of the participants’ teaching careers were completed and individual interviews were conducted related to participant needs and interests, how they negotiated their teaching careers, and why they left teaching, if they had. From the interview data, themes of resiliency, respect, and resignation described how teachers negotiated schools and their teaching careers. An additional theme was related to the lack of professional development targeting teaching and learning in physical education.

The teachers in the O’Sullivan (2006) study were able to develop resilience although they endured teaching in poor facilities and a lack of professional development opportunities related to learning in physical education. The teachers were able to accomplish this in the following ways: (a) using space creatively, (b) revising content, such as moving away from traditional and individual games, (c) distributing teacher burden by fundraising and co-opting teachers to help with extra tasks, and unique to Ireland, (d) utilizing career breaks that permit teachers to take up to five years off from their position and return to their jobs thereafter. Nine of the teachers in the study took advantage of this sabbatical opportunity. Over the years, teachers worked to create a more positive school climate for physical education at their schools. They built rapport with colleagues, were active in their communities, and advocated the importance of physical
education to administration. Most of the teachers said the support of the principal and school had been critical and provided a kind of “protective shield” (p. 280), which motivated them to be creative with their curricula planning.

In her seminal work on the ways in which veteran urban secondary physical education teachers experience their careers, Henninger (2007) differentiated between: (a) lifers—those who were committed to teaching, expressed sustained enthusiasm for what they did, and believed they were making a difference; and (b) troupers—those who had lost their commitment and enthusiasm for teaching, and felt they were no longer making a difference. Data were collected for the nine participants from seven sources (demographic questionnaires, career timelines, Rainbow of Life Roles (Super, 1990), sentence stems, formal and informal interviews, and observations of teachers in their school environments). Although both groups were able to remain in teaching, the lifers demonstrated resilient qualities that enriched their careers and the troupers who became worn down in their contexts, lacked characteristics of resiliency. For example, lifers viewed passive administration support as positive affirmation of a job well done, whereas, troupers found administration as a barrier to teaching. When handling student behavior, troupers viewed students as barriers to teaching and held students to lower standards than lifers. The organizational factors affecting lifers and troupers were similar, however, the response to these factors was quite different. Henninger (2007) noted, “It was how teachers responded to their organizational contexts that had the most significant influence on differentiating between lifers and troupers” (p. 141).

In an attempt to study the organizational environment, Lux and McCullick (2011) analyzed how one exceptional elementary physical education teacher navigated her working environment. The selected participant, Grace, was a National Board Certified (NBC) elementary
physical education teacher who had twenty-seven years of teaching experience in a close knit community in Georgia. Researchers spent eleven weeks collecting data three days each week, spending the entire day with Grace. Findings indicated that Grace used four strategies to navigate her working environment: (a) being one of their own—she nurtured close bonds with non-school personnel (parents, students, and the community), (b) acquiring and managing instructional currency—Grace actively pursued tools and resources to improve the quality of her program and strengthen the position of physical education within her school, (c) cultivating and nurturing kinship with a paraprofessional—she used this bond for comfort and reinforcement while also minimizing her workload, and (d) fostering diplomatic relations with colleagues—Grace aligned herself with individuals of similar perspectives and circumstances within her working environment. By creating a network of support, promoting interdisciplinary teaching, and deliberately placing herself into academic matters at her school, Grace took control over the organizational environment and without knowing, enacted key resilient promoting factors in her professional life. As important as studying early career teachers like Grace is to understanding resilience capacity, learning about the journeys of veteran teachers can provide a more holistic view of teacher resilience.

In their study of a single veteran teacher, Woods and Lynn (2014) examined Everett, who was part of a longitudinal project that examined six teachers’ journeys (Lynn & Woods, 2010; Woods & Earls, 1995; Woods & Lynn, 2001). They used Fessler and Christensen’s (1992) career cycle model to examine the career cycle movement of Everett and the environmental factors that both enhanced and constrained his career development. Several factors highly influenced Everett’s career movement, including: (a) his individual disposition, (b) the impact and continued influence of a professional preparation program, and (c) his school and community
support. Everett was able to negotiate barriers to his personal and organizational environment that would prove difficult for many physical education teachers.

Fessler and Christensen (1992) refer to the competency-building stage of their model as being the period of time when teachers are working to improve their skills and abilities while being receptive to new ideas. Everett moved into this stage around year three of his career. He was exposed to several key resiliency factors during this time including: (a) highly supportive principal who promoted an atmosphere of trust, (b) good connections with colleagues, and (c) success as a softball coach. He also spent time mentoring student teachers and began a master’s degree program. Everett would eventually enter and experience what Fessler and Christensen (1992) refer to as the career frustration stage. In his twenty-second year of teaching the organizational environment began to diminish his positivity regarding teaching. He began experiencing a shift in the demographic of children who did not speak English as their first language and many children who lived in poverty. Everett contemplated seeking a new line of work but he felt trapped because of the number of years he had invested in the state retirement system. Demonstrating his resilience, Everett used the high-expectations he had for himself and his students to do the best for his students every day. Atypical to teachers in the career frustration stage, he pursued and achieved National Board Certification (NBC). Although his motives for achieving the certification were financial, he admitted that achieving NBC, “definitely gave me a sense of accomplishment” (p. 76). By creating a positive narrative to his professional life, Everett was able to demonstrate resiliency and persevere despite experiencing many environmental barriers throughout his career.
Occupational Socialization Theory: Building Resiliency Over Time

The ability to demonstrate resiliency during transitional periods in life can be difficult, and this is no different for those who train to become physical educators. Physical educators may experience a socialization process that influences their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and teaching philosophies (Hushmann & Napper-Owens, 2012). Occupational Socialization Theory (OST) describes the ways in which physical education recruits are recruited into the profession and socialized into the role of teacher (Richards, Templin, & Lux-Gaudreault, 2013). It attempts to explain the personal, contextual, and organizational factors that shape individuals’ alignments toward teaching through three phases: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. Occupational socialization theory has been labeled as dialectical because it accentuates teachers’ ability to determine what parts of their socialization they accept along with those parts they resist (Schempp & Graber, 1992). The backgrounds and socialization experiences of teachers working in schools of poverty can have explicit implications for their ability to manage the demands and micro politics within the context in which they work (Graber, 1998). Teachers who are unprepared for the structural and organizational aspects of teaching are more likely to experience burnout, role conflict, and ultimately leave the teaching profession (Liston et al., 2006).

Acculturation Phase: Recruitment into the Physical Education Profession

Acculturation refers to the recruitment phase of teacher socialization and is the 12-15 year period prior to entering college teacher education programs. During this phase individuals develop meanings for the knowledge, values, attitudes, beliefs, skills, and interests that are both particular to their school community and characteristic of teacher roles (Hutchinson, 1993).
The recruitment phase of teacher socialization has primarily been examined from the teacher education students’ perspective after they have entered the professional phase of teacher socialization.

**Apprenticeship of observation.** Unlike professionals such as lawyers or doctors, student teachers begin their teacher education having spent many hours (as students) observing and evaluating what would be their chosen profession. Lortie (1975) coined the term the “apprenticeship of observation” to describe this period of teacher observation which amounts to thousands of hours. This apprenticeship, he argued, is largely responsible for many of the notions that pre-service teachers hold about teaching.

Dewar and Lawson (1984) refer to apprenticeship of observation in physical education as a period of time in which the subjective warrant is developed. The subjective warrant includes each person’s perceptions of the requirements for teacher education and for actual teaching in schools. The many hours spent in gymnasiums and on playing fields provide opportunities for a subjective warrant to be formed. Dewar and Lawson (1984) explain the significance of the subjective warrant as the profession’s otherwise invisible attempt to announce itself to new recruits through the years spent as students in physical education classrooms. They believe it provides an idea in which to link all of the factors that influence recruitment into the physical education profession. A strong subjective warrant for physical education means that the individuals believe they are prepared to meet the demands of the profession, however, those with a weak subjective warrant see physical education as a less likely option (Templin et al., 1982).

**Professional Socialization Phase**

Dewar and Lawson (1984) suggest it is against the subjective warrant that each pre-service teacher tests aspirations, presumed competencies, and characteristics. Formed on the basis of
personal biography, the effects of significant others, societal influences, and direct experiences in schools, the subjective warrant is as important to the understanding of identity-formation as it is to a career choice. Matanin and Collier (2003) explored the beliefs of three pre-service teachers as they evolved through a four-year teacher preparation program. The results indicated that participants adapted program messages into their beliefs about teaching physical education relative to elementary content, teaching effectiveness, and the importance of planning. Participants were less likely to assimilate program messages about classroom management and the purpose of physical education due to the impact of their personal biographies.

An interesting finding emerged regarding elementary school physical education experiences of the participants and the assimilation of the program beliefs. The participants came into the PETE program with no intense conception of (how or what?) should be taught in an elementary program. Participants exited the program demonstrating a sophisticated perspective of their instructional effectiveness as teachers by using pedagogical terms based on time efficiency and quality of skill demonstrations. In contrast, all three participants rejected the secondary content promoted in the PETE program (Sport Education and Tactical Approach) in favor of their preferences of multi-activity and fitness-based models. These findings reinforce a previous finding that recruits favor a traditional approach to secondary curriculum (Hutchinson, 1993). Background factors such as their own secondary physical education programs and field experiences, in which there was no distinct curricular model in place, apparently influenced their preferences concerning the secondary curriculum (Matanin & Collier, 2003). The findings from this study support the beliefs of Dewar and Lawson (1984) and Lortie (1975) that participants’ K-12 school experiences as well as their lived experiences play a powerful role in the formation of their beliefs about teaching physical education.
Organizational Socialization Phase

Organizational socialization as viewed from the broad perspective introduced by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), has provided a lens for physical education researchers to view workplace socialization. Their view of organizational socialization is one in which the teacher is taught and learns the ropes of the organization. Important to this perspective that Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have provided is the idea that the socialization process is ongoing and shapes the teachers’ experience throughout their career. Regarding physical education teacher socialization, Lawson (1983a) posited that, when teachers enter the workplace they take on more of a custodial approach to teaching that reflects the knowledge and behaviors that the school setting values.

Socializing agents and the organizational context. The influence of socializing agents on teacher’s daily lives in understanding their capacity to be resilient is valuable and can assist in understanding why teachers adopt particular approaches to teaching (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Important to the socialization process and resiliency capacity of teachers; colleagues, principals, and students operate as the main socializing agents in the organizational socialization phase.

Colleagues can be influential in the socialization of individuals within an organization (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1983). The institutional press is how teachers’ are taught about a schools’ culture and the knowledge and behaviors accepted by veteran colleagues in the specific context. Due to its emphasis on preserving the status quo in the school setting, the institutional press often contradicts professional socialization (Lawson, 1983a). Nevertheless, Templin et al. (2011) reinforce the dialectical nature of socialization and focus upon teacher agency when considering the institutional press. Teachers are not passively socialized within the institutional press, in fact, some teachers assert their sense of agency both overtly and covertly to alter the status quo of the organization. Yet, the institutional press is a strong force in schools and should not be ignored.
Physical educators have reported feeling pressured by colleagues to teach in ways that contradict their adopted beliefs (Blankenship & Coleman, 2009; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Curtner-Smith et al., 2008; Graber, 1998). This can be intensified when teachers feel they are not able to cultivate effective relationships with their colleagues (Eldar et al., 2003).

In addition to colleagues, school principals as socializing agents has been highlighted in the literature (Watkins, 2005). When physical education teachers perceive they are supported from principals, the relationship is viewed as favorable (Eldar et al., 2003; Richards & Templin, 2011). In contrast, when principals are viewed as non-supportive, teachers may become frustrated and their feelings of isolation may increase (Solmon et al., 1990). Williams (2003) found that long-term exemplary teachers credited administrators with creating a balance of challenge and support for doing their jobs, while providing opportunities for collaboration with their colleagues.

Perhaps the most central socializing agents are students, since teachers spend most of their time interacting with them each day (Lortie, 1975). In physical education this influence is important because research indicates that teachers make changes or concessions in their expectations and curricular goals in an attempt to align with student’s expectations (Curtner-Smith, 1997; Solomon et al., 1990). Educators view parents as important resources to student development, especially when they are supportive. O’Sullivan (1989) described that many physical education teachers viewed parents as unwilling to get involved or generally unsupportive of physical education. Unfortunately, in low-socioeconomic contexts this lack of support can be even more pronounced.

Strong Organizational Environments: A Must-Have in High-Poverty Schools

Teacher satisfaction and intended career decisions are based on a combination of workplace factors—quality of principal leadership, collegial relationships, and aspects of the school culture.
It is essential for practitioners and policy makers to understand these factors more clearly to improve teacher-working conditions and minimize turnover.

**Administrative support.** As leaders, principals are responsible for establishing strong work environments. They are accountable for hiring skilled teachers and support staff that are committed to a common vision and mission for the school (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Principals establish an atmosphere of trust and support when they shelter teachers from the external demands and mandates that distract teachers from classroom responsibilities (Achinstein et al., 2010; Richards & Templin, 2011). The relationships that principals establish with parents, students, and community organizations have the chance to maximize students’ opportunities to learn (Warren, 2005).

According to Grissom and Loeb (2011), principals may be even more significant in high-poverty schools, which can be problematic as inexperienced principals lead many high-poverty schools. The primary data source in this study was an online survey completed by 314 principals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). The survey asked principals to rate their own effectiveness at conducting common job tasks in their current school. At the same time, they administered a similar survey to assistant principals ($N = 585$). Finally, they surveyed M-DCPS teachers ($N = 15,842$) on the question of: “To what extent are you generally satisfied with being a teacher in this school?” The descriptive analyses of teachers’ work environments, which included ratings of the effectiveness of the principal, revealed that principal ratings were generally lower in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students. Results from regression analysis demonstrated that principal effectiveness was associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher would leave the school within a year. These findings indicate that an effective principal could offset the issues of turnover in high-poverty schools.
In support of this concept, Simon and Johnson (2015) reviewed six studies that analyzed turnover as a function of school context rather than as a function of student demographics. They recommend that principals with strong organizational management skills be encouraged to work in high-poverty schools to address the income-achievement gaps. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that principals’ organizational management skills were important to teacher retention when interviewing new teachers in their study. One teacher, for example, had left the classroom altogether because of a principal whose leadership skills caused the school to “unravel” (p. 596). This is explained well by Bryk et al. (2010) as they stated that poor administrative management “undermines teachers’ classroom work by eating away the amount of effective instructional time” (p. 61). In schools that retain teachers, principals typically expect their teachers to be lifelong learners and are committed to supporting the learning process to ensure teachers are continually improving (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Principals in high-poverty schools who deliberately develop and maintain a professional culture that allows teachers to be an integral part of the change process will be more likely to retain teachers than those principals who do not engage teachers as partners and criticize and maintain control over teachers (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Bryk et al., 2010).

Collegial support. In the past, Lortie (1975) depicted teachers as appreciating to teach in isolation and away from the scrutiny of others. However, research now reports a distinct relationship between teachers’ experiences with their colleagues and their commitment to teaching at their schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2014). Principals can facilitate mutual relationships, but productive partnerships require investment from the teachers themselves (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Three areas have been identified by researchers as important factors for productive work with colleagues (Simon & Johnson, 2015). First, an inclusive environment characterized by respect and trust among colleagues. Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) work on school-
based relationships revealed that trust was a condition for building learning communities where teachers count on one another. The second area was formal structures that foster collaboration. Johnson and colleagues (2014) interviewed ninety-five teachers in six urban schools and found that teachers valued collaboration when it was congruent with their individual needs as a teacher and with the larger agenda for improving the program or school. And finally, a shared mission among teachers is warranted. In high-poverty schools teachers oftentimes state that they have chosen to teach in these contexts because they are motivated to help low-income, minority students excel (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2014).

**School culture.** The quality of experiences in teachers’ work lives contributes to the overall sense of what matters in the school. Researchers have not agreed on a definition of school culture. For example, Johnson et al. (2012) used school culture as a way to predict teacher satisfaction and turnover. In their work, school culture referred to “the extent to which the school environment is characterized by mutual trust, respect, openness, and commitment to student achievement” (p. 14). The current review concentrates on school culture as described by Simon and Johnson (2015) who focused on factors that involve teachers’ interactions with students and parents because these interactions oftentimes surface as agents of teacher turnover in high-poverty schools.

**Student discipline in high-poverty schools.** Teachers leave schools where discipline prevents them from delivering meaningful instruction (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ladd, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013). In high-poverty schools, especially those that serve large portions of minority students—reports of student discipline issues are more common than at wealthier schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Teachers have aspirations to work in schools that have a strong school-wide norm for behavior and consistent discipline policies (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).
School employees who work in high-poverty contexts must recognize that students come to school with a narrower range of appropriate emotional responses than other students. A child who lives in a stressful home environment will likely channel that stress into disruptive behavior at school (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These emotional and social deficits are oftentimes misinterpreted as a lack of respect for teachers (Jensen, 2009). Children raised in poverty are more likely to demonstrate the following behaviors in school: “acting-out” behaviors, impatience and impulsivity, gaps in politeness and social graces, limited range of behavioral responses, inappropriate emotional responses, and less empathy for others’ misfortunes (Jensen, 2009, p. 19). Teachers who are unaccustomed to working with children raised in poverty will likely become surprised and discouraged by these behaviors.

**Parental involvement.** Teachers’ satisfaction with their working conditions can be dependent upon the ongoing relationships they establish with parents (Allensworth et al., 2009). Parents can influence teachers’ commitment to their school and predict teacher turnover (Allensworth et al., 2009; Henkin & Holliman, 2009). Teachers and parents working together to jointly solve problems of student behavior are more predictive of teacher retention than other forms of parent involvement, such as helping with homework (Allensworth et al., 2009). Teachers in high-poverty schools often understand that the challenges related to poverty may prevent parents from being actively involved in their child’s education, but that does not prevent them from viewing these challenges as frustrating and overwhelming. Engaging parents with the school is vital for developing trust between teachers and parents in high-poverty schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

**The Need for Physical Education in Schools of Poverty**

Physical inactivity among children and its relation to increased occurrences of disease, such as childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes, has become a national health concern (U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2000). Inactivity impacts children from low socioeconomic communities in even greater ways than children in higher socioeconomic communities. For example, children in low-socioeconomic contexts spend less time playing outdoors and more time watching television and are less likely to participate in after-school activities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Almost half of young people, ages 12–21, are not vigorously active on a regular basis (USDHHS, 2000), yet physical activity offers a variety of benefits to those who participate regularly. In high-poverty schools these benefits can include: improved student health, increased cardiovascular capacity, increased muscle strength, improved academic outcomes, reduction of student behavior problems, and improved stress responses (Newman, 2005; Sibley & Etnier, 2003).

**Benefits of physical activity for children living in poverty.** According to Jensen (2009), stress is defined as the physiological response to the perception of loss of control resulting from an adverse situation. Children raised in poverty oftentimes experience acute and chronic stress that can be debilitating and severely impact their lives. Exposure to both acute and chronic stress influences children’s physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive functioning—areas that affect brain development, academic success, and social competence (Jensen, 2009). Students who are regularly exposed to these types of stress may lack the coping skills to handle stressful situations and may lead to behavioral and academic problems in school (Almeida, Neupert, Banks, & Serido, 2005).

Exercise can increase the release of a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) which aids in learning and memory function as well as the production of brain cells that are vital to establishing the connections the brain needs to learn (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008). Additional cognitive research has connected aerobic fitness to increases in neuroelectric and behavioral
performance of children during a stimulus discrimination task (Hillman, Castelli, & Buck, 2005). These findings suggest that higher fit children displayed greater distribution of attentional resources to working memory, supporting previous research examining fitness and cognition in adult populations (Kramer & Hillman, 2006). Additionally, Sibley and Etnier (2003) found in their meta-analysis that a small but significant relationship between physical activity and cognitive performance among school-aged children, suggesting that physical activity might be favorable to children’s cognitive health, with the largest effects on IQ and academic achievement.

When students living in poverty are exposed to physical activity in high-quality physical education programs there is potential for increased self-concept (Strohle, 2009), and reduced stress and aggression (Wagner, 1997). Exercise has been shown to protect against the negative outcomes of stress and diseases as well as enhanced memory, focus, and brain function (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008). In their study on aerobic fitness and cognitive development, Hillman et al. (2005) discovered third and fifth graders who scored high on aerobic fitness and body-mass index (BMI) tests earned higher scores on state math and reading exams, even when controlling for the children’s socioeconomic status. Viadero (2008) established that a relationship existed between exercise doses and cognitive and academic benefits among overweight children. In this study, three groups of students were utilized, the first group participated in 40 minutes of physical activity every day after school, the second group participated in 20 minutes of physical activity, and the third group did not participate in any special physical activity sessions. After fourteen weeks, the children in group one (40 minutes daily) made the greatest improvements on both a standardized academic test and a test measuring executive function (thinking processes that involve planning, organizing, abstract thought, or self-control). The gains for group two (20 minutes daily) were half as large (Viadero, 2008).
Discussion

Increasingly, teaching has been rated as one of the most stressful professions (Kyriacou, 2000; Nash, 2005; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001), and, predictably, teacher attrition has increased substantially in U.S. public schools over the past three decades (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). The impact of this trend on student learning is pronounced, especially in high-poverty schools. Research is warranted that examines physical education teachers working in high-poverty contexts and across different professional life phases. External and internal challenges teachers face and, any reduced sense of commitment experienced from working in high-poverty contexts is worthy of examination. However, more importantly is studying the ways in which their resilience, commitment, self-efficacy and wellbeing, may be promoted, developed and sustained (Day & Gu, 2010).

Resiliency can be supported in the teaching environment by access to the following: preservation of planning time, professional development opportunities, adequate equipment and materials, caring collegial relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for shared decision making (Benard, 2003). The ability to discover features of the personal and professional supports required for physical education teachers to be resilient is important. Therefore, future research should seek to uncover the organizational environment of physical education teachers in relationship to an individual teacher’s capacity for resilience.

Teacher education programs should not withhold pre-service teacher placements in high-poverty schools because with proper planning and support from teacher education faculty and qualified cooperating teachers, pre-service teachers can learn the intricacies of teaching in high-poverty contexts. Inquiry into individual dispositions of resilient in-service physical educator’s could prove beneficial to training future teachers in physical education teacher education (PETE)
programs. Understanding the elements that have helped teachers in high-poverty schools stay resilient despite encountering the barriers that exist can offer valuable information to assist in identifying teachers with the individual dispositions to succeed in high-poverty schools. PETE programs could use this information to begin identifying candidates with resilient individual dispositions and provide those students experiences in high-poverty schools.

These structured placements may assist in the reduction of the “reality shock” oftentimes experienced by new teachers in high-poverty schools. Important to exploring these individual dispositions is for pre-service teachers to receive the proper support, feedback, and opportunities for reflection by the university and cooperating teachers. In addition, future projects associated with physical education teacher resilience should focus on quantifying resilience and student perceptions of resilient teacher’s effectiveness. The ability to identify ways in which to increase the resilience capacity of physical education teachers has the potential to decrease the issues surrounding teacher attrition and increase job satisfaction for those working in high-poverty schools.

References For Manuscript Three


Curtner-Smith, M. (1999). The more things change the more they stay the same: Factors influencing teachers' interpretations and delivery of the National Curriculum Physical Education. *Sport, Education and Society, 4*, 75-97.


Milner, H. R. (2010). *Start where you are, but don’t stay there*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.


Chapter 7

Limitations and Future Directions

While this investigation has provided significant insight into physical education teacher resilience, it is not without its limitations. Limitations specific to each study are considered in the discussion sections in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. This section will cover some of the general limitations of the entire dissertation. First, as with all research using surveys, the analyses conducted as part of this dissertation are limited by the self-report nature of the study. It is possible that some teachers may have responded to the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 in ways that do not align with the actual feelings of resilience. It is also possible that some teachers may have responded to the survey questions without fully reading and reflecting upon the choices that they were making.

A second limitation of this study was the cross-sectional type of the design. Since an individual’s capacity for resilience can change over time, it is probable that a longitudinal investigation that examined teachers across multiple time points would have yielded more accurate results. Such a design would allow for regular disparities among study variables due to factors such as the time of the school year. Similarly, having multiple data points would have allowed the researchers to account for variations in teachers’ perceived resilience due in part to the uncertainty of a teachers’ school year. Possibly the most effective way to collect data about teachers’ impressions of resiliency would be to utilize ecological momentary assessment (Carson et al., 2010). Using devices such as smart phones, or tablets, ecological momentary assessment applications prompt teachers to respond to questions about how they are feeling at pre-planned intervals throughout the day. This provides researchers with data in real time, which eliminates variation that occurs when asking reflective questions (Brewer et al., 1991).
A third limitation of the study was that the participants comprise a convenience sample rather than a truly random sample. Fundamentally, any physical education teacher in the two school districts sampled was asked to participate in the study. Those who decided to participate may have been motivated to do so because they believed they were highly resilient and effective teachers. Since there was no incentive for participation in the study, individuals who considered themselves not to be resilient or less effective teachers may not have responded. As a result, the findings may have been different if a truly random sample had been available.

Another key limitation of this study is the dependence on a sample drawn from teachers within a small geographic region within the American Midwest. As a result, the responses of the teachers in this study may not reflect the experiences of teachers in other geographic locations in the United States or abroad.

Despite the limitations expressed above and those discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, this investigation contributes significantly to the literature related to teacher socialization. In addition to the results of the specific results of the studies, another contribution of this dissertation is the directions for future research that it provides. Specific directions for future research are communicated along with the studies presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. This section focuses on directions for future research more generally. One important finding of this investigation is that a teacher’s individual disposition plays an important role in understanding teachers’ experiences and ability to develop resilience. Future researchers should investigate the individual dispositions of resilient teachers over time. If researchers are able to identify the specific contextual factors that promote or inhibit resilience in the lives of teachers, recommendations could be made for changes in school contexts to protect teachers from burnout and attrition from high-poverty schools. A second but related direction for future research is to
examine PETE programs preparation of physical education teachers to identify resiliency-building strategies for pre-service teachers.

Related to the current investigation, future researchers should consider adopting occupational socialization theory as a theoretical lens through which to examine the resilience capacity of teachers. Although occupational socialization theory is in its adulthood, this dissertation provides evidence to support the combination of resilience theory and occupational socialization theory in the study of teachers. As future researchers continue to examine teacher resiliency and the combination of individual dispositions and sociopolitical contexts of school on teachers’ lives and careers, it is recommended that occupational socialization theory be utilized as a framework for studying and interpreting teachers’ experiences.

Finally, the current investigation provides for a qualitative understanding of teachers’ experiences with resilience. Much can be learned, however, through quantitative study as well. Often, the most effective way to answer a research question is through the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to collecting and interpreting data. While qualitative methods allow a more in-depth investigation of the participants involved in the study and their lived experiences, quantitative methods allow the researcher to make distinct associations between variables through the use of inferential statistical techniques. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers continue to explore physical education teacher resilience from a mixed method perspective in order to more comprehensively answer research questions that are posed.
References


Curtner-Smith, M. (1999). The more things change the more they stay the same: Factors influencing teachers' interpretations and delivery of the National Curriculum Physical Education. *Sport, Education and Society, 4*, 75-97.


Milner, H. R. (2010). *Start where you are, but don’t stay there*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.


O'Sullivan, M. (1989). Failing gym is like failing lunch or recess: Two beginning


Teaching in Physical Education, 10, 188-209.


Figures and Tables

Figure 1

Dialectics of Socialization and Teacher Agency
Figure 2

Ways Poverty Impacts Children

- Mercury & lead poisoning
- Pollution

- Medical Care
- Vision & Hearing
- Asthma related

- Homelessness
- Substandard Housing
- Shared spaces with many people
- Lack of area to complete school work

- Needing to work at early age to support family

- Lack of access to services
- Witnessed to violence and abuse and inability to process situations

- Long hours traveling using public transit

- Anxiety & Depression
- Withdrawal

- Transportation Issues

- Shelter Issues

- Health Issues

- Community Violence

- Mental Health Issues
Table 5

Manuscript One

Participant and School Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of teaching</th>
<th>Grades served</th>
<th>Number of students in school</th>
<th>% Of students served free and/or reduced lunch</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>99.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>99.8</td>
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### Table 6

Manuscript One

Resiliency Survey Results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (total out of 40)</th>
<th>Teacher Self-Rating (total out of 10)</th>
<th>Principal’s Teacher Rating (total out of 10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 7
Manuscript Two
Participant and School Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants (T=Teacher)</th>
<th>Years of Experience in Current Role</th>
<th>School Type (ES= Elementary, MS= Middle School)</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Receiving Free and/or Reduced Lunch at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean (T)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary (T)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (T)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne (T)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan (T)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike (T)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delee (T)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wes (T)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>ES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janene (T)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis (T)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Campbell (Sean)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Rupple (Gary)</td>
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<td>ES</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hupfer (John, Janene, Dan)</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Cash (Delee)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ M=6.36 \]
## Table 8

**Manuscript Two**

**Perceptions of Resilience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher (H=High Resiliency; L=Low Resiliency)</th>
<th>Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (Converted to percentage)</th>
<th>Teacher Self-Rating (Percentage)</th>
<th>Combined Percentage (CD RISC-10; Teacher self-rating)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sean (H)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary (H)</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne (H)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan (H)</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (H)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike (H)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delee (L)</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73.75</td>
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<td>Wes (L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janene (L)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis (L)</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>73.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ M = 83.75 \quad 79 \quad 81.375 \]
Appendix A

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
528 East Green Street
Suite 303
Champaign, IL 61820

October 19, 2015

NOTE: Please supply approval from the school districts once obtained.

Amelia Woods
Kinesiology & Community Health
215 Free Hall
906 S Goodwin
Urbana, IL 61801

RE: The Resilience Capacity of Physical Education Teachers in High-Poverty Schools
IRB Protocol Number: 16243

Dear Dr. Woods:

Your response to stipulations for the project entitled The Resilience Capacity of Physical Education Teachers in High-Poverty Schools has satisfactorily addressed the concerns of the UIUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) and you are now free to proceed with the human subjects protocol. The UIUC IRB approved, by expedited review, the protocol as described in your IRB-1 application with stipulated changes. The expiration date for this protocol, IRB number 16243, is 10/18/2016. The risk designation applied to your project is no more than minimal risk. Certification of approval is available upon request.

Copies of the attached date-stamped consent form(s) must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Under applicable regulations, no changes to procedures involving human subjects may be made without prior IRB review and approval. The regulations also require that you promptly notify the IRB of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated side effects, adverse reactions, and any injuries or complications that arise during the project.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at the OPRS office, or visit our Web site at http://oprs.research.illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Van Tine, MS
OPRS Specialist

Attachment(s)

c: Douglas Ellison
Appendix B

Teacher Informed Consent and Information Sheet

The Resilience Capacity of Physical Education Teachers in High-Poverty Schools
Dr. Amy Woods
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Department of Kinesiology and Community Health. You were selected, as possible participants because you are a physical education teacher in a high-poverty school context. We request that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. The principal investigator of this study is Dr. Amy Woods and the co-investigator is Doug Ellison.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this investigation is to develop a more complete understanding of the resilience capacity of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools. Specifically, we are interested in how you are able to balance your teaching and non-teaching responsibilities and whether or not you feel as if you have enough time in your day to complete all of the tasks that have been assigned to you. Additionally, we would like to learn about your overall resilience and the degree to which you are happy with your current teaching and non-teaching related assignments.

Specific Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. You will be asked to complete a 5-10 minute survey about your background and overall level of resilience as a teacher.
2. You will be asked to participate in a 60-90 minute audio-recorded interview that will examine your experiences related to your professional teaching career and personal life related to resilience. The purpose of the interview is to help us better understand your perspective and how you cope with the stress of teaching in a high poverty school.
3. You will be asked to allow the co-investigator to shadow your teaching for one full day. The purpose of the shadowing experience is to help us understand your specific daily duties and the context of your school.
4. Your participation will not have any effect on your employment, and your responses will not be shared with your employer.
5. School administrators will be specifically interviewed focusing on the organizational context of the school and professional supports they offer. In addition to exploring the organizational context of the school, administrators will be asked if they have witnessed you demonstrating resilience. They will not be
You are asked to review or evaluate your performance as a teacher, coach, or extracurricular advisor in any way that may impact your employment.

**Duration of Participation**

The study will begin in September 2015 and will be completed by May 2016. During this time period, researchers will work with participants to schedule the most convenient time to conduct the one-day job shadow, Resilience survey (CD-RISC 10), and the 60-90 minute formal interview. Individual components may be completed at the participant’s leisure or all components can occur at the same time.

**Risks**

While participating in the study, the risks for you are minimal but may include:

1. Discomfort in responding to survey or interview questions related to teaching and personal experiences associated with resilience.
2. You may feel like participating in the study is taking too much time.
3. Breach of confidentiality is a risk, but safeguards are in place to minimize this risk as outlined in the confidentiality section below.

**Benefits**

It is not likely that there will be any direct benefits for participating in this investigation. However, potential benefits include increased self-awareness of your capacity for resilience in your life. By becoming more self-aware, you may be more apt to take steps to buffer against threats to resilience in your own life.

**Compensation**

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

**Confidentiality**

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Here are the measures taken to maintain confidentiality:

1. When participating in the interview you can skip any question or stop the interview at any time. You are also welcome to discuss the concern with the researcher.
2. To avoid the sharing of your personal responses to survey and interview questions, all information will be recorded immediately and kept confidential. The research team will transcribe all interviews and then the audio files will be destroyed. All interviews will be conducted in a quiet, semi-private location.
3. All records gathered during the study will be maintained in locked filing cabinet inside the locked office of the pedagogy lab in order to promote confidentiality. Only members of the research team will have access to the data in this location. Additionally, all identifying information will be removed from the
records and replaced with a code number. These unidentified records will be maintained indefinitely.

4. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to all teachers in reports of the research in order to maintain confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

You do not have to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate you can withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate or not, or withdraw from the study will not affect your job or relationship with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Dr. Amy Woods (217-333-2461 or amywoods@illinois.edu) or Doug Ellison (704-577-5062 or dwellis2@illinois.edu). If you have concerns about the treatment of research participants, you can contact the Institutional Review Board Office 528 East Green Street, Suite 203, Champaign, IL 61820. Tel: 217-333-2670 or fax: 217-333-0405. E-mail: irb@illinois.edu Web: www.irb.illinois.edu

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Yes, but not always. In general, we will not tell anyone any information about you. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to tell certain people about you. For example, your records from this research may be seen or copied by the following people or groups:

- Representatives of the university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects;
- Other representatives of the state and university responsible for ethical, regulatory, or financial oversight of research.

Documentation of Informed Consent

I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research project described above.

SIGNATURE:______________________________________________________________
NAME PRINTED:________________________________DATE:_________________
Appendix C

Principal Informed Consent and Information Sheet

The Resilience Capacity of Physical Education Teachers in High-Poverty Schools
Dr. Amy Woods
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Department of Kinesiology and Community Health. You were selected, as possible participants because you are a principal in a high-poverty school context. We request that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. The principal investigator of this study is Dr. Amy Woods and the co-investigator is Doug Ellison.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this investigation is to develop a more complete understanding of the resilience capacity of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools. Specifically, we are interested in how you teachers are able to balance their teaching and non-teaching responsibilities and whether or not they feel as if you have enough time in their day to complete all of the tasks that have been assigned to them. Additionally, we are interested in speaking with you regarding the role of school administration in building teacher resiliency.

Specific Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to do the following things:
1. You will be asked to participate in a 60-90 minute audio-recorded interview that will examine your perceptions of the organizational context at your school as they relate to building resilience capacity in physical education teachers. The purpose of the interview is to help us better understand your perspective of the organizational context.
2. Your participation will not have any effect on your employment, and your responses will not be shared with your employer.

Duration of Participation

The study will begin in September 2015 and will be completed by May 2016. During this time period, researchers will work with participants to schedule the most convenient time to conduct the 60-90 minute formal interview either in person or via phone interview.

Risks

While participating in the study, the risks for you are minimal but may include:
1. Discomfort in responding to interview questions related to responsibilities as a school administrator in a high-poverty school.
2. You may feel like participating in the study is taking too much time.
3. Breach of confidentiality is a risk, but safeguards are in place to minimize this risk as outlined in the confidentiality section below.

Benefits

It is not likely that there will be any direct benefits for participating in this investigation. However, potential benefits include increased self-awareness of your capacity for resilience in your life. By becoming more self-aware, you may be more apt to take steps to buffer against threats to resilience in your own life.

Compensation

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Here are the measures taken to maintain confidentiality:

1. When participating in the interview you can skip any question or stop the interview at any time. You are also welcome to discuss the concern with the researcher.
2. To avoid the sharing of your personal responses to survey and interview questions, all information will be recorded immediately and kept confidential. The research team will transcribe all interviews and then the audio files will be destroyed. All interviews will be conducted in a quiet, semi-private location.
3. All records gathered during the study will be maintained in locked filing cabinet inside the locked office of the pedagogy lab in order to promote confidentiality. Only members of the research team will have access to the data in this location. Additionally, all identifying information will be removed from the records and replaced with a code number. These unidentified records will be maintained indefinitely.
4. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to all teachers and administrators in reports of the research in order to maintain confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

You do not have to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate you can withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate or not, or withdraw from the study will not affect your job or relationship with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Dr. Amy Woods (217-333-2461 or amywoods@illinois.edu) or Doug Ellison (704-577-5062 or
dwellis2@illinois.edu). If you have concerns about the treatment of research participants, you can contact the Institutional Review Board Office 528 East Green Street, Suite 203, Champaign, IL 61820. Tel: 217-333-2670 or fax: 217-333-0405. E-mail: irb@illinois.edu Web: www.irb.illinois.edu

**Will my study-related information be kept confidential?**

Yes, but not always. In general, we will not tell anyone any information about you. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to tell certain people about you. For example, your records from this research may be seen or copied by the following people or groups:

- Representatives of the university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects;
- Other representatives of the state and university responsible for ethical, regulatory, or financial oversight of research;

**Documentation of Informed Consent**

I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research project described above.

**SIGNATURE:** ________________________________________________

**NAME PRINTED:** ___________________________ **DATE:** ___________
Appendix D

Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian(s)

We are excited to announce the voluntary opportunity for the physical education teacher(s) at your school to participate in a research study involving the complexity of their role as a teacher. Researchers will be shadowing the physical education teacher(s) as they perform their duties throughout one entire school day. During the job shadow the researchers will be recording notes on the context of the classroom, school, and interactions that the teachers have with colleagues, administrators, students, and community members.

It is important for you to understand that although the researchers will be documenting teacher and student interactions, the students are not considered participants in this study and will not be identifiable in this research project. At no time will researchers ask students information regarding this project.

Please feel free to contact Doug Ellison at dwellis2@illinois.edu or 217-333-2461 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Woods
Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Appendix E

District-Level Administrator Permission Email

Dear SCHOOL DISTRICT RESEARCH COORDINATOR,

We are excited to announce the voluntary opportunity for principals and teachers in your district to participate in a research study involving their experiences in high-poverty schools and the complexity of their roles. We are interested in talking to principals and physical education teachers in your district and are hoping that you would be willing to give us permission to speak with them. Upon approval to speak with them, we will explain that this is a voluntary opportunity and they will be given the right to opt out of participating. Below we have included an overview of the study as well as information related to what teachers who agree to participate would be required to do.

**Purpose of study:** to develop a more complete understanding of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools and how their experiences effect their capacity for resilience.

**Requirements for the study if your teachers decide to join:**
- Completion of a 5-10 minute survey related to their background and resilience
- 1 formal interviews related to teaching in high-poverty schools
- 1 day of physical education teacher being shadowed by researcher

**Requirements for the study if your principals decide to join:**
- 1 formal 60-90 minute interview related to the organizational context of their school

I ask that you please reply to this email as to whether or not you agree to participate in this research. Upon receipt of your decision the research team will then proceed with contacting the building principals in your school district and requesting their permission to participate as well as permission to contact the physical education teachers within their building. Both the principals and the teachers who agree to participate will sign consent forms.

Please feel free to contact Doug Ellison at dwellis2@illinois.edu or 704-577-5062 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Woods
Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Appendix F
Teacher Email Invitation for Participation in Interviews

Dear TEACHER,

We are excited to announce a voluntary opportunity for you to participate in a research study involving your experiences teaching in high-poverty schools and the complexity of this role. We are interested in speaking with you to discuss the details of our study. During the discussion, we will explain that this is a voluntary opportunity and you will be given the right to opt out of participating. Below we have included an overview of the study as well as information related to what teachers who agree to participate would be required to do.

**Purpose of study:** to develop a more complete understanding of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools and how their experiences effect their capacity for resilience.

**Requirements for the study if your teachers decide to join:**
- Completion of a 5-10 minute survey related to your background and resilience
- 1 formal interview related to teaching in high-poverty schools
- 1 day of physical education teacher being shadowed by researcher

Please feel free to contact Doug Ellison at dwellis2@illinois.edu or 704-577-5062 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Woods
Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Appendix G

School-Level Administrator Permission Email

Dear SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,

We are excited to announce the voluntary opportunity for you and your teachers to participate in a research study involving the experiences of working in high-poverty schools and the complexity of the role. We are interested in talking with teachers in your physical education department and are hoping that you would be willing to give us permission to speak with your teachers. During the conversation, we will explain to the teachers that this is a voluntary opportunity and they will be given the right to opt out of participating. In addition to speaking with your physical education teacher(s), we are interested in speaking with you regarding the role of school administration in building teacher resiliency. Below we have included an overview of the study as well as information related to what teachers who agree to participate would be required to do.

**Purpose of study:** to develop a more complete understanding of physical education teachers in high-poverty schools and how their experiences effect their capacity for resilience.

**Teacher Requirements for the study if they decide to join:**
- Completion of a 5-10 minute survey related to their background and resilience
- 1 formal interviews related to teaching in high-poverty schools
- 1 day of physical education teacher being shadowed by researcher

**Administrator Requirements for the study if you decide to join:**
- 1 formal interview related to the organizational context at your school

Please feel free to contact Doug Ellison at dwellis2@illinois.edu or 704-577-5062 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Woods
Professor
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Appendix H

Teacher Background Questionnaire

Gender
☐ Male (1)
☐ Female (2)

Racial/Ethnic Affiliation
☐ African American (1)
☐ Asian American (2)
☐ Caucasian (3)
☐ Hispanic (4)
☐ Mixed Race (5)
☐ Native American Indian (6)
☐ Other (7)

What is your age (in years)
☐ 25 years or less (1)
☐ 26-30 years (2)
☐ 31-35 years (3)
☐ 36-40 years (4)
☐ 41-45 years (5)
☐ 46-50 years (6)
☐ 51-55 years (7)
☐ 55-60 years (8)
☐ 61-65 years (9)
☐ 66 years or more (10)

Marital Status - Are you (or have you ever been) married
☐ Currently married (1)
☐ Widowed (2)
☐ Divorced (3)
☐ Separated (4)
☐ Never married (5)

How many children do you have at home?
Highest level of degree attained
- Bachelor’s degree (1)
- Some Master’s level work (2)
- Completed Master’s degree (3)
- Doctoral level work (4)
- Educational Specialist (5)
- Doctoral degree (6)

At what school level are you currently teaching?
- Elementary school (1)
- Middle school (2)
- Junior high school (3)
- High school (4)
- Multiple Levels (please specify) (5) ________________________

How many years have you been teaching?

How many years have you been teaching in your current school?

How many years have you been teaching in schools that receive Title 1 funding?

What is the average number of students in the classes you teach?

On average, how many hours a day do you spend teaching classes?

On average, how many hours a day does your school provide you to prep?

Approximately how many hours a day do you spend preparing for teaching related tasks (both inside and outside of school time)?
Appendix I

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 Survey

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the last month. If a particular situation has not occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have felt.

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I am able to adapt when changes occur.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I can deal with whatever comes my way.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>I am not easily discouraged by failure.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life’s challenges and difficulties.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger.</td>
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Appendix J

Interview Guide for Teacher Participants

STATE: Your responses will not be discussed or shared with anyone outside of the research team and if you are uncomfortable at any time during the interview you may skip a question(s). Information regarding administration is to be used for gaining a perspective on the organizational context of the school and how it could potentially influence your capacity to be resilient.

1. In addition to your teaching responsibilities, what added school-related responsibilities do you have?
2. Describe your decision to become a teacher.
   a. What people or experience(s) led you to pursue a career as a physical education teacher?
   b. Do you believe your perceptions of teaching have changed since your initial decision? If so, why? If not, why?
3. Explain a specific memory from your physical education/school experiences that influenced your decision to enter a PETE program? Could you share another memory?
4. Explain any changes in your approach to teaching students that you have made since working in your current school.
   a. Specific training, change in personal teaching style, etc.
5. Describe your teaching goals related to student learning.
   a. What steps do you take to teach effectively?
6. Describe your ideal instructional context.
   a. How does your current context align with this vision?
      i. If your current context isn’t aligned with your ideal vision, what do you need (resources, support, etc.) to unite the two?
7. Describe how you make curricular choices related to your teaching context.
   a. Which specific curricular resources do you use and why did you choose them?
   b. Do you use specific curricular models?
8. Provide examples of how you include personal/social responsibility in your lessons.
   a. Do you specifically plan for these outcomes? If so, how? If not, describe the reasons why you do not.
   b. Have you had any training related to implementing personal-social responsibility in your classroom? If so, who initiated this training?
      i. Would you be interested in this type of training?
9. Tell me about the professional culture in your school. (School professional culture is a set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies that make up the “persona of the school).
10. Explain whether the professional culture influences your ability to teach students in your school. If so, how and if not, why do you believe this?
11. Describe any influence the professional culture has on your ability to remain motivated in your job.
12. Describe professional support systems in place within your school and/or district available for you to access for support.
   a. Do you utilize any of these support systems?
13. Describe your relationship with the administration at your school?
14. Describe the type of specific support related to physical education provided to you by the administration in your school and district.
15. Explain the relationship that you tend to have with students in your class.
   a. Does this relationship change outside of the classroom?
16. Has there ever been a time when you struggled to understand a student’s needs in your classroom? If so, how did you approach this; if not, what reasons do you credit for this?
17. Describe the most prevalent student issues you encounter in your teaching context.
   a. What strategies do you use to resolve issues that may be present?
18. Describe any teaching support provided to you by the members of the community (parents, businesses, etc.).
19. Describe the relationship(s) that you tend to have with your colleagues
   a. Department (if applicable)
   b. School/Grade level
20. How do you define resiliency?
   a. On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate your resiliency as a teacher? (Why do you assign yourself this score?)
21. Describe your greatest challenge in the past five years which has tested your ability to be resilient.
22. What strategies do you use at school to remain positive during difficult times?
   a. Where do you draw support and strength from at school?
23. Provide an example of when you had to face a tough professional challenge
24. Describe a time in your life before you became a teacher that demonstrates your resiliency.
   a. Describe your resilience outside of school.
25. What is the biggest threat to your resiliency as a teacher?
   a. What would assist you in overcoming this threat?
26. To what extent do your professional beliefs align with policies in place at your school?
27. Describe the extent to which local, state, and/or national policy agendas affect your values or beliefs related to your teaching?
28. How involved are you with local, state, or national PE agencies? Do you draw support for your teaching from these outlets?
   a. What support do you desire from researchers, local, state, and/or national PE agencies to help you succeed in your position?
29. To what extent do you associate with other physical education teachers in your school, district, state, etc.?
   a. Professionally
   b. Personally
30. Describe the how well your PETE training prepared you for teaching in your current context.
   a. Describe your practicum/clinical experiences as an undergraduate.
      i. Types of school settings, etc.
ii. Explain whether your practicum experiences reinforced the teachings of your PETE program.

b. Did you accept the mission and vision of your PETE program into your personal belief system related to teaching?

c. If you could make changes in how you were trained in PETE, what specific changes would you identify?

31. Describe your first three years as a teacher.

a. Struggles
   i. School-related
   ii. Outside of school

b. Support
   i. School based (induction programs, colleagues, administration, etc.)
   ii. External (family, friends, etc.)

c. To what extent did you experience changes in your beliefs related to teaching?
   i. What prompted these changes?

32. What activities do you participate in during your free time away from school to keep balance in your life?

33. Where do you draw support and strength from outside of school?

   a. How does this help you accomplish your responsibilities as a teacher?

34. Describe any personal challenges away from school that may influence your ability to teach to your fullest potential.

35. Describe how those close to you (family, friends, etc.) supported or criticized your initial decision to become a teacher.

   a. Have those views changed as you have progressed through your career?

36. Have you ever felt “burned out” as a teacher? If so, what did you do to recover?

37. Is there any additional information you would like to provide related to your career as a physical education teacher and the personal and professional challenges that have enhanced or restricted your ability to be resilient?
Appendix K

Interview Guide for Principal Participants

STATE: Your responses will not be discussed or shared with anyone outside of the research team and if you are uncomfortable at any time during the interview you may skip a question(s). Information regarding teacher(s) is to be used for gaining a perspective on the organizational context of the school and how it could potentially influence a teacher’s capacity to be resilient. This is not an evaluation of the teachers’ job performance.

1. How long have you been an administrator at your current school?
   a. How long have you been working in schools labeled as Title 1?
2. Tell me about the professional culture in your school.
3. Explain whether or not the professional culture influences the morale of the school.
   a. If so, how and if not, why do you believe this?
4. When teachers are faced with a challenge in their classroom, how do you provide support?
5. Describe any professional support systems in place within your school and/or district available for teachers to access for support.
   a. How do you know if teachers use them?
6. Describe the type of specific support related to physical education provided to teachers in your school and district.
7. Explain the professional relationship you have with ___________ (PE teacher).
   a. Does this relationship change outside of the school building?
8. Describe common student behaviors that teachers encounter in this school.
   a. What strategies do you encourage teachers to use when attempting to solve issues that may be present?
   b. Describe your perception(s) related to the ability of ___________(PE teacher) to handle these student behaviors.
9. Describe to what extent the members of the community (parents, businesses, etc.) provide teaching/school support.
10. Resiliency is known as the ability to bounce back quickly from adversity, How would you define teacher resiliency?
    a. On a scale of 1-10 how would you describe the resilience capacity of _____________(name of PE teacher)?
11. Describe a time where you noticed ___________ (PE teacher) demonstrating resiliency personally and/or professionally.
12. In addition to their teaching assignment, what type(s) of school-related activities does ___________ (PE teacher) participate in?
    a. Describe their ability to balance these responsibilities with their role as teacher.
13. When hiring physical education teachers in your school what specific characteristics are desired?
    a. Explain whether or not the hiring committee prefers PE candidates to have a coaching or a teaching background?
14. Are there any additional details you would like to provide related to administrative support provided to ____________ (PE teacher) or ____________ (PE teacher) capacity for resilience?