11-1-2018

Teachers' Description of Multiple Initiatives Implementation: A Phenomenological Study

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Recommended Citation

Spann, A. (2018). *Teachers' Description of Multiple Initiatives Implementation: A Phenomenological Study* (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cup_commons_grad_edd/240

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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Teacher's Description of Multiple Initiatives Implementation:

A Phenomenological Study

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Teacher Leadership

Nicholas J. Markette, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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Concordia University–Portland

2018

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to describe the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives in a Wyoming school district. This study sought to answer two research questions: (a) How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with implementing multiple initiatives? (b) How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue? A descriptive phenomenological design was used to investigate to experience of 12 K–12 teachers in a southwest Wyoming public school district who experience multiple initiative implementations. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analyzed using the steps in Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method. After transcription of each interview, the meaning units were abstracted and turned in to themes utilizing In Vivo coding and thematic analysis. This process produced four categories, which described the participants' experience: implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems, and professional growth. This structure depicted an experience consisting of waves of initiatives or overlapping initiatives. Within this environment, teachers felt the impact on their classroom practices, their professional selves, their emotional state, and their students. Despite some professional growth, the 12 participants conveyed a mostly negative experience. The results of this study can assist future educational leaders in understanding change from the teachers' perspective in order to gain positive outcomes for reforms.

     Keywords: multiple initiatives implementation, reaction to change, educational change, teachers and change

Dedication

Education has always been a part of my life as student or teacher or librarian. In all of this time, I have been extremely fortunate to have family, friends, and teachers by my side to share, cheer or commiserate. To them, I dedicate this work.

To my parents, Larron & Marj, who from the beginning have been my biggest advocates and cheerleaders.

To my husband, Rick, my love and partner in life. I'm so happy to share life with you!

To my daughter, Catie, who inspired me to go back to school and cheered me on every step of the way.

To my son and daughter-in-law, Nick & Katrina, who give me reason to keep sharing love and helping others even when they are not biologically mine.

To my grandpa, Clarence Lammers, who is my educator role model.

To my great-aunt, Theresa, who taught me to embrace life, love family fiercely, and laugh wholeheartedly.

To my "sister", Kori, and best-friend, Laura, who believed in me all the way.

And finally, to the many educators in my life, particularly Mrs. Tomich, Ms. Vincent, Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Gamble, who gave me the skills and knowledge to reach for my dreams.

Acknowledgements

I could never have reached the end of this dissertation without the help and assistance of many individuals. Dr. Nicholas Markette has been a wonderful guide in this journey. His support, insight, and faith in me helped make this dream a reality. Ti ringrazio molto! I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Brianna Parsons and Dr. Yvette Ghormley, for their feedback, guidance and encouragement in completing this study. They have truly helped shape and finish this work.

Over the course of the past four years, many others have influenced and shaped my ideas. Thank you, Rhonda and Gigi, for listening to my ideas and letting me vent. Kristi provided much assistance in helping me to juggle work and school as well as not letting me lose sight of my dream. I would also like to thank the individuals who participated in this research for being honest and open about their experience. Thank you for trusting me to tell your story.

Finally, thank you to my husband who took over cooking and other household chores so I could focus on school and who kept me from losing my sanity, remaining focused, and providing much needed encouragement. Thank you to my parents for helping with the busy times and always loving me and encouraging me. Last but definitely not least, thanks to my daughter who would wrap me in a hug during stressful moments and look me right in the eye saying, "I believe in you, Mom. You got this!" Catie-Bug, I do indeed!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Sorokin (1992) contended that cultures are dominated by an overarching mindset that shifts and changes, creating new ideas and eventually exhausting itself to the point where another mindset becomes dominate. Just as cultures reshape and redefine themselves in order to exist, education appears to be at a similar juncture. The international education environment has been a hotbed of reform and calls for change. Between 2008 and 2014, the 34 countries of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) undertook more than 450 separate education initiatives (OECD, 2015). One of the OECD countries, the United States, has been in the midst of reform since the early 1980's.

Beginning in the 1980's and continuing to 2018, classrooms in the U.S. have faced changes brought about by external forces (Henig, 2013; Katz & Rose, 2013). Business leaders, politicians, the media, think tanks, advocacy groups, and individuals in higher education have applied pressure on the U.S. K–12 education system to change in order to have a highly competitive and knowledgeable workforce and citizenry (Cuban, 2013a; Henig, 2013; Mitchell, Shipps, & Crowson, 2018; Ravitch, 2016). Career and college readiness became the goal for educating the youth of the country (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 2017). Globalization has brought about new skills for workers as well as a need to be culturally knowledgeable (A. Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Rury, 2016). These education policy reforms and changes to the needs of students has initiated a need to rethink teaching practices, curriculum, structure, and accountability (Cuban, 2013a; Fives & Buehl, 2016).

Unfortunately, the U.S. education system has not changed much in 100 years (Brown & Berger, 2014; Clement, 2014). For most schools, grade-level cohorts determine student

placement, classrooms still contain desks facing the teacher at the front, summer vacation lasts 10-12 weeks, and student grades determine their success or failure at learning the curriculum (Henig, 2013; Mitchell et al., 2018). Keeping up with these changing demands placed on the system by various interest groups has led to cyclical, chaotic or disjointed initiative implementation by local district to meet or exceed state expectations surrounding these policy reforms (Henig, 2013). Some individuals contend that teachers suffer from initiative fatigue due to this phenomenon of initiative implementation. However, research has not confirmed whether teachers are suffering from initiative fatigue because few studies have conducted research involving the phenomenology of change or reflecting teachers' reality with multiple initiatives. Filling these gaps in the literature supplied an impetus for this study.

Background

Over the past 40 years, policy makers have defined problems with the U.S. education system and sought to suggest solution through federal law or opening up the system to for-profit entities (Mitchell et al., 2018). Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983, the United States educational community has endeavored to improve schools to remain competitive in an increasingly global society (OECD, 2015). Prior to *A Nation at Risk,* the ruling of *Brown vs the Board of Education* in 1954 on segregation holds the distinction of being the first national reform effort since major restructuring at the turn of the 20th Century. Eleven years later, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 provided federal funding to low-income schools in an attempt to close inequalities created along race lines (Mendez, Yoo, & Rury, 2017). While reform efforts occurred during the 1960's and 1970's, *A Nation at Risk* convinced the public of the failing nature and certain inequities in the U.S. school system (Mitchell et al., 2018) and started a trend of reform policies that has lasted until 2018.

A Nation at Risk. With the purpose of stemming mediocrity in U.S. schools, the *A Nation at Risk* report began a decade of state-led reform efforts, which focused on organizational structure reforms (Mehta, 2015). State reforms sought to increase graduation rates especially in the areas of science and math, to put into place statewide testing programs, to increase Advanced Placement (AP) offerings, to encourage the increase in technology use in classrooms, and to begin teacher performance evaluations (Au & Hollar, 2016; Tirozzi & Uro, 1997). Quality and excellence became the trademark of federal policies with a belief in the state to carry out these ideals (Henig, 2013; Superfine, Gottlieb, & Smylie, 2012). Many state departments of education rose to the challenge, creating task forces, initiating studies or commissions to investigate school reforms; however, since the report was not a federal mandate, states could choose whether to pursue the report's suggested reforms or leave schools alone (Ravitch, 2016). With this public cry for reform brought about by *A Nation at Risk*, education became even more of a national and political issue, and the reforms started in the 1980's continued in to the 1990's (Au & Hollar, 2016).

In 1993 with the reauthorization of the ESEA, the federal government became the apex of directing education policies and practices in the United States making most educational change efforts top-down in origin. President Clinton's Goals 2000 Act of 1994 established a framework for school improvement at the state and local level (Ravitch, 2016; Tirozzi & Uro, 1997). The Goals 2000 Act increased the federal mandates to the state level, specifically in the areas of content standards, curriculum and assessments (Ravitch, 2016; Superfine et al., 2012). The spread of the federal involvement in education brought top-down pressure to state departments of education, who in turn passed implementation on to local districts. With the ESEA reauthorization and Goals 2000 Act, the federal government provided funding for schools to

make curricular standard improvements suggested by the eight goals outlined in the act (Ravitch, 2016). The adoption of the ESEA was the first time the federal government outlined standards that states must meet to increase student achievement. By the mid-1990's, business enterprises established more influence on the educational sector as politicians partnered with them to establish national goals, skill standards, and congressional acts related to education (Au & Hollar, 2016).

Changing mandates. In 2001, the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) firmly establishing a position at the top of the educational pyramid and increasing the work load of state educational agencies through accountability measures (Mendez et al., 2017; Ravitch, 2016). As a reauthorization of the ESEA, NCLB was supposed to bring educational quality and outcomes even more firmly into the political agenda and bolstered accountability requirements that were weak in previous reform efforts (Ravitch, 2016; Superfine et al., 2012). States could still determine many areas in meeting the requirements of this law; however, strict sanctions made not meeting these conditions unthinkable.

In 2009, education policy changed once again. The Obama administration kept the accountability and testing aspects of NCLB, while allowing states waivers for making annual yearly progress (Ravitch, 2016). Some of the work and changed made by states under NCLB could be delayed or ended completely. In addition, the Obama administration formed Race to the Top (RTTT), which positioned schools to compete for federal funds. Like *A Nation at Risk,* RTTT was not a mandate, but dangled federal funds as a carrot to adopt certain political initiatives including the newly dubbed national curriculum (Ravitch, 2016). RTTT required states to use student test scores to hold teachers accountable for increases in student learning

necessitated the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) by state departments of education (Spring, 2016) as a means to get students college and career ready (Ravitch, 2016).

Before President Obama left office in 2017, his administration changed the federal education policy with a reauthorization of ESEA known as the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA). Some hope the new reiteration of ESEA will change the rapid turnover and abrupt shifts, characteristic of previous policy making efforts (Mitchell et al., 2018; Ravitch, 2016). However, while the ESSA relieved the stress and stringent sanctions of the past, testing and accountability still rule the policy. How long the ESSA will rule education policy remains to be seen as the Trump administration took office in 2017 and has taken up the rallying cry for school choice once again (Mitchell et al., 2018).

Trickle-down educational policies. Changes at the federal level have required alterations to the educational system at the state level and the local level. With each successful political candidate, whether at the federal or state level, a shift occurs in the educational policies and practices of schools. Lack of stable periods, times when change is minimized, can be detrimental to those implementing the change (Beauden, 2006; Collette, 2015; Ferreria, 2012; Scott-Morgan, Hoving, Smit, & Van Der Slot, 2001). The instability and revolving reform policies from the top have the potential to cause instability at the lower end, especially for those front-line workers implementing and enacting the policies.

Change continues to be a constant in educational environments, as federal, state and local policies attempt to increase student achievement and educational effectiveness (Mitchell et al., 2018). Reformers have defined deficiencies and offered new instructional techniques, new tests, new organizational structures, new classroom configurations, technology, and incentives (Ravitch, 2016). These mandates could often reduce the teachers' autonomy and individuality in

terms of using professional expertise and knowledge in running their classroom (Friesen & Osguthorpe, 2018). Some researchers, most notably Fullan (2016), Ravitch (2016) and Reeves (2010), have indicated all of these changes have led to a weariness among educators regarding change reform. The three authors have suggested teachers may be suffering from initiative fatigue, defined as the exhaustion, stress, and passive behaviors exhibited by individuals who have experienced multiple reform initiatives. Reeves (2010) gave the explanation that this fatigue comes about when the demands of the job replete both physical and emotional resources available to teachers.

A survey by Education Week Research Center indicated teachers perceive reform has become too much (Yettick, Lloyd, Harwin, & Osher, 2017). However, academic research into teacher reaction to change on multiple reform efforts is not forthcoming (Fullan, 2016), nor has the research addressed initiative fatigue. Instead, research into educational change has focused on teachers resistance to change (Terhart, 2013). A search of Google Scholar pertaining to teacher resistance to change yielded 2.1 million responses. Some of these articles pertained to the management of change and overcoming the resistance. Research on educational change has also focused more on the effective management and implementation of change (Brady, Duffy, Hazelkorn, & Bucholz, 2014; Dale & James, 2015; Dike, 2014; M. Jones & Harris, 2014; Schechter & Shaked, 2017). The teachers' perspective on multiple initiative efforts or their experience with initiative fatigue has rarely garnered researcher attention.

Context

The Southwest Wyoming district in which this study took place responded to federal and state mandates by adopting various initiatives to increase student achievement and graduation rates, to provide interventions for struggling students, to increase academic rigor, and to change

teaching practices. Table 1indicates the various initiatives the district used between 2003 and 2018. According to district documents, the rural district in the southwest corner of Wyoming had approximately 20 initiatives implemented simultaneously at various levels between 2003 and 2010, including remediation programs, instructional techniques, curriculum and resources, and more; all were in an effort to improve the district's effectiveness and student achievement as measured by state mandated tests. Other initiatives added between 2011 and 2018 replaced some in Table 1, while some initiatives on this list disappeared completely.

In academic literature, this shifting rotation of programs has been described by some researchers as *initiativitis* (Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012), *initiative fatigue* (Reeves, 2010), *reform fatigue* (Ravitch, 2016) or *change fatigue* (Bernerth, Walker, & Harris, 2011; Dilkes, Cunningham, & Gray, 2014; Ferreria, 2012; Scott-Morgan et al., 2001). All of these phrases refer to the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being exhibit by employees because of excessive change. While studies in business and nursing use the term *change fatigue* more often, education researchers use the term *initiative fatigue* or *change fatigue*. The researcher has chosen to use the term *initiative fatigue* to describe this phenomenon for the purposes of this study.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework forms a foundation on which the researcher conducts a study. Ravitch and Riggan (2017) define a conceptual framework as "an argument about why the topic one wishes to study matters, and why the means proposed to study it are appropriate and rigorous" (p. 5). Personal and professional experience, previous literature, and guiding theories make up the constructs within the conceptual framework (Hays & Singh, 2012). Figure 1-4

provide a visual representation of how each of these areas fit together to form the study's

conceptual framework.

Table 1

Initiatives Implemented from 2003-2018

District Initiatives	District Initiatives
Kagan cooperative learning strategies	Thinking strategies (PEBC & Marzano)
Cross-curricular reading & writing strategies	READ 180
Read Naturally	FOSS science
iPads in the Classroom	Technology integration
Everyday Mathematics	Career Academies (secondary only)
Harcourt Reading	Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)
Reading Mastery	Wilson Reading
Instructional Coaches	Common Core-WY standards
Stop & Think behavioral strategies	Handwriting programs
Building book studies	Academic vocabulary
Check and Connect	Response to Intervention (RtI)
Formative & summative assessments	Common assessments
Curriculum mapping (K–12 in all subject areas)	Project Based Learning (PBL)

Note. This list includes initiatives that some buildings had and others did not. In addition, some

of these programs were level dependent. Not all of these initiatives were implemented in every

building or by every teacher. District documentation supplied the contents of this list.

Personal and professional experience. The researcher became interested in the concept

of initiative fatigue while exploring the topic of educational change as change continues to

pervade the educational environment in the United States (see Figure 1). Having worked in a

district in the United States that has experienced many failed change initiatives, the researcher

began exploring techniques and management strategies to implement educational change

successfully. While exploring educational change, the topic of change effects on individuals

within organizations and schools began to be an area worth exploring.
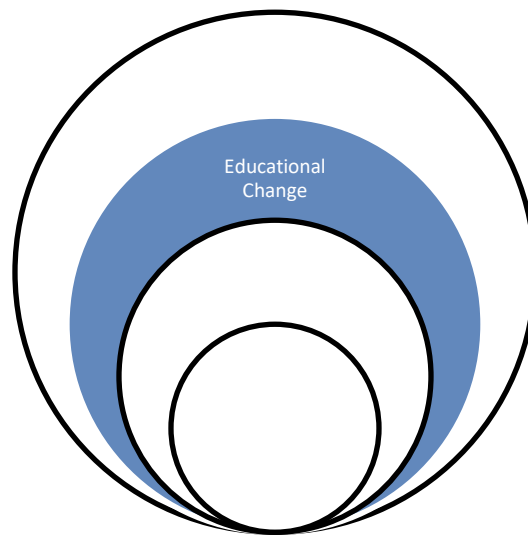
Figure 1. The first stage of the study's conceptual framework explored educational change

literature. The researcher's personal and professional interest in the subject became the impetus

for initially exploring the topic of education change as a possible research topic.

Previous literature. A review of literature on the effects of change revealed studies on

teachers' emotions, behavior, resistance, and cognitive processes during change through

initiative implementation (see Figure 2). Most studies on the effects of change on teachers

investigated this phenomenon using a singular initiative and rarely from multiple initiatives

implementation. Thus, a gap in the literature regarding teachers who have experience with

continuously revolving change initiatives became apparent.
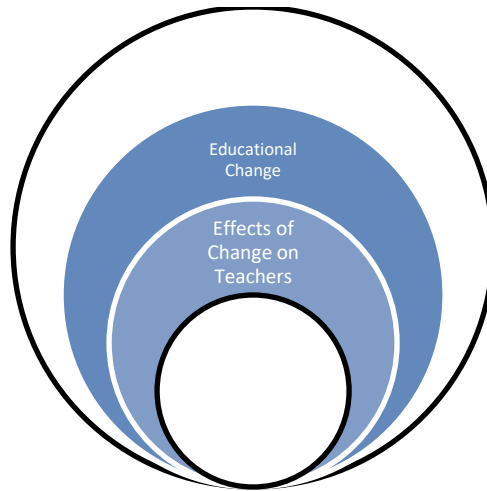
Figure 2. The second stage of the conceptual framework proved to be a subset of the concept of educational change. A review of the literature regarding educational change revealed research regarding the effects of change on teachers.

Educational change research has given credence to teachers' reaction to change; however, further exploration of teacher's response to educational change revealed a little researched topic and one rarely addressed inside the academic realm. This concept, initiative fatigue, has garnered little acknowledgment in research literature and has not been the focus of few, if any, studies. Initiative fatigue has been defined as the overload of initiatives on individuals within an organization, as time, resources, and energy dwindle (McMillan & Perron, 2013; Reeves, 2010). Synonyms of initiative fatigue further lend definition to this concept: being tired of change, adaptive failure, innovation fatigue (Dilkes et al., 2014), initiative overload or repetitive-change syndrome (Clement, 2014). Often the concept of initiative fatigue involves mandated changes that are introduced at a rapid pace to schools and teachers or street-level bureaucrats are left to cope with the consequence (Clement, 2014). Few studies have explored whether reform happens too fast or if teachers may be experiencing cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being problems associated with revolving educational change and the implementation of

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multiple initiatives. Therefore, the concept of initiative fatigue became the focus of this study (see Figure 3).
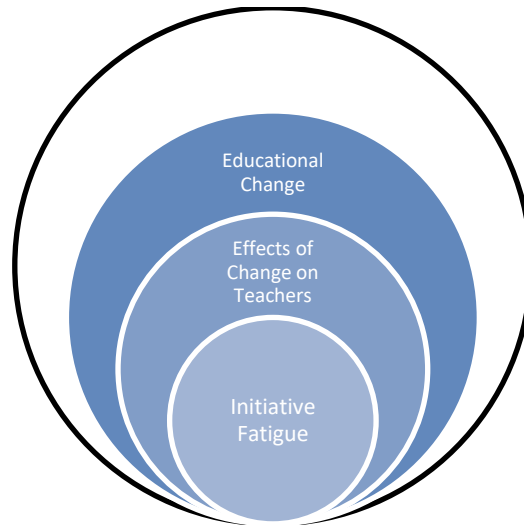
Figure 3. The third stage of the conceptual framework was a further subset of the effects of change on teachers. Known as initiative fatigue, this particular subset of the effects of change on teachers has largely been ignored by academic research. Therefore, this construct became a part of the conceptual framework as a focus for the research.

Guiding theories. Fullan (2016) indicated another gap in the literature regarding educational change. His book, *The NEW Meaning of Educational Change*, recognizes the lack of the "phenomenology of change" (p. 8) in its fifth edition. The fourth publication (2007) did not note such a discrepancy. In other words, researchers have neglected the personal or humanistic side of change. Both of these epistemologies emphasize the human as the center of knowledge. Humanistic psychology focuses on the individuals' experience as viewed subjectively by the researcher (Cameron & Green, 2015). Furthermore, humanistic psychology stresses the significance of viewing the individual holistically, meaning humans do not consist solely of

thoughts, emotions and behaviors, but they operate and exist as part of societies and cultures (Cameron & Green, 2015).

Post-positivism contends that a universal truth applied to all human affairs presents problems (Hays & Singh, 2012; Patton, 2015). The paradigm maintains events and phenomenon present different meanings and views for different individuals and may shift according to varying contexts (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The study presented herein will not attempt to draw a correlation. Instead, the research begins to explore the initiative fatigue concept by providing a description of the lived experience of teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives concurrently and questioning whether the described experience provides an understanding of initiative fatigue. Therefore, taking a humanistic psychology and post-positivist approach (the outermost circle) to educational change frames the entire study in that the researcher used an inductive and human perspective in studying multiple initiative implementations to begin to understand of initiative fatigue (see Figure 4).
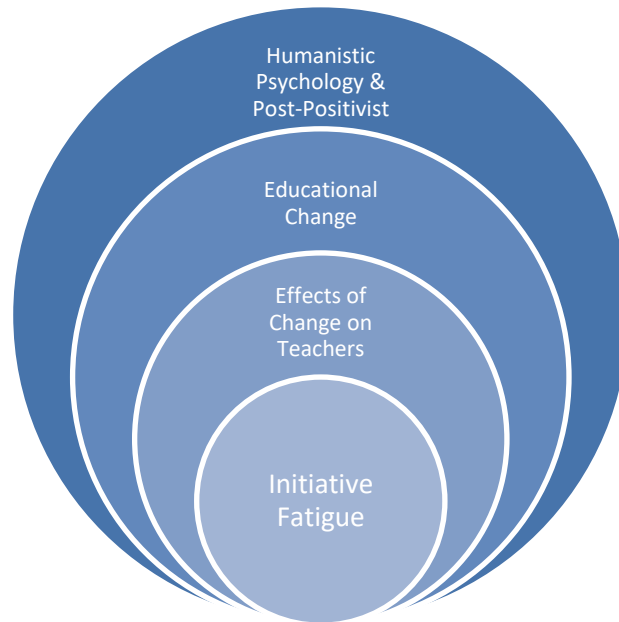
Figure 4. The complete conceptual framework illustrates the embedded nature of each of the components. Initiative fatigue is in the forefront as the impetus for this research.

Problem Statement

Reincarnations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) have changed the U.S. K–12 education system through various policies, top-down mandates, and reform efforts (Clement, 2014). The most recent overhaul of the ESEA required states to formulate a plan to achieve the standards set in the act (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 2017). While the ESSA required these state-level plans, implementation of the policies rested with individual district leaders to evaluate and apply certain changes to meet the demands, if necessary. Researchers in educational policy implementation have revealed interpretation of policies at the local level may not always correspond with the intent of the original regulations (Brady et al., 2014; Cerna, 2013; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Webel & Platt, 2015) causing disconnect between implementation and intent. The outcomes of these top-down mandated changes may have caused unintended consequences for those charged with carrying out the policies. These outcomes could have physical and psychological consequences, positive or negative, for individuals embroiled in the implementation (Brady et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2018). Clement (2014) called attention to teachers emotional and behavioral reaction to such top-down mandates. However, little research existed regarding K–12 teachers' first-hand experience with implementing multiple initiatives. Therefore, the need to conduct research into how K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with the implementation of multiple initiatives came to the researcher's attention.

Additionally, with the mandate by RTTT and ESSA to use *research-based* or *evidence-based* practices and innovations, a plethora of programs and methods has inundated the market in staggering proportions (Dumas & Anderson, 2014; Ellis & Bond, 2016). The creation of the *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC) by the federal government provided a place to house

evidence-based programs from which educators can make decisions regarding changes within the school or the classroom. In 2018, the WWC contained over 500 evidence-based programs and practices, over 576 intervention reports, and 23 practice guides for pre-K through postsecondary leaders and teachers to use to increase student achievement and success (Institute of Education Science, 2017). Due to federal policy request to use evidence-based methods, many school leaders sought such programs and practices as a way to enhance student success and achievement in their buildings and reformers continue to push the latest, successful reform measure (Ellis & Bond, 2016; Ravitch, 2016). As such, a rotation of evidence-based programs may have occurred in a search to find out what works best at a specific location. Change based on these programs affected the work of frontline educators, those who teach in the classroom and eventually carry out the initiatives decided upon by school administration or central office (Clement, 2014).

In researching educational change, teachers' lived experience with implementation of multiple initiatives rarely made an appearance. Research on change in instructional practices has focused on one initiative occurring at a time, but this rarely describes the real situation teachers face which is multiple initiatives at once (Fullan, 2016). Policy implementation by educators has focused either on large-scale quantitative studies on the effects on educators or beginning teachers, or conceptual papers on teacher sense-making of the policies (Jones, Khalil, & Dixon, 2017).

Research on educational reform has focused on various aspects including teacher's resistance and reticence to change (Terhart, 2013) and how teachers may profess change while their practice shows something different. Spillane et al. (2002) argued that policy implementation may not be as cut and dry as numerous factors may contribute to implementation actors' lack of

success with implementing policies. Nolan (2016) observed that administrators may have a misconception of teacher reaction to change, slanting more towards teachers as resistors to change rather than another explanation. Cuban (2013a) noted teachers as resistors to change albeit also placing the blame on policy makers lack of knowledge regarding educational practices as well as not including teachers in shaping policy. The idea of resistance to change implies an active and conscious effort by individuals to sabotage reform efforts (McMillan & Perron, 2013; Terhart, 2013). Other research on teacher's agency (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Datnow, 2012; Ketelaar, Beijaard, Boshuizen, & Den Brok, 2012; Vähäsantanen, 2015), beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2016; Guerra & Nelson, 2009; Lebak, 2015; Talbot & Campbell, 2014), cognitive processes (Ilies, Huth, Ryan, & Dimotakis, 2015; Ketelaar et al., 2012; März & Kelchtermans, 2013; van Veen, Sleegers, & van de Ven, 2005) as well as contextual indicators (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011; Kwok, 2014; Sau-Ching Yim & Moses, 2016; Tsang & Kwong, 2017) suggested that how teachers perceive and experience change may affect their response and attitude toward the change. Each of these areas contribute to the idea of initiative fatigue, which ultimately manifests in teachers' passive, ambivalent and powerless feeling towards change (McMillan & Perron, 2013). Thus, these studies may provide a contradiction to explain why teachers may not change as policy makers, the public and administrations would hope. Moreover, without the teacher perspective on their experience with change, the educational field may not be able to say whether change resistance or initiative fatigue can explain the role of the teacher in reform failure.

Gaining a clear description of the teachers' lived experience could start to close the gap between what administrators see as resistance and what teachers actually experience during

multiple initiative change. Understanding the teacher's perspective on educational change also should be considered for these reasons:

> 1) Teachers are the ones ultimately responsible for implementing the changes at the classroom level, which directly influences students and their achievement.
>
> 2) Teachers have insight in to the daily workings of the classroom, what works and problems therein, as opposed outside stakeholders.
>
> 3) Teachers resistance to change could be valid and successful implementation could hinge on understanding these reasons. (Clement, 2014)

Hearing teachers' voices then could change the management and acceptance of initiative implementation to make the impact on student achievement that policies and change set out to make. In particular, educational leaders could greatly benefit from this research due to limited time to inquire, understand, and integrate reasons as to why prescribed reforms may not be successful (Snyder, 2017).

Fullan (2016), Hargreaves (1994), and Reese (2011) have noted that many educators suffer from initiative fatigue given the rate, depth manner of change brought about over the course of the past 40 years of educational policy reforms. However, few research studies have provided a platform to explore teachers' lived experience with multiple changes. Given scant research on initiative fatigue and lack of phenomenological studies on educational change, a need remained to explore how K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with the implementation of multiple initiatives. The study presented herein describes the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who dealt with implementing multiple initiatives.

Purpose of the Study

Over the past 40 years, the United States has seen a shift in the political climate regarding educational policy and mandates (Mendez et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2018; Ravitch, 2016; Rury, 2016). Federal laws regarding education have meant changes in state educational direction, goals, and requirements that have a dramatic effect on those who are required to carry out and fulfill this mandate at local levels. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study is to explore the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who experienced multiple initiative implementations in a Wyoming school district. These teachers experienced multiple initiatives mandated by the central administration office. In one ten-year period, the teachers in the Wyoming district implemented approximately 20 initiatives. Those on the front lines, the teachers, were often required to make changes to their practices through initiatives directed at the local level in response to the changes at the state and federal level. Studies have analyzed teacher response to change, but few have looked at initiative fatigue components or taken a phenomenological stance (Fullan, 2016).

This study's intent aimed to fill the two gaps suggested by Fullan (2016) in adding to phenomenology of change and reflecting teachers' reality with implementing initiatives. Thus, the first goal of this study was to describe the teachers' lived experience with multiple initiatives in order to inform educational administrators and policy makers of teachers' reactions to such situations. The findings could inform administrators as to any personal or professional tolls teachers could have with multiple changes in a short amount of time. Furthermore, the conclusions could show policy makers the impact of their decisions on those charged with carrying out the directives in their policies.

Moreover, both groups could use this information to plan future initiatives and change efforts in a manner in which implementation could be successful. As Fullan (2016) noted, paying

attention to the finer points in the change process and reducing the number of failures in reform efforts could turn the tide in making the changes reality. Thus, administrators and policy makers should know educators' experiences with initiative after initiative, especially if the implementation of continuous initiatives could be a factor in failing. Due to this imperative, the second purpose of this study explored whether the experience of teachers with multiple initiatives can help us to understand whether teachers are indeed experiencing initiative fatigue.

Research Questions

In researching the topic of teacher reaction to change and initiative fatigue, the author noticed the lack of research pertaining to how teachers' experience multiple initiatives. Fullan (2016) wrote that most research on change examines one initiative at a time, even in research regarding the effects of change on teachers; however, this view of change happening as single incident does not reflect reality. Because of this rotation of multiple initiatives occurring simultaneously, researchers such as Fullan (2016) and Reeves (2010) and non-academic entities fear teachers experience initiative fatigue. Research did not adequately address teachers' perspective or reaction to multiple initiatives that could cause initiative fatigue. Therefore, the research questions were formed to address this gap in the literature by asking:

- How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with implementing multiple initiatives?

- How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Proposed Study

The research study sought to fill a gap in the literature regarding education change by providing a rarely studied aspect of educational change: teachers who experience multiple

initiatives concurrently. Charged with carrying out educational policy in a climate wrought with reform efforts and changes, these frontline workers often do not have a chance to have the reality of what they are experiencing brought to the public. In doing so, the study took a phenomenological perspective to describe teachers' experience with change, a new aspect to educational change and policy implementation efforts.

Potential benefits of such a study may lie in informing policymakers and administrations on the need to frame change policy or reforms in such a way as to mitigate unforeseen consequences on those in charge of enactment. Brady et al. (2014) and McMillan and Perron (2013) advocated for policy framing which attempts to prevent problems in implementation before reaching the enactment stage. When change initiatives fail, the blame often rests on teachers (Hirsch, 2016; Katz & Rose, 2013). Teachers experience initiative fatigue (Yettick et al., 2017) at an alarming rate and yet, few studies draw on cases of initiative overload to tell teachers' experience with multiple implementation efforts.

Definition of Terms

Demoralization. Teachers enter the profession with a sense of what constitutes good work. These definitions of good work usually stem from a moral center (Santoro, 2018) that can then be tapped in to when assessing or evaluating the worth of the job that is being done. When individuals are unable to access the moral rewards or sources of work satisfaction, demoralization has occurred (Santoro, 2018).

Initiatives. For the purposes of this study, initiatives refer to the programs and practices implemented within an organization. In this study, this term will be interchangeable with the *reform* and *mandates*.

Initiative fatigue. Initiative fatigue refers to the overload of initiatives on individuals within an organization, as time, resources, and energy dwindle (McMillan & Perron, 2013; Reeves, 2010). The exchangeable terms *initiative fatigue* and *change fatigue* involve the increasing demands placed on workers by the need to innovate and reform. Other terms applied to this concept include initiative overload, innovation overload, innovation fatigue, and repetitive-change syndrome (Clement, 2014; Dilkes et al., 2014).

Innovations. Innovation involves the changing of organizational structures, cultures, behaviors, or other aspects in an attempt to adapt to changing times and specific goals (van den Berg, Vandenberghe, & Sleegers, 1999). Innovations cause change within an institution and therefore, the term can exchange with *initiatives* or *reforms*.

Organizational change. The definition of organizational change in this paper refers to the radical or second-order change required by policy and enacted through initiatives and reforms (Bartunek, 1987; Ertmer, 1999; Levy & Merry, 1986). The concept transforms below the surface causing a change in beliefs, values, identity, behaviors, or perceived views of the organization.

Organizational development. Unlike organizational change, organizational development refers to surface modifications. These alterations may not affect the basic core of the organization, but rather only rearrange certain procedures or processes but the values and beliefs remain the same (Bartunek, 1987; Levy & Merry, 1986).

Policy implementation. Policy implementation means the way in which actors interpret and carry out the demands of the policy (Cerna, 2013). This phrase can refer to either federal or state political policy as well as school district policies.

Reculture. The term *reculture* refers to the process of changing the components that make up organizational culture: values, beliefs, behaviors, stories, traditions, purpose, direction, and so on (Crockett, 1996).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

By employing a descriptive phenomenological method, the researcher needed participants to be open in honest in describing their experiences (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). One assumption was the selected participants would answer questions openly and honestly. A second assumption was that the author would employ phenomenological bracketing to hold personal experience and observation of the phenomenon studied in this investigation in abeyance. A third assumption was the ability of the author to mitigate any potential bias towards the participants, as the author knows the individuals. The author hoped to minimize the second and third assumption by continually writing down expectations, assumptions, and hopes prior to data collection in a reflexive journal and crosschecking outcomes to ensure biases or preconceptions were not appearing in the analysis phase of the study.

Limitations naturally occur in research studies. Two limitations of the current study were the use of teachers from the same district and utilizing a small sample size, which decreased the generalizability and potential transferability of this research. A third limitation involved the use of self-reporting strategies. Deception and individual perspectives can limit and color the data obtained from such methods and cause the data to be skewed or be unusable (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2016). One final limitation of the study entailed the possibility of error in gathering retrospective data, despite perfection not being the aim of the description being sought in the interview (Giorgi, 2009; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). The author employed member-checking to help mitigate the effects of such a limitation as suggested by Giorgi and Giorgi (2008).

Delimitations refer to limitations imposed by the researcher on the study. One delimitation placed on the research concerned the study's timeframe., the researcher's investigation focused on the period between 2003 and 2010. These years were significant to the study because they represented a time when teachers managed a plethora of district-mandated initiatives. The district involved within the study still dealt with initiative implementation in 2018 and therefore, the researcher included participants who worked in the district from 2011-2018 as well. Another delimitation placed on the study was selecting public school teachers from the same rural Wyoming school district. The community in which the district resides houses a private school but the researcher chose to use only teachers from the public school system.

Chapter 1 Summary

With the changing educational landscape in the United States, teachers hold the potential to make these changes come to fruition. For 40 years, the U.S. has experienced a plethora of changing laws, initiatives, and reforms in an attempt to alter the system given external pressures and demands. However, research in how these alterations may affect teachers consists of mostly quantitative studies based on single initiatives, overcoming teacher resistance to change, and successfully leading and managing change. The research question of this study attempted to bring into focus the lived experience of teachers and delve into the affects multiple initiatives may have on their cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being. To answer this question, this research employed a descriptive phenomenological method to uncover teachers' description of their lived experience with multiple initiative enactment.

This chapter set up the background, context, purpose, rationale and relevance of this study. In addition, certain terms have been defined to assist in an understanding the concepts and ideas inherent in this study. Lastly, this chapter outlined the assumptions, limitations, and

delimitations in this research. Chapter 2 expands on some of these ideas by providing an overview of the research on educational change, the research outlining the effects of initiatives on teachers, and the concept of initiative fatigue.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

  In the past 40 years, education in the United States has seen a multitude of reform initiatives and changes brought about by internal and external environmental forces. Reform efforts have sought to close the achievement gap by ensuring *all* children are educated to the same standard, to integrate technology, to create national standards and to teach 21st century skills (Mendez et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2018; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Ravitch, 2016; Rury, 2016; Tirozzi & Uro, 1997). The US educational environment contains numerous triggers calling for change including inadequate test scores, graduation rates, underprepared workers and college students, global economy, societal changes, more diverse student population, and a widening achievement gap within our nation. Some of these triggers have been around since the 1980's, but reform efforts since then have had limited effect on adjusting the educational organization towards improvement (Clement, 2014; Fullan, 2016) as shown by the United States' steady decline of results on international testing and consistently declining graduation rate.

  While the results have remained the same, reform efforts have targeted different areas in instruction and accountability. For example, reform in the 1980's and 1990's focused on curricular changes and organizational structures within the system. Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), improvement efforts have aimed at increasing student achievement and other recent policies have focused on teacher accountability and development. The spotlight has been on improving instruction and teacher skill set by means of research-based, best-practice initiatives and equating test scores with teacher effectiveness (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Friesen & Osguthorpe, 2018; Tsang, 2018; Webel & Platt, 2015). Federal level changes directed at these efforts, such as the teacher

accountability embedded Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation, have prompted shifts in policies at the state level. Changes at these two levels combine to affect local policies, initiatives and practices enacted to fulfill the mandates directed from the state and federal government.

While schools, administration, teachers, students, and other constituents can adapt to the changes with time, the right leadership and training, the climate in education has seldom allowed for periods of stability before the next wave of reform hits. Lack of stability at the top of the hierarchy (the federal level) means every new administration sets their own mark on education. This possibility exists at the state level and local level in some states as well. Those individuals ultimately in charge of carrying out the changes to increase or maintain student achievement levels have been affected because implementation of policies has been a continuous cycle. Most research on educational change or policy implementation stresses one initiative and one level of schooling. Our teachers, however, face a different reality made up of multiple and often rotating initiatives (Fullan, 2016). Teachers' descriptions during the implementation of multiple reforms, leading to initiative fatigue, did not crop up in the literature studied for this research.

This study proposed to fill this gap by presenting the lived experience of K–12 public education teachers' who underwent multiple initiative reform efforts. First, the conceptual framework discusses the constructs relevant to why the author chose to pursue this topic and the theoretical frames from which the topic begins to form. After this disclosure, the review of research literature examines the phenomenon of initiative fatigue and change fatigue, as defined in organizational science literature. Next, this review highlights research conducted in the field of organizational change pertaining to the type and depth of change as well as the psychological effects of change on recipients, all of which connect to the concept of initiative fatigue. Following this exploration, this chapter discusses literature relevant to change within the

educational field and situating this study with this arena. A third section explores research

regarding the effects of change on teachers. Finally, this section presents a review of the

methodology literature, a synthesis of the research findings, and a critique of the previous

research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides an explanation of the impetus, importance, and

innovativeness of a proposed study. Ravitch & Riggan (2017) described the conceptual

framework as being an argument defending the purpose of the proposed study within the

appropriate field and the choice of the method used to conduct the study. Hays and Singh (2012)

labeled the framework's components as guiding theories, personal and professional experience,

and previous literature. These three categories also make up the conceptual framework for this

study.

Guiding theories. Theory equips a researcher with perspectives from which to consider

the phenomenon under study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). As such, a theoretical framework

furnishes a philosophical stance from which to view the research (Crotty, 2010). For this study,

humanistic psychology and post-positivist paradigms framed the researcher's perspective and

acted as guiding theories.

Humanistic psychology. According to Cameron and Green (2015), the humanistic

psychology approach emphasizes a holistic approach to defining humans as well as

understanding the individual's experience from their advantage point. Holistically, individuals

belong to societal and cultural context in addition to understanding and knowing them by their

emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. The humanistic psychology approach requires the researcher

to understand the individual in this complete manner by subjectively acknowledging and

knowing their experience. In other words, the researcher needs to place their own views and thoughts on the individual aside and view the individual from their vantage point in all their different aspects.

Post-positivism. Post-positivism, as opposed to the positivism paradigm, maintains human affairs should not be narrowed down to a single universal truth (Hays & Singh, 2012; Patton, 2015). The meaning or experience behind a phenomenon changes and has a definition depending on individual viewpoints (Cohen et al., 2007). The positivistic, natural scientific approach to generalizing events may not provide a complete picture of what happens during such a time (Cohen et al., 2007; Hays & Singh, 2012). Moreover, post-positivism explicates the idea that all research methods contain limitations and imperfections and therefore, research needs to include qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches to provide a well-rounded picture of an experience or individuals.

Personal and professional experience. Another construct of the conceptual framework regards the means by which the researcher chose the study's topic. From 2003-2018, the researcher observed several reform initiatives come and go within a Southwest Wyoming district. As an employee in this district, these shifting initiatives did not interrupt the everyday working environment of the researcher, who works in a non-classroom capacity within a district school. Several colleagues of the researcher talked about the frustrations and stress associated with working in which new programs or strategies where continually being presented to teachers to implement. With these talks, the researcher wanted to make these colleague's lives easier and so decided to research effective means of implementing educational change. From the researcher's perspective during this time, some of the problems with the implementation of initiatives stemmed from teacher reluctance to attempt the initiatives. Because of this perception

that some teachers resisted the changes, the researcher wanted to explore ways to implement educational change successfully. In reviewing literature, the concept of initiative fatigue brought a new perspective for the researcher. Maybe the teachers were not resisting implementation. Other factors could be the reason. Therefore, the researcher wanted to know the experience of implementing multiple initiatives from the perspective of the teacher and not rely on the outsider view in determining what the teachers were experiencing at this time. With this drive to study educational change, the researcher turned to the literature to study educational change, organizational change, and initiative fatigue.

Previous literature. The desire to study the phenomena of initiative fatigue stemmed from the researcher's work and readings of literature on organizational change and how teachers had been affected by changes mandated from a top-down perspective. Unfortunately, after an examination of the literature on educational change and the effects of change on teachers, the researcher discovered a gap consisting of teacher's experience with the implementation of multiple initiatives. Delving deeper into the effects of change on teachers, the researcher discovered the idea of initiative fatigue. The notion of initiative fatigue has rarely been studied despite the use of similar terms by Fullan (2016), Ravitch (2016)and Reeves (2010). Literature on educational change has focused on the effects change and reforms have had on teacher cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being. Kelchtermans (2005), Rigby et al. (2016), Talbot and Campbell (2014), and van Veen et al. (2005) have studied the cognitive changes associated with beliefs, agency, affects, and commitment. Emotional well-being such as workload, stress, and burnout have garnered research attention from Ilies et al. (2015), Kokkinos (2007), Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelen (2014) and Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, and Yang (2015). Day and Smethen (2009) and Dicke et al. (2014) have studied work related well-being

associate with self-efficacy while Le Fevre (2014), Lo, Lai, and Wang (2013), and Woolner, Clark, Laing, Thomas, and Tiplady (2014) have studied the effects of change on teacher space, practice and professionalism. Each of these studies has used theories from organizational change science as part of the study's conceptual framework. The effects of change on teachers in these studies have not explored whether reform happens too fast or if teachers may be experiencing cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being related problems associated with initiative fatigue because of change brought about by the implementation of multiple initiatives.

As Fullan (2016) suggested, the reality for teachers does not necessarily exist in dedicating time to one initiative only. Moreover, the affects caused by integrating multiple initiatives could be multi-fold. The only way to capture a full picture of teachers' experience with change through multiple initiatives would be to allow them to describe their reality. Thus, the researcher aimed to provide a description of teachers' experience with multiple initiatives implementation.

In addition, this examination of the research revealed few studies that employed a phenomenological method to study this phenomenon. This gap in the literature provided a means for explaining why the topic merits a study and the choice of method. The next section provides a more in-depth examination of the literature on initiative fatigue, organizational change, and educational change and effects on teachers.

Review of Research Literature

The goal of this research project was to explore whether K–12 teachers in a Southwest Wyoming school district could be experiencing initiative fatigue. In order to begin this exploration, a picture of these same teachers' experience with multiple initiative implementations needed to be established as initiative fatigue stems from a continuous cycle of change or change excess. Thus, the review of

research literature begins with a discussion of the construct of initiative fatigue. Change research follows this examination in regards to the type and depth of change as these can contribute to initiative fatigue. Additionally, this section presents research that provides an overview of an employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to change as well as changes effect on a worker's work related well-being as covered in organizational change literature. Lastly, this review covers change research from the educational field situating the present study within the discipline. In particular, the educational change discussion focuses on the impetus behind changes, pertinent research regarding educational perspectives on change, and research on teacher demoralization.

Initiative fatigue. Living in a fast-paced world has contributed to individuals being busier than their counterparts 30 years ago (Levitin, 2015). Technology has allowed people to perform tasks previously delegated to others and has contributed to a multitasking mindset. Unfortunately, while individuals may seem to be able to handle numerous responsibilities, multitasking actually has negative side effects. Citing a study by a MIT neuroscientist, Levitin noted that multitasking actually takes away from the effectiveness of being able to do any of the tasks. Stress levels rise, adrenaline production increases, and our minds become addicted to constantly searching for stimulation (Levitin, 2015). Research has shown initiative fatigue usually stems from change excessiveness with little time to adjust to one change initiative before another begins (Johnson, 2016; Johnson, Bareil, Giraud, & Autissier, 2016). Thus, an increase in tasks an individual must focus on causes many psychological and physical alterations, which are not good for personal well-being or the effectiveness of an organization trying to implement change and improvement through initiatives.

This overload of tasks has a name within organizational change literature: change fatigue or initiative fatigue. Unfortunately, in educational change literature, the concept remains almost

non-existent. Reeves (2010), one of the few educational researchers discussing this phenomenon, proposed the Law of Initiative Fatigue. Reeves' principle asserted a link between the number of initiatives adopted at one time and the allocation of resources, time, and emotional energy in pursuit of these changes. In essence, as the number of initiatives increases, resources dwindle as more areas need covered; time to perform all duties decreases; and the emotional energy of those carrying out the change recede.

Other research by White (2005, 2009; Reeves, 2010) supported such an idea. White also found an inverse reaction between the number of initiatives leaders chose to pursue and the effectiveness of those initiatives. Excessive amounts of initiatives decrease the success rate of any individual initiative. In organizational science, the concept of excessive change depends on the change frequency (type of change), the impact of the change (depth of change) or the extent of the change (Johnson, 2016). Psychological phenomena associated with such changes have come under study as well. Job-demand theory suggested that excessive change threatens an individual's well-being due to the imbalance between the demands of the change and the individual's resources to cope with such change (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Johnson, 2016; Johnson et al., 2016). When change demands exhaust the physical, psychological, social, and motivational stores of an individual, the change has reached an excessive level (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011) and fatigue could very well be a part of the reaction to such change.

In the realm of education, the concept of initiative fatigue has been addressed in blog posts, educational focused publications, and certain organizational reports. However, these non-academic publications simply claim initiative fatigue haunts teachers. Academic research studies have not ascertained the validity of these claims, nor have studies investigated the repeated

demands or excessiveness of educational change. Fullan contended that many school systems suffer from *initiativitis*, or the condition in which teachers and leaders become confused or exhausted due to the implementation of change effort after change effort without regard as to the connectivity, impact or effect such rotation of reform may have on individuals or the system (Evans et al., 2012). In another publication, Fullan (2016) referred to this as *initiative overload.* Indeed, in searching for the *best-practice*, *research-based* program, some educational systems have become subjected to a "succession of fad-driven spirals of innovation" (Ellis & Bond, 2016, p. 29). Very little non-empirical research exists as to how teachers describe their experience with this revolving door of innovations.

Initiatives in and of themselves are not bad and usually, teachers welcome the chance to learn new and adaptive ways of making the job more productive. Indeed, some change initiatives have made the national spotlight because of their successful implementation or popularity. Despite research on change, very few studies have used a method that gets to the lived experience of those individuals having to implement change effort after change effort, the teachers. Most research into educational change has focused on how to reduce anxiety, stress, burnout or risk associated with change. Studies with such an emphasis look to provide a relationship or causality between change and different emotional or behavioral responses. In addition, this research usually deals with one innovation at a time, or individual change episodes (Johnson et al., 2016), which rarely happens in education systems attempting to stay up with changing policies and legislation. However as Fullan (2016) observed, the need exists to look at the shared meaning behind change in education. This author contended by not studying or recognizing the phenomenology of change, or "how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended" (Fullan, 2016, p. 8), the field has missed the

opportunity to understand why change initiatives fail. Therefore, this study sought to depict K–12 teachers' experience with implementing multiple initiatives using a descriptive phenomenological method. This description was then utilized as basis to begin to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue.

Change research. Organizational change research defines the phenomenon of change as the interaction between environmental triggers and the perceived notion of the individual employee, a select group or team, or the organization as a whole. An environmental impetus, either internal or external to organization, begins the change process, the consequences of which affects the organizational, group, and individual levels of the institution. This research study concentrated on the reactions of change by those on the individual level. Research on employees and change conceive of change in relation to the shared meanings and understanding that people within the organization hold (Levy & Merry, 1986). Change or lack of change occurs depending on the resolution of the interaction between the environmental factor and the individual. Moreover, the type and depth of change relates to the concept of initiative fatigue. This condition occurs in organizations when the type of change is continuous with little time in between initiatives to establish equilibrium and adjust to the change. In addition, the depth of change could determine the appearance of change fat Therefore, this section focuses on research pertaining to the types of change, which corresponds to the frequency of change, and the impact or extent of the change, which parallels to the depth of change, in order to explain how change occurs within an organization.

Types of change. In general, change within organizations can occur organically, evolutionary, as part of a crafted plan, or as disjointed activities. Organic organizational change, also known as the Life Cycle perspective (Burke, 2014; Levy & Merry, 1986), views alterations

as part of the cyclical and linear development of the organization. Change naturally occurs depending on the organization's developmental stage. The frequency of such change occurs randomly as part of the organization's growth. The counterpart of the Life Cycle perspective set out to make planned changes. Known as Teleological type, these planned organizational changes modify the existing organizations in order to reach set goals or a desired end state (Burke, 2014). Continual improvement characterizes this type of change as constant goal setting happens as a response to a change in group's purpose or environmental factors. This type corresponds with the continuous improvement cycle meant to hold schools accountable and accredited. In this type of change, the organization remains in a constant state of change with only momentary bouts of equilibrium.

Evolutionary change resembles biological evolutionary theory as a desire to remain competitive or survival drives the motivation to change (Burke, 2014). Like the Teleological view of change, evolutionary change efforts place employees in a never-ending state of disequilibrium especially if adaptations happen quickly or in succession. The frequency of change turnover tends to cause change episodes to overlap, leading to a potential cause of initiative fatigue (Johnson, 2016). Lastly, disjointed or dialectic types of change transpire when opposite forces collide, and a creative resolution presents itself out of a mixture of the two sides (Burke, 2014). This solution may not always be for the good as in the example of change brought on by an acquisition or company take-over. A merger or take-over can leave employees with a positive or negative feeling based on their perception of change as being good or bad for organization or for themselves (Sung et al., 2017). Factors within the context of the merger, such as job change, positioning, uncertainty of continued employment, or resource allocation, can sway this perception towards the positive or the negative depending on the perspective of the

individual (Sung et al., 2017). These perceptions in turn could lead to organizational attachment issues such as job satisfaction or intention to stay (Sung et al., 2017).

Frequency of change, as denoted by the types of change, has the potential to understand employees' perception toward excessiveness of change and fatigue (Johnson, 2016). In attempting to understand how change affects employees, and how they in turn cope with change, an understanding of the employees' perception of change, especially during the simultaneous implementation of multiple initiatives, needs studied (Johnson, 2016). Therefore, the present study means to provide the lived experience of teachers regarding the phenomenon of multiple initiative implementations.

Depth of change. Institutions depend on adaptations in order to thrive. Some of these alterations create little change to the basics of the organization (organizational development), while others cause radical alterations making the organization look unlike its past (organizational change or transformation). The depth of change as characterized by these types of change can determine the extent or impact of change on the recipients in terms of their behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects as shown in the theories of Schein (2010), Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974)and Bartunek (1987).

Schein (2010) elaborated on the work of Lewin (1947) to form a psycho-social theory of organizational change. According to this author, the collective organizational concepts, beliefs, mental models, attitudes help to provide stability and unity among members of the organizational. In order for development or change to take place, a motivation for modification needs to occur. This alteration could upset the equilibrium of perceptions but requires a reassessment of the cognitive constructs holding one to the status quo and take on new mental models with which to view and perform work (Schein, 2010).

First-order or second-order change also explains the depth of organizational transformation. First-order change occurs within a system and does very little to alter the system

(Watzlawick et al., 1974). Changes categorized as first-order take on surface level or cosmetic changes, allowing present policies, procedures, beliefs and values to remain intact (Kezar, 2001, p. 16). According to Levy and Merry (1986), the organization's core or a company's basic precepts of identity, values, and purpose (Collins & Porras, 2004) remains fixed because first-order change targets one subsystem of the organization not the whole (Burke, 2014). Incremental in nature and often associated more with development rather than transformation, first-order change alters the individual, group or organizational processes, practices, or behaviors without major upheaval or effecting the other sets (Burke, 2014; Kezar, 2001). First-order change tends to use the pre-existing organizational routines, beliefs, practices, values and procedures in order to make the shift possible (Bartunek, 1987) rather than being creative or unique. Individuals may profess and believe a change of attitude and behaviors has occurred, but any shifts only maintain the status quo and thus have not truly changed (Bartunek, 1987).

Second-order change, on the other, attacks individuals' schemata causing the letting go of one idea and replacing this idea with a completely different frame (Bartunek, 1987; Burke, 2014; Leonard, Lewis, Freedman, & Passmore, 2016; Levy & Merry, 1986). This level of change leads to transformation, wherein alterations to the values, mission, culture, or even structure could be drastically altered (Levy & Merry, 1986). Change of this magnitude alters paradigms by breaking ties with past images of the organization (Bartunek, 1984; Burke, 2014; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Creativity and innovation thrive in such an environment (Levy & Merry, 1986) breaking the organizational inertia that occurs from constant first-order type changes (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). However, second-order change often invites resistance as individuals are made to evaluate and adapt to new information, altering their perceived schemata, behavior, and skills (Marzano et al., 2005). Acceptance and success do not come easy with this

level of change. Thus, this depth of change can affect a worker's cognitive, emotional, behavioral and work-related well-being more than a first-order change.

      Reaction to change. Most people accept that change causes stress, but work related stress created by organizational change contributes to other effects, including initiative fatigue. Often referred to as recipients of change, these individuals ultimately hold the responsibility of the successful enactment and implementation of change although management and context also play a role (Olsen & Sexton, 2008). Studies show relationships and correlations between the consequences of change upon the recipients' livelihood, sense of belonging and competence, motivation, and overall well-being (Oreg, By, & Michel, 2013), which in turn affects how the success of the change efforts (Clement, 2014). Fugate (2013) contends that individuals reactions to change varies tremendously. Some perceive change initiatives as negative and others tend to take positive advantage of change, seeing the alteration as a time of growth and advancement.

      Within organizational science and organizational psychology field, research has addressed more prominently the concept of change and its effects on individuals than the educational field. For example, Michel and González-Morales (2013) noted several studies indicating the negative impact of organizational change on an individual's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and work-related well-being. Other studies draw on these same constructs in various combinations to investigate this phenomenon. According research, change involves a disruption of normal organizational routines and practices (Johnson et al., 2016). The depth or magnitude of this shift can affect organizational members to a different degree. Reactions to change vary as much as the individuals who experience change (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013). This section will discuss various studies from the organizational science and education, which

highlight the effects of change on recipients' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and work-related well-being.

Cognitive reactions to change. Cognitive aspects deal with how individuals shift their preconceived notions and beliefs as well as make meaning regarding their work and shift these meanings when change occurs. When confronted with change, such as a mandated initiative, individuals strategically move to figure out what is happening by gathering information and then cognitively processing this material in to something that make senses (Bartunek, Rousseau, Rudolph, & DePalma, 2006). Perception of the change, or appraisal of the change, also determines response to the change (Fugate, 2013). According to Michel and González-Morales (2013), how an individual appraises the change determines a healthy response. When a person judges the change to be fair, their response to the change will be positive (Fugate, 2013). Positive appraisal of the change can lead to positive affects and behaviors and conversely, negative appraisal leads to negative effects. Often, positive perspectives on change can lead to fewer sick days being used and limited amounts of drug abuse (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). Moreover, individuals who perceive management as being mindful of the employee's interest and well-being during the change tend to respond more positively to the change (Fugate, 2013). These mental appraisals of change can further affect emotional and behavioral reactions to change (Michel & González-Morales, 2013).

When change dramatically alters a company's beliefs, mission, purpose, or culture, employees feel the strain and need time to adjust (Scott-Morgan et al., 2001). People feel major disruption has occurred when they cannot fit the changes into their already existing mental models of the company, their role with the organization, and the status quo practices. The individual then will employ sense-making in order to understand the changes required. At a basic

level, sense-making describes the process by which individuals or groups perceive a change in their current environment and attempt to explain or act in manner to rectify the novel, unexpected, or confusing event with what is known (Maitlis, Vogus, & Lawrence, 2013; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Chaos or flux in the environment begins sense-making as the individual notices a break down in a previously coherent circumstance, representation or event. When this happens, the individual may consult their mental models and cues in order to ascertain exactly what differs (Weick et al., 2005) and then move on to noticing and bracketing their perceptions into categories and labels (Weick et al., 2005) in order to determine a course of action similar to past experiences or to forge new behaviors. Dialogue and communication contribute vitally to the sense-making process as these actions assist enabling individuals to categorize this new experience. Narrative creation allows individuals to construct or reconstruct actively their own realities, which aides in sense-making (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2015).

Organizational change can also influence how an employee views the psychological contract. Van der Smissen, Schalk, and Freese (2013) defined the psychological contract as the individual beliefs one holds about the individual obligations one has as an employee and the obligations the employer has to the employee. Change can disrupt the psychological contract especially if any transformations cause roles to change, reward systems to alter, career opportunities to diminish, job security to decrease, and compensation changes (van der Smissen et al., 2013). Employees view these alterations as a split in the perceived obligations of the employer under the psychological contract (van der Smissen et al., 2013).

Emotional reactions to change. Organizational change can trigger positive feelings, such as satisfaction, or negative feelings, such as ambiguity, uncertainty, distrust, irritation, and stress (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2015; Vakola, Armenakis, & Oreg, 2013). Emotional reactions

can differ depending on the personal impact, understanding, frequency, and speed of the change. When change affects an individual on a personal level, emotional reactions tend to surface. Schmidt and Datnow (2005) noted changes that affected teachers at the classroom level rather than at the school level elicited stronger positive or negative emotional responses. For example, changes to classroom practice that coincided with teacher beliefs, personality, and values tended to elicit positive emotions of enthusiasm, contentment, validation or joy. Moreover, Atal Köysüren and Deryakulu (2017) determined in their research that negative feelings and emotions surfaced when changes increased personal workloads and altered individual roles and duties.

Frequency and speed of change also affect emotional reactions to change, mostly in a negative fashion. Continual change can cause individuals to feel out of control and overwhelmed, which in turn leads to stress and anxiety (Smollan, Sayers, & Matheny, 2010). Frequent change over a short period time can lead to emotional weariness and exhaustion (Smollan et al., 2010). Moreover, the frequency at which reform initiatives replace unsuccessful reform initiatives can elicit emotions of cynicism (Sau-Ching Yim & Moses, 2016). A shortened implementation period, such as when initiatives change rapidly, can also lead to anger and anxiety (Smollan et al., 2010) as individuals do not have the time to fully comprehend the changes or assess their success or lack of success.

Schmidt and Datnow (2005) noted positive emotions of satisfaction, joy, and contentment experienced by teachers stemmed from consistently applied reform procedures and being well-informed of the content of the change. Moreover, these authors made the connection between teacher involvement with reform and their emotions. When teachers' had a high-level of involvement, the emotional reaction to reform tended to be positive and the opposite proved true as well (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005).

Emotions also play a role in the manifestation of cognitive and behavioral reactions to change (Klarner, By, & Diefenbach, 2011). For example, positive and negative emotions can fuel sense-making or emerge out of the process (Maitlis et al., 2013). Too little or too much emotion can affect an individual's sense-making process. Furthermore, the meanings made by the change recipients, influenced by emotion and participation behaviors, can dramatically affect the impact of the change initiative (Bartunek et al., 2006; Maitlis et al., 2013). Indeed, the behaviors triggered by emotional response to change can mean individuals either actively support or actively resist change (Klarner et al., 2011; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005).

Behavioral reactions to change. Behavioral reactions to change consist of those actions that show support or resistance to change. Vakola (2016) categorized behavioral reactions as being active or passive in regards to the support or resistance. An individual's active support for the change manifests as actions that ensure the success of the change. Passive support behaviors do not necessarily undermine the change's success, but do not increase the likelihood for success either. The individual who passively supports the change works with minimal effort (Vakola, 2016). In contrast to these support behaviors, individuals could act in ways that show a failure to comply with the demands of the change (Vakola, 2016). Active resistance refers to those actions that deliberately weaken the chance of successful change. Passive resistance includes more subtle or covert behaviors that challenge the change.

Often times, organizational change can mean a shift in job workload and strain. At these times, individuals adapt their behaviors in order to alleviate the new environmental demands that come with alterations in their work (Petrou et al., 2015). How individuals make these adaptations depends on various perceptions, intentions, and motivations. If the change increases stress level or is unwanted, individuals will tend to want to protect themselves by reducing the job demands

as opposed to embracing the change and enhancing themselves (Petrou et al., 2015). Reduction in job demands may cause employees to leave jobs incomplete or avoid doing certain tasks, especially those involved in the changes (Petrou et al., 2015). Overtime, the attempt to reduce demands can eventually lead to exhaustion (Petrou et al., 2015). In contrast, when an individual perceives the change as being beneficial to both the company and themselves, their behaviors become more proactive (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010; Petrou et al., 2015). These actions could include seeking new resources or challenges to assist in making the change benefit the individual and the organization.

Work-related well-being and change. Work-related well-being refers to how an employee's sense of agency, an employee's positive professional identity, and level of satisfaction and motivation for the job. Change can affect each of these constructs (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). When confronted with change, a person's choices, decisions, and feelings of control over their work can affect how they respond to and implement the change. Vähäsantanen (2015) defined professional agency as "the notion that professionals such as teachers have the power to act, to affect matters, to make decisions and choices, and take stances . . . in relation to their work" (p. 1). Agency allows an individual to feel in control of their working lives (Ketelaar et al., 2012). Professional agency determines what changes take place in every day actions, and how to implement any changes into current practice. These understandings, decisions, and actions can transform or destroy an institution (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015). When reform or policy implementation occurs as top-down fashion, workers' agency becomes reduced significantly and may affect another aspect of agency—how one interacts or participates in the reform effort (Vähäsantanen, 2015). By acting with agency, professionals control or change their environment and lives through self-selected actions and choices

(Oolbekkink-Marchand, Hadar, Smith, Helleve, & Ulvik, 2017). Thus, a person's level of participation to enact or reject the reform could depend on the level to which the individual has control over the actions and choices to employ in the changes.

How an individual exercises agency often ties to social contexts and structures within which the person resides (Vähäsantanen, 2015). Within education, factors such as the curriculum, resources, and school or district cultural norms can restrain a teacher's agency. Moreover, one's position within the power or micro-political structure can influence a teacher's ability to use their agency, especially in reform situations that can reduce teacher choice and alter their self-defined identity and role within the organization.

Professional identity also relates to work well-being. A professional identity encompasses a personal vision and beliefs of what defines an educator. Identity forms not only from within but from external factors such as relationships, emotions, other's perceptions, as well as social, cultural, political, and historical contexts (Buchanan, 2015). When asked to describe their professional self, teachers will often express this in terms of their identity, knowledge, skills, and attitudes as an educator. A teacher's perception the educator's role creates his professional identity or self-understanding. These interwoven concepts have become a lens through which to view how teachers respond to innovation and change. Within the classroom, a teacher's identity shapes their every practices and interactions with students and colleagues. The malleability of one's professional identity manifests itself in the changes wrought by these interactions and situations.

Most researchers agree on five interrelated parts composing one's professional self: self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, task perception, and future perspective (Day, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005). The self-image component alludes to the individual's view of the self in

their job role combined with how others view them in this role as well. Self-esteem, the feelings one has about their job performance and the feedback they receive from others about this, shape professional identity as well. This element highlights the positive and negative role emotions play in a teacher's professional life. These evaluative efforts at defining one's professional self can play a large factor in the next piece, job motivation. Positive professional self-esteem can bolster one's motivation to be committed to staying with the job and conversely, negative self-esteem can erode one's enthusiasm. This job motivation, in turn, will determine how well one performs the tasks necessary to have an elevated self-esteem and self-image. Task perception also frames one's professional identity by defining one's duties and agenda within the work. Lastly, the future perspective component relates to how the individual perceives their job development over time.

Change can affect each of these components as change can cause individual's to assess their professional identity. Depending on the change, one's professional identity could require transformation in order to adapt to the changes (Buchanan, 2015). This shift in identity could provide a threat or change that the individual can either accept or reject. However, individuals new to a profession and who have not had time to solidify a professional identity may not feel as threatened by changes as to do those who have been within the profession for a lengthy time (Buchanan, 2015).

Change that negatively disrupts one's work-related well-being increases the likelihood of burnout, dissatisfaction, and demotivation. Certain job demands required by change could require employees to expend a great deal of mental and physical energy in order to adjust or comply with such changes (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). In turn, these mental and physical demands could extend a person's physical and mental coping mechanisms to the point

that burnout and stress become too much (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010). The depletion of resources to cope with changes also leads to emotional and physical exhaustion (Petrou & Demerouti, 2010) characteristic of initiative fatigue.

The above explanation of the effects individuals experience during organizational change has presented these areas in isolation. However, these areas interact with each other. For example, Wagstaff, Gilmore and Thelwell (2016) indicated a connection could be made between emotional and attitudinal responses of change recipients influenced their behavior. In this study, Wagstaff et al. indicated participants felt they lived in a persistent state of uncertainty, which led these individuals to seek employment outside the organization or even outside the profession. Therefore, research into the experience of continuous implementation of multiple initiatives should contain a whole rather than being broken into one part, such as Valoska's (2016) research on the behavioral aspects of change, or even two or three of these areas, such as the work of (Ketelaar et al., 2012; Rigby, Woulfin, & März, 2016). Therefore, employing a phenomenological method, the author attempts to gain a sense of the whole, rather than limiting the research to only certain effects of change.

Educational change research. In recent years, change and research into educational change has become more prevalent due to living in a world full of policy transitions and centralization of education at the federal level. The globalization of our world has affected politics, economics, society, and education (A. Hargreaves, 1994). Production and consumption of goods in the postmodern economy has fashioned a new workforce that demands different skills and qualities than in the past (Hargreaves, 1994). Unfortunately, changes may not be clear-cut or consistent at times causing disequilibrium and resurgence in centralized control or nationalism (A. Hargreaves, 1994). Just as our society has felt the push for progress and change,

so too has education had to change, sometimes from an inertial state to much needed modifications meant to successfully educate our future citizens (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2016; A. Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Sizer, 2013; Wagner et al., 2006).

With the work of Marzano et al. (2005), Senge et al. (2012), and Wagner et al. (2006), the research and frameworks of organizational change science have started to make their way into the educational change research. In organizational science view of change, theories abound regarding successful change techniques (Kotter, 2012); the magnitude of change (Bartunek, 1984, 1987; Watzlawick et al., 1974); the scale of change (Kezar, 2001); timing of change (Levy & Merry, 1986); and focus of change (Kezar, 2001). These studies present a macro perspective of organizational change, focusing on how to describe it, what causes it, its development over time, and how it should be managed (Oreg et al., 2013). This macro perspective deals with change more from an organizational level rather than an individual level. Research regarding change to the micro or individual perspective rarely exists leaving a gap in the knowledge of how change looks and feels like from the individuals experiencing this phenomenon. A large portion of educational change literature seeks to express theories on how educational change occurs or on managing educational change. This section expands these topics and covers the concept of teacher demoralization, a reaction to change not covered as extensively in organizational change literature.

Competing paradigms of change. Educators experience change in different ways due to the competing paradigms of change within the system. Darling-Hammond (2009) suggested four such competing theories of educational change: the bureaucratic approach; the market approach; the professional approach; and the democratic approach. These paradigms suggest differing

views of the purpose, structure, and function of a school system and as such, approach change from these vantage points.

The bureaucratic approach views schools as a hierarchical system. Those at the top make the decisions and those at the bottom implement them. Indeed, since the formation of the modern, factory-like system, schools have added upward reaching levels of control beginning with the formation of superintendents in the late 1800's. This view sees change within such a context, wherein approaches for reform can be "centralized and hierarchically managed" (Darling-Hammond, 2009, p. 46). Within such a view, teachers simply follow top-level prescribed curriculum, instruction, practices, and rules. Their professional opinion and knowledge may count little in such an environment, but their effectiveness and efficiency at carrying out directives becomes one focus should reforms not work (Darling-Hammond, 2009, p.). In many ways, this follows the concept of managerialism in the organizational research. Managerialism does not have an agreed upon definition by researchers; however, in the context of this paper, managerialism means utilizing private sector practices and concerns into education (Shepard, 2017). In 2010, Gordon and Whitechurch discussed managerialism in higher education and how this construct has contributed to academic work from management while also granting managers more regulatory control over the academic work and lessening the professional status of academics (Shepard, 2017). Like the bureaucratic approach to change, the power lies at a level above those who carry out the work.

The managerial view of change also looks at bringing in private sector concepts into the educational world. In particular, this approach brings in choice and competition with the belief that these two free-market ideals can improve schools. This approach encourages schools to vie for students, working on the assumption that this rivalry will encourage schools to improve and

change in order to attract customers (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Schools earmarked by managerial officials as having difficulty in attracting students require further reform and improvement efforts.

In opposition to these two top-down approaches, Darling-Hammond (2009) describes the professional approach and democratic approach. Instead of shunning the professional expertise and knowledge of educators as in the bureaucratic approach, the professional change paradigm capitalizes on such expertise. Change from this view relies on the professional judgement of educators in doing what is best for the students given local contexts and priorities (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Directives from afar cannot be as effective as those made locally and thus, the structure of change enhances the professionals' abilities to use their individual and collective knowledge when prescribing and delivering initiatives and reforms (Darling-Hammond, 2009). The democratic approach also incorporates local ownership of education. Democratic change efforts "incorporate school-site governance that involves parents and students, as well as teachers and administrators, in decision-making that is grounded in principles of consensus and parity and built on norms of trust, openness, and equity" (p. 53). Localizing and democratizing change focuses reform on the needs of the community and brings about buy-in to reform efforts.

Fullan (2016) proposed a simple paradigm of educational change with aspects of organizational learning at its core. For this author, change takes place in three phases: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. The idea of change or reform begins when a group, individual or some other environmental entity initiates the need for modification. Once determined, several actors attempt to implement or apply the plan or program decided upon, sometimes not by those doing the work. This lack of participation in the initiation stage can be detrimental to the outcome (Wedell, 2009). When the program or reform effort remains in place

beyond at least two years, institutionalization occurs. Fullan recommends two years as a measure of when the effort becomes part of the culture knowing, however, that this could be even a longer period.

Managing educational change. One of the problems educational leaders currently face in managing educational change deals with the magnitude of change being called for by reform initiatives and educational proponents (Cuban, 2013a; Fullan, 2016). Only once in the U.S. system's history has change of this depth happened. During the mid-to-late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the educational system changed dramatically in philosophy and form as urbanization and industrialization heralded a new direction for the nation (Mehta, 2015; Rury, 2016). Influential researchers and educators turned to new scientific ideas permeating the business sector as a means of bringing about a needed change to the system (Tyack, 2000). The system changed to accommodate new ways of thinking and conceptualizing education that come from the outside the system. For several years, the ideas put forth by the news ideas about education dominated the concept of school and even withstood attacks from outside to break the hold of the traditional mindset, especially the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's (Mehta, 2015; Reese, 2011; Tyack, 2000). The publication of the *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983 ended the hold of the traditional mindset as an attack from the outside caused the US to reevaluate the educational system.

Once again, outside forces and thinking have called for alterations to the U.S. education system, transition away from episodic modification of the past to more continuous change efforts and transformations of a second-order magnitude. To date, educational reform efforts have mostly been programs that add to the current educational system, not seriously attempted to repurpose, retool, reculture or reform the system as some reformers maintain needs to happen (Coburn, 2003; Crockett,

1996; Cuban, 2013b; Fullan, 2007; Murphy, 1997; Robinson, 2010b, 2010a, 2011). Such a call for reform means changing the basic culture or longstanding norms, behaviors, and thinking inherent within an organization (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Wedell, 2009). Reculturing at such a magnitude takes time and willingness to occur successfully as many new ideas and innovations must reach institutionalization in order to begin to form part of the culture.

Many previous educational reform efforts have fostered more first order type changes rather than second order. First order change occurs within a system and does very little to alter the system (Watzlawick et al., 1974). Changes categorized as first order take on surface level or cosmetic changes, "allowing the organization to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives" (Kezar, 2001, p. 16). According to Levy and Merry (1986), the organization's core—a company's basic precepts of identity, values, and purpose (Collins & Porras, 2004)—remains fixed because first order change targets one subsystem of the organization not the whole (Burke, 2014). Prior educational ventures sought to make the current system stronger through add-ons or novel fads that have delivered the same outcomes.

Admittedly, school improvement, from an accreditation standpoint, has operated on a continual cycle of change based on looking at data, people, contexts and contents of schools. Similar to teleological theory of change, this framework provides a means for what change may need to happen in order to reach improvement goals. However, school improvement for accreditation purposes fails to offer advice on handling the human aspects of change, which if ignored can spell the end of reform efforts. Overton, du Toit, and Smit (2012) claimed that getting the *how* of change correct means understanding how people cope and deal with change. Therefore, how change happens means gaining knowledge of people's experience with change. As Scott-Morgan et al. (2001) maintained, "Only by assessing the cumulative total effect can we determine the disruption experienced and whether people

can easily accommodate the changes involved" (p. 38). Research needs to assist in presenting this picture by presenting findings on change in as many different ways as possible. The phenomenological perspective lacks representation, whether in business or in education. Fullan (2016) maintains successful change needs to be understood from those who experience it. Research often glosses over the "personality of change"(Wedell, 2009) or the personal aspects in an attempt to understand the logistics of change or what needs to change (Spillane et al., 2002). Thus, this research study took the personal perspective to enlighten the educational field of the experience of teachers implementing multiple initiatives.

Teacher demoralization. Education reform has hit many aspects including curriculum and school structures. Over the past few years, however, the teaching profession has experienced reforms that have had a tremendous impact on individuals, such as accountability measures, scripted curriculum, and standardizing teaching methods (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Friesen & Osguthorpe, 2018; Sanger, 2012; Santoro, 2011, 2018; Schussler & Murrell, 2016; Tsang, 2018; Webel & Platt, 2015). Literature on the effects of change on teachers mostly covered similar reactions to change found in organizational literature regarding cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and work-related well-being. This research on reactions to change focus on the internal individual changes, or reactions that reside within the person. However, a person's reactions to change could occur due to the context or environment created by the change. One effect rarely found in organizational change literature that addresses such a reaction to change was demoralization.

Most teachers would agree that teaching could be considered an intellectual and moral endeavor (Santoro, 2011, 2018; Tsang, 2018). Intellectually, the practice of teaching is often referred to as an art that uses cognitive practices of creativity and decision-making. Teachers are often able to use professional knowledge, expertise, and skill to make decisions regarding classroom management,

teaching methods, assessments, and remediation or enrichment activities. Being able to make these decisions has offered teachers a certain sense of autonomy in their jobs (Trinidad, 2018). Morally, teaching is said to offer rewards that fulfill certain professional moral goals that draw individuals to the profession. Individuals are drawn to teaching out of a sense of doing good work (Santoro, 2011, 2018; Schussler & Murrell, 2016; Tsang, 2018) and find moral satisfaction in carrying out their work (Frank, 2015; Santoro, 2018; Schussler & Murrell, 2016). Not all teachers share the same moral goals, but the profession as a whole shares similar meanings of what constitutes good work, what makes a difference, or how to help others (Santoro, 2018; Schussler & Murrell, 2016). These goals and ideas create a teacher's moral center from which individuals assess whether they have acted according to a moral good (Santoro, 2018). Within this moral center, teachers define what makes a good teacher, how to relate to students, how to create a classroom environment conducive to learning, or how best to assist struggling students. When teachers feel they have acted on their beliefs regarding these areas, they have created for themselves a moral reward. These moral rewards can sustain teachers and make work meaningful (Frank, 2015; Santoro, 2011, 2018).

Unfortunately, many reforms and initiative, such as meeting accountability or testing mandates, have driven teachers in to a moral dilemma—does a teacher do what they know to be morally and ethically worthwhile as part of their profession or comply with mandates that go against their profession? Schussler and Murrell (2016) have noted that these contradictory aims place teachers in a state of persistent tension, moral dilemma, or dissatisfaction. When this state occurs, the effect has been termed *demoralization* (Santoro, 2011, 2018), as teacher's are placed in a situation in which they cannot "enact the values that motivate and sustain their work" (p. 43). Institutional forces, such as top down mandates or control of teaching practices, could prohibit teachers from accessing moral rewards (Tsang, 2018); workplace conditions do not enable teachers to do what they feel they need to do to be a good

teacher (Santoro, 2018). In such situations, teachers are said to be left feeling as if the work they are

doing is unimportant or is not the right work (Santoro, 2011) and thus, they may be unable to reach

certain goals they have for teaching or access the moral rewards they find in doing good work (Tsang,

2018). As a result, negative emotions such as feelings of guilt, frustration, defeat, resistance,

discouragement, despair, being undervalued or treated unprofessionally, and depression may occur

within educators (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Frank, 2015; Friesen & Osguthorpe, 2018; Santoro, 2011,

2018; Schussler & Murrell, 2016; Tsang, 2018; Tsang & Liu, 2016). Change of this form could lead

teachers to evaluate their choice of profession, with some leaving the profession altogether.

Review of Methodological Literature and Issues

Qualitative and quantitative research methods vary in their purpose, which in turn

influences many design features of a study. In quantitative methodologies, the intention is to

prove a hypothesis in order to establish generalizations, trends, or themes useful in applying what

is learned to a large population (Creely, 2016). Qualitative methodologies aim to examine a topic

with a more singular, in-depth focus. Rather than attempting to make wide-spread elucidations,

qualitative methodologies search for explanations for circumstances in a particular, culture

group, cohort or individual (Creely, 2016). Qualitative research seeks to gain knowledge through

more than mere observation or objective experimentation in a controlled environment. Instead,

this type of research gains insight into the lifeworld of individuals and the experiences they have

in the natural environment (Krefting, 1991; Sousa, 2014). The use of both of these approaches

balances out our understanding of a construct under study; however, the author found few studies

employing the phenomenological method to study change recipients' experience with

implementing change. Therefore, this review of the methodological literature focuses on

methodology employed in various research as well as the phenomenological methodologies utilized in this study.

Research into how individuals handle change within their professional world and their experience with such changes through top-down or bottom-up means has used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and methods. Researchers have employed case studies, observations, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, content analysis, and longitudinal studies to assess many aspects of change and change recipients. Each of these methods and methodologies has limitations. For example, questionnaires and surveys may allow for gathering data from a large sample of individuals, but these instruments rely on self-reported answers by participants, which can prove to be problematic. Self-reporting methods depend on individuals to be honest in answering (Sau-Ching Yim & Moses, 2016) and can provide inaccurate and conflicting results (Talbot & Campbell, 2014). Despite these various means for describing change effects, one methodology, the phenomenological methodology, lacked representation in exploring the phenomenon of how change affects employees. Considering the purpose behind this methodology, phenomenology was a worthy means of researching change recipients' experiences with reform.

Phenomenology began as a philosophy, but through the work of Husserl, turned into a research methodology (Giorgi, 2009; Zahavi, 2003). Husserl designed the phenomenology research methodology to study human lived experiences and the conscious knowing of these experiences, as opposed to a natural science, the study of objects in order to categorize or explain them (Van Manen, 1990). For Husserl, phenomenology represented a way of exploring the lifeworld or the common world in which all humans inhabit and have experiences in (Giorgi, 2009). Husserl believed these experiences in the lifeworld should be studied as they appear in the

world rather than controlling the context in which certain variables or parts of the phenomenon could be studied (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). The only means of studying these experiences consisted of identifying the experience of the phenomenon as manifested in a person's consciousness (Creely, 2016).

The semi-structured interview tends to be the favored method of obtaining the conscious manifestation of a person's experience of a certain phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Giorgi (2009) advocated for the use of the semi-structured interview because this method of data collection, if done correctly, can provide a rich and detailed first-hand account of the phenomenon from the individual's point of view. Written descriptions could possibly provide the data, but Giorgi (2009) argued that these types of manuscripts might not contain the rich, detailed data one can get from an interview. Other phenomenological researchers use other sources of data to discover lived experiences. For example, Van Manen (1990) advocated for the use of descriptive writings, diaries, journals, observation, historical texts, and even art. According this researcher, all of the methods provide experiential data for acquiring a description of the lived experience under study. The difference between using this type of data for phenomenological purposes as opposed to other qualitative methods that use these items as well resides in the analysis of these sources (Van Manen, 1990).

Once the phenomenon surfaces from an individual's consciousness, the inquirer investigates the structures and manifestations of the experience in order to understand the experience as an event, thought, process, behavior, or object (Creely, 2016). This investigation takes place within the epoché and phenomenological reduction. The epoché or phenomenological bracketing requires the researcher to suspend or place aside any preconceived knowledge of the experience (Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Giorgi, 2009; Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017;

Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenological research aims to tell the lived

experience of the participant and not of the researcher (Englander, 2012; Giorgi, 2009).

Employing the epoché attempts to ensure the researcher's bias and prior knowledge does not

taint the analysis of lived experience as viewed from the participant (Giorgi, 1997, 2009).

Therefore, the researcher needs to incorporate bracketing in the inquiry process.

Most phenomenological researchers, including Creely (2016) Giorgi (2009), Moustakas

(1994), and Van Manen (1990), discussed taking on the attitude of the phenomenological

reduction in addition to bracketing prior to data analysis. Phenomenological reduction often is

lumped with the epoché as this attitude also concerns approaching and analyzing the text

uninhibited by the researcher's views (Giorgi, 2009). However, as Moustakas (1994) elucidated,

the phenomenological reduction entails textually describing the experience, event, or objects just

as the participant described and perceived them, and not interpreting them from the researcher's

viewpoint. The process of describing and investigating the phenomenon in such a way reveals

the *essences* of the phenomenon (Sloan & Bowe, 2014), which in turn can be placed into

descriptive structures from which outsiders can appreciate and view the holistic aspects and

relationships of the experience (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008).

The study presented in this dissertation pursues an understanding of the teachers'

experiences in an environment of multiple initiatives implementations created by one district's

blueprint for fulfilling state mandates using the descriptive phenomenological method. Fullan

(2016) wrote, "An understanding of what reality is *from the point of view of people within the*

role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory of the meaning and results of

change attempts" (p. 123). With this statement, Fullan called for qualitative type research to

understand educational change environment and this study took up this call by employing a method that explores the lived experience of individuals.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Indirectly or directly, teachers have dealt with policy changes and reform efforts over the last 40 years. Curriculum, instructional and accountability reforms have greatly affected these frontline workers. In education, research exists focused on the effects of change on educators. Most studies have focused on teachers' aversion or resistance to change (e.g. Terhart, 2013), their mindset about change (Olsen & Sexton, 2008), and the translation of change into classroom practices (Isenberg, 1990). Some of these studies have led to teacher's receiving a bad reputation for upholding institutionalized practices and sabotaging change efforts. However, as Nolan (2016) pointed out, teachers may not be resistant to or be adverse to change. Rather, individual cognitive, affective, and institutional factors may account for unsuccessful implementation of initiatives.

Fives and Buehl (2016) noted that teacher's beliefs about teaching, knowledge, and about students provided a lens from which the educator viewed policies. If the policy required a shift in beliefs, teachers may have difficulty then in making this transition. Teacher's level of ownership to the policy (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001) as well as sense of agency (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015) contribute to teacher's enactment of policy. Teacher's cognitive sense-making also play a role in implementation. Spillane et al. (2002) indicated policy may require teachers to reconcile what the new policy demands with their prior experience or at least have the policy constructs reside alongside their prior experience. Affects—moods, feelings, and emotions—can hamper or contribute to policy implementation (Tsang & Kwong, 2017). Dale and James (2015) noted the depth of change and attractiveness of change can determine its success. Welcomed first-order

change takes a short time to accomplish and can occur easily whereas unwelcome, second-order change takes more time and effort to enact. Still other research looks at teacher's sense of agency (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015), commitment, motivation, sense of power and identity (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; van Veen et al., 2005) in whether policy enactment comes to fruition. Other research indicates context and institutional environment contributes to policy enactment success or failure (Braun et al., 2011). When leadership ignores any of these areas, change will likely not occur as desired.

The studies mentioned above and others documenting teachers and their response to new reforms or changes have been causal or relational in design with few offering a phenomenological description of the actual experience of implementing multiple initiatives in an educational environment. One case study documented five secondary teachers' experience with restructuring initiative over the course of one year (Nolan & Meister, 2000). Few have documented multiple initiative implementations over several years, the experience of teachers at differing levels to the same initiatives or the requirement of continuous change due to the enactment of multiple initiatives. However, as Day and Smethen (2009) conjectured, teacher's response from top-down reforms may not be as clear cut as some researchers would have us believe. Thus, a look at how teachers describe their experience can lend insight for administrators and policy makers to consider this perspective when instigating and creating policy.

Critique of Previous Research

Much of the previous research on educational change and its effects on teachers has be lacking in some areas. In particular, these studies have only investigated the effects of one change initiative at a time. As Fullan (2016) pointed out, teachers rarely face one change

initiative at time. Therefore, a need exists to study teachers' experience in facing the implementation of more than one initiative at a time. Some researchers have intimated that the frequency and amount of change initiatives faced by teachers has led to initiative fatigue or overload (Fullan, 2016; Reeves, 2010). Unfortunately, the claim that teachers experience initiative fatigue has not come under review; however, since initiative fatigue comes about due to the frequency and amount of change, the need exists to first explain teachers' experience with continuous multiple initiative implementations. Moreover, researchers have yet to apply the descriptive phenomenological method to explore teachers' experience with change. This qualitative method can lead to a focus on the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009) rather than the teacher and their practice.

Chapter 2 Summary

Basic phenomenology attempts to present a description of a concept or phenomenon shared by a group of individuals (Barker et al., 2016). In the past 40 years, the teachers in the United States have dealt with various initiatives, policies, and reforms in an attempt to improve the education system to contend with the world in which in U.S. students will live. Research on these changes has varied by looking through an organizational lens and an individual lens. The educational change literature has directed educators as to what needs to be changed and how to change, but has only limited information on teachers' reactions to change. Most of this research looks at a teacher's reaction to a single initiative. This singular focus presents a gap as most educators face more than one initiative at a time. Therefore, this study provides an area of need in educational change literature by providing a description of teachers' lived experience with multiple initiative implementations. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and specific method utilized by the researcher to conduct this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Qualitative inquiry strives to uncover, describe, or interpret a phenomena as occurring in a natural setting (Sousa, 2014). Since the research questions asked for a description of the lived experiences of teachers implementing simultaneous multiple initiatives, the researcher selected the phenomenological method of qualitative research. A gap in the literature revealed little research addressing the phenomenological perspective or the construct of initiative fatigue within education. Research outside the educational field, particularly in organizational science, business, and nursing, has shed light on the ways, depth, and rate of change and the effects of change on those tasked with carrying out change initiatives. In education, literature on educational change focuses on the effects change and reform have on teacher work well-being such as self-efficacy (Day & Smethem, 2009; Dicke et al., 2014); workload, stress, and burnout (Ilies et al., 2015; Kokkinos, 2007; Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014; Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015); the effects on teacher space, practice, professionalism (Le Fevre, 2014; Lo, Lai, & Wang, 2013; Woolner, Clark, Laing, Thomas, & Tiplady, 2014); and teacher beliefs, agency and commitment (Kelchtermans, 2005; Rigby et al., 2016; Talbot & Campbell, 2014; van Veen et al., 2005). However, this research addressing educational change and implementing initiatives does not completely reflect the reality teachers face as most studies examine one reform effort rather than multiple reforms at once. In reality, teachers face multiple initiatives (Fullan 2016) and activities simultaneously. Writers of non-academic educational publications and blogs fear teachers may be suffering from initiative fatigue due to multiple changes and mandates brought about by top-down reform, only academic writers such as Fullan (2016), Ravitch (2016) and Reeves (2010), mentioned this possibility.

To begin researching the construct of initiative fatigue, the researcher aimed to gather teachers' descriptions of their actual experience during times when mandates require educators to juggle multiple initiatives. Research into the circumstances of teachers during times of multiple initiatives implementation that could possibly lead to initiative fatigue rarely exists in current educational research. This chapter outlines the purpose of this study, including a description of the phenomenological method used, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, limitations and delimitations, validity, and ethical issues. In doing so, the elements provided a connected base on which to build the present research study. The purpose and the method connected to create a solid research design that enhances the study's credibility.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives in a Wyoming school district. Change has become an ever-present reality in education, especially with external governmental regulations or local pressures from stakeholders (Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2016; Katz & Rose, 2013; Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; Ravitch, 2016). As such, policies and reform initiatives steer and influence the direction of several school districts to successfully meet or exceed standards set to improve achievement. Unfortunately, change efforts may not go as planned (Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2016). Research on organizational change in education often focuses more on the theoretical practices that can bring about successful change rather than, as Van Manen (1990) suggested, looking at experiences first and how theory can inform practice via reflection on what was successful. Studies have focused on teachers' resistance to change without first understanding the essence of the experience (Terhart, 2013); teachers may

be seen as resistant to change when in reality, they may be coping with a new and unfamiliar situation (Lo et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2018).

When organizational change involves changing the cognitive, emotional, behavioral or work related well-being of individuals, their perspective and response to the change will affect the successful implementation (Nolan, 2016). Moreover, work can fulfill many needs and roles within an individual's life. Work can provide individuals with fulfillment of certain innate needs, especially in providing for growth to get individuals to their highest potential (Cameron & Green, 2015). When individuals are unable to access the parts of their jobs that make them feel successful, they may experience demoralization (Santoro, 2018). A person's pride, integrity, ethics, and values all come in to play within their work environment. When change disrupts or shocks such personal attributes or systems (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), then the individual and the organization suffer.

While several studies have explored teachers' reaction or readiness for change, very few have sought to give a phenomenological description of the public school teachers experience with multiple initiatives implementation (Fullan, 2016). Clement (2014) argued for a need to study the impact of mandated change on teachers as a means of developing improved process for implementing such reforms. The question pursued by this study centered on understanding how K–12 teachers describe their lived experience with multiple change initiatives, especially with the school reforms mitigated in a top-down fashion. A descriptive phenomenological method best suited this purpose because the study aimed to provide a description of a person's inner worldview or life world with the aforementioned phenomenon.

The descriptive phenomenological method employs a human science approach to explicate the structured meaning of a shared lived experience (Giorgi, 2009; Van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenological research places the cognition and perspective of human experience above the

explanations brought to life through natural scientific methods. The philosophical roots of

phenomenology show a penchant for stressing the individual as containing the ultimate

knowledge and seeking self-knowledge and self-actualization through experience with the world.

Husserl, considered by many as the father of phenomenology, constructed the phenomenological

philosophy as a reaction to the reliance on natural science cropping up during his time (Giorgi,

2005, 2009). The founder of phenomenology sought to bring human aspects back into science

expressing the belief that an object does not become real until it is recognized and brought to the

conscious awareness of an individual (Giorgi, 2009). Human science studies individuals in all

their humanness rather than reducing them to an object to be studied or observed through a

controlled means (Giorgi, 2009). Phenomenological philosophy deals with human beings as

human rather than reducing them to *things* to be studied objectively in a lab situation (Giorgi,

2009). Husserl would consider this letting intuition, not preconceived notions, exist as the source

of knowledge (Husserl, 2012). This introspection and bringing things to consciousness creates a

change in the individual toward enlightenment of realizing truth and the existence of *things* in

our world derive from within humanity (Zahavi, 2003).

By using descriptive phenomenological design, this study endeavored to shed light on

teachers' handling of the changing landscape brought about by federal, state and local reform

measures as well as to fill a gap in the lack of phenomenological studies of education change.

Fullan (2016) encouraged the increased use of individual voices in understanding the results of

change efforts within education when contending, "the neglect of the phenomenology of

change—that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been

intended" (p. 8). The phenomenological point of view delves into the life world of individuals to

gain knowledge of the world in which they live. By becoming a part of the subject's world, the research becomes a "caring act" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 5) by which those teachers charged with implementation could possibly have their experience revealed.

Leaders could possibly benefit from such research to promote the growth and psychological health of teachers in order to positively influence change outcomes. Hargreaves (2005) noted that understanding teacher's experience and response to change could determine the likelihood of success. Phenomenology does not look to solve problems but to make meaning of a phenomena in order to select the right solution to the dilemma (Van Manen, 1990). Administrators may use methods deemed *best practice*, *evidence-based*, or the most popular, but without an understanding of the change recipients' point of view, none of these may advance the alterations needed to improve the system. Thus, while many studies have looked at teachers' responses to change, neglect lies in the understanding of the lived experience had by teachers especially with the implementation of multiple initiatives (Fullan, 2016; K. Nolan, 2016). By using a descriptive phenomenological method, the present study strove to describe the lived experience of teachers who have faced contiguous, multiple initiative enactment because of local policy changes in response to state and federal level reforms. In addition, the study presented herein serves to highlight teachers' experience in order to offer a baseline for possible further research on the construct of initiative fatigue. Moreover, potential benefits of this study and possible future research could inform policymakers and administrations on the need to frame change policy or reforms in such a way as to mitigate unforeseen consequences on those in charge of educating children.

Research Question

In the descriptive phenomenological design, the research question should confirm the use of the method. Such a question should seek to recognize a need to understand a phenomenon from the lived experience of the group under consideration (Englander, 2012; Van Manen, 1990). The gap in the literature expressed in the previous section demonstrates a need for just such a research study. Thus, the following research questions guide this investigation:

- How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience implementing multiple initiatives?

- How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue?

Population and Sampling

Sampling techniques within qualitative research differ from quantitative research. Within quantitative research, sampling refers to a group that has been chosen by statistical means of mathematical formulations and preselected parameters (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Quantitative sampling methods are statically based which yields the universal population of similar identifying features from which generalizations can be made concerning the topic under study (Nakkeeran, 2016). Contrariwise, sampling in qualitative research becomes a means of identifying a population that is able to help give an explanation of or meaning to the human behavior—a phenomenon—under study (Nakkeeran, 2016). Researchers may argue that identical units exist in a qualitative investigation as all participants have had the same experience; however, this is where the similarity ends as individuals perceive an incident in a personal fashion according to their prior experiences. To derive a sample for a qualitative study,

the researcher needed to use a sampling technique not tied to numerical means as well as find individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

With these conditions in mind, this study utilized purposive sampling and convenience sampling for this study. Both of these methods are non-probabilistic in origin so conform to qualitative sampling designs. Purposive sampling requires selecting participants who meet specified criteria developed for relevancy to the research objective (Guest et al., 2006). Therefore, a selection criterion for this study's participants consisted of having experienced multiple initiatives implementation. This decisive factor could have yielded a very large number of participants and while this would not be objectionable, time was a factor in this study. Therefore, the researcher utilized convenience sampling in conjunction with purposive sampling to narrow the number of potential volunteers. This method selects a sample based on expediency and suitability. The situation of the implementation of multiple initiatives had occurred in the Wyoming school district that employs the researcher. For convenience, then, the sample drew from individuals employed by this same district.

Since this was a qualitative study, the population needed to have experienced the phenomena in question. As a result, the population strived for homogeneity rather than heterogeneity often desired in quantitative research. Padilla-Díaz (2015) indicated a homogeneous population allowed for the identification of the essence and common meaning of the shared occurrence. Descriptive phenomenological research depends on ensuring individuals have experienced the phenomena under study (Giorgi, 2009). The population then should consist of individuals who have experienced multiple initiative changes. Additionally, the researcher needed to keep the target population numbers to a manageable amount so as not to have the study become overwhelming or too cumbersome for the time limit.

Phenomenological studies often require a small sample size due to instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Giorgi (2009) recommended getting as many individuals as possible to reach saturation, which would provide a rich understanding of the experience. However, Guest et al. (2006) indicated a lack of consensus on the meaning of saturation within phenomenological studies. Saturation means exhausting all possibilities to develop a clear picture of the experience. Some researchers indicated saturation could come about when the researcher does not glean new information from the interviews or observations (Guest et al., 2006). However, Morse (1995) indicated that striving for a detailed description derived from the richness of the data cannot be expressed in terms of a number. Rather the researcher must strive for completeness in getting the information needed to build a comprehensive picture of the phenomena. Results from a literature review conducted by Guest et al. (2006) and their own phenomenological research experience indicated saturation usually transpires at a minimum of six interviewees and a maximum of 12. Giorgi (2009) recommends at least a minimum of three participants. Another author, Padilla-Díaz (2015), suggests three to 15 homogeneous members.

The chosen population for this study included teachers who worked in the same local Wyoming district as the researcher during a time when multiple initiatives occurred. This population included at least 500 individuals in K–12 schools from which the researcher opted to select a sample size of 15, with an expected number of at least eight. These numbers fit within the range suggested by literature. The selection of these numbers occurred because of the small sample size required by the method and because many of the individuals working during the time when the bulk of the initiatives were introduced have either left the district or retired. In addition,

the researcher aimed to have a sample of individuals based on gender, level taught, and years of experience.

Instruments

Phenomenological studies tend to ignore pre-designed instruments to gather data. Instead, phenomenological researchers become the instrument for data collection through interview methods and other ways to allow participants to construct their experience. Giorgi (1997, 2009) and Giorgi, Giorgi, and Morley (2017) noted interviews as the best method to collect data, although conceded that a written description could be used. When conducting an interview, the researcher's interaction with the interviewees should facilitate the accumulation of data rich enough to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). This interaction may require the use of open-ended questions, which should allow for "openings through which interviewees can contribute their insiders' perspectives with little or no limitations imposed by more closed-ended questions" (Chenail, 2011, p. 255). Thus, a set of closed questions or predesigned, set questions become difficult in gathering the data necessary for the study. Researchers may write study specific questions prior to any data collection but do not restrict themselves only to these questions during the interview. Most literature recommended novice researchers prepare a list of questions prior to the interviews, which the researcher heeded. Appendix A provides a list of the pre-designed question that guided the interviews conducted in this study.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the author obtained consent. First, the researcher sought permission from the district to conduct interviews with their employees and received a letter from the superintendent giving approval (see Appendix C). Next, all teacher employees in the

district received letters from the author, which explained the research study and provided information to contact the researcher should the individual wish to volunteer, and the approval letter from the superintendent. The researcher contacted volunteers to set up times to conduct the interview, with the caveat that additional interviews would be necessary for clarification or gathering. At the interview, the consent form required by the IRB (see Appendix B) was presented to the participant for a signature. The consent form reminded participants of the study's purpose, their role in the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Gaining the lived experience of the participants is central to the intention of a descriptive phenomenological study. In a phenomenological study, the experience within the participant's life world comes to consciousness in his or her own words. The researcher discovers the meaning of this experience to share with others to understand the situation from an insider's perspective. To gain this information, researchers name the semi-structured interview as the best method. According to Seidman (2013), in-depth interviews permit individuals to tell their story through the selection of details stored in their consciousness. Interviewing concedes the center of the research to the participant and his or her experience. Seidman (2013) stressed this when the author stated:

> Being interested in others is the key to some of the basic assumptions underlying interviewing technique. It requires that we interviewers keep our egos in check. It requires that we realize we are not the center of the world. It demands that our actions as interviewers indicate that others' stories are more important. (p. 9)

Bringing details of an experience to consciousness corresponds to Husserl's phenomenological philosophy (Giorgi, 2009). In designing this philosophy, Husserl wanted to counter the objectivity of the natural sciences (Giorgi, 2009) and trust in human intuition as a guide for knowing (Zahavi, 2003).

In this sense, the interview begins the phenomenological reduction or bracketing. Bracketing, according to Giorgi (2009), involves setting aside past knowledge or *a priori* assumptions regarding the event and taking only the participants view of the experience. Prior to the interviews, the researcher proceeded to bracket by writing down personal beliefs, assumptions, and experience in a reflexivity journal. This bracketing enabled the interviewer to exist outside the experience and focus on the interviewee. Moreover, phenomenological research interviews seek to gain a thorough, rich and complete description of the participants' lived experience (Giorgi, 2009). A semi-structured method allows the researcher to ask general questions of all participants while maintaining flexibility to ask unique questions to each participant in order to draw out information on their experience (Seidman, 2013). Høffding and Martiny (2016) indicated that the interview be a nuanced interplay between the interviewer and the participant so as gain the rich, detailed description required. Without such an interaction, the interview reverts to a monologue rather than a dialogue about the phenomena experienced.

Interview approach. Interviewing can take many forms depending on the information the researcher wants to obtain (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In a descriptive phenomenological study, the interview should focus on obtaining a clear and rich description of the interviewee's experience. Asking the right questions leads to gaining the depth of knowledge needed for this study as the craft of interviewing lies within the questions presented to the participant.

Certain questions extract certain information, so the interviewer needs to ask the correct questions (Hays & Singh, 2012). This statement does not mean the researcher formulates all questions prior to the interview but some authors encourage the production of basic or main questions ahead of time (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Basic questions, as this study had, provide a scaffold for the interview and have a basis in the study's research question. Open-ended in nature, these types of

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questions should allow the interviewee to take any direction (Hays & Singh, 2012). For the purposes of this study, the author constructed a variety of main questions shown in Table 2 and Appendix A prior to the interviews.

The interviews began with the researcher asking questions regarding the interviewee's background and experience. Starting with basic questions gave the individual time to become comfortable with the interviewer. In interview situations, the two participants usually do not know each other and so a time period to get comfortable and acquainted should take place (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Seidman, 2013). However, this beginning may not take as long if the interviewer knows the interviewee. This situation occurred with some participants in this study. Therefore, the author carefully selected individuals and reflexively journaled any preconceived ideas and notions. Later, the researcher used the journal to ensure that knowing the individual did not predispose the analysis.

Table 2

Potential Interview Questions

What was your experience like during multiple initiatives implementation?

How did this experience affect your attitude towards teaching?

How did the experience contribute to your growth as a professional?

What emotions or feelings did you have during multiple initiatives implementation?

After the initial questions, the researcher asked the main question: "Can you describe in as much detail as possible, what was your experience with implementing multiple initiatives?" This question served to focus the participants on the main objective of the inquiry by referencing a time when the district underwent multiple initiatives mandated by the curriculum director and also any other times noted by the participant. While the participants answered this question, the researcher took notes and listened for topics to explore further. Follow-up questions flowed from what the participant revealed.

From the answers provided by any main questions, follow-up questions or probing questions ascertained further descriptions. Follow-up questions extend the interviewees answers to elaborate or procure further details instead of assuming the interviewer knows exactly what they mean (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Probing questions manage the conversation and seek to clarify unknown concepts or provide examples (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Additional probes included gestures to keep the interviewee discussing the topic or encourage them to continue and elaborate on their statements.

The researcher attempted to hold the length of the interviews to not exceed 90 minutes as recommend by Seidman (2013). As a novice researcher, the author did not know precisely how long the interview would last and thus, estimated the maximum time. Most interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. Giorgi (2009) indicated that one interview may be sufficient but after data analysis, a follow-up session may be necessary. The researcher did not encounter such a situation, but a second interview occurred with the participants in order to perform a member-check. Additional information gleaned from this second interview was incorporated into the initial data.

Listening and recording. Asking the right questions undoubtedly commands a high level of importance in the interview; however, the ability to listen equally holds such a position. Patai (1987) characterized the type of listening required for in-depth interviewing as intense concentration, focus, and openness to the interviewee. This attention leads to absorption in the interviewee as an individual who has something important to impart to others (Seidman, 2013). Listening in this manner shows the participant the seriousness and worthwhileness of their description (Seidman, 2013). This can provide a level of comfort to the interviewee, which may induce them to answer more honestly and openly about the experience.

In order to allow the researcher to take notes, listen, and ask follow-up questions, the researcher captured the interview, with the participant's consent, using two digital voice

recorders. Recording allowed the author to receive the participant's complete answers without distraction and to note any nuances in tone or inflection missed while conducting the live interview. On-site notes consisted of lines of inquiry to pursue further and notations on changes in body language or voice inflections. Giorgi (2009) supported the use of videotaping interviews; however, one must not use the information gleaned from transcribing the video to put an interpretation on the data that would go beyond the descriptive level. Therefore, two digital voice-recording devices provided the means to record the interview for later transcription. Upon transcription, the researcher deleted these recordings from the devices and personal computer per IRB regulations.

Data Analysis

Giorgi's (1997, 2009; Giorgi et al., 2017) four-step, descriptive phenomenological method in psychology approach to data analysis provided the basis for the analysis of the data acquired through interviews. The researcher started this method by taking the phenomenological attitudes of reduction and bracketing, using a reflexive journal to record thoughts and biases. Next, a textual transcription of the interview was created in order to provide a "naïve description" (Giorgi, 2009) of the experience. The researcher listened to the audio recording and transcribed verbatim the dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer. The process of immersion (Wagstaff et al., 2016) commenced after the initial transcription, meaning the researcher listened to the recording several times to ensure an accurate representation of the interview. Then, the researcher listened to the recording a third or fourth time to note any change of inflection or other non-verbal cues. Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher made two copies of the transcription; one served as an unaltered document and the other was used as a working document during data analysis. The unaltered document was stored on the researcher's

personal computer as well as on an external hard drive, and the working document was stored in a locked file cabinet. Once satisfied the transcription accurately depicted the content of the interview, the researcher moved forward with the analysis. The core of this analysis was conducted using the approach outlined by Giorgi (2009) and included techniques to analyze textual data and elucidate theme as described by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove (2016).

Phenomenological reduction and bracketing. In the phenomenological reduction and bracketing, the researcher put aside prior knowledge of the phenomenon in order to look upon the participant's experience with new eyes and from within their world-view (Giorgi, 2009; Hycner, 1985). Qualitative researchers can accomplish this is through reflexive journaling. The reflexive journal becomes a place in which to bracket my preconceptions as well as record the progress of my research (Hays & Singh, 2012). The act of reflecting can allow the researcher to look at how their personal ideas and beliefs may be influencing the research process (Krefting, 1991), including that of data collection. As the research instrument, the researcher can use the journal to reflect and come to terms with the techniques employed, any biases or ethical issues encountered, and lay a foundation for the analysis and interpretation of the data collected (Janesick, 2016).

The phenomenological reduction does not mean completely suspending one's background knowledge; rather the researcher checks preconceived judgements, biases, and opinions in order to examine the phenomenon in a new light (Holroyd, 2001; Zahavi, 2003), as it manifested itself in the consciousness of the participants. This process allowed the researcher to act as a learner, taking in the information as though newly heard and not supplanting the participant's rendition of the phenomenon with personal past experience (Giorgi, 2005, 2009).

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Hycner (1985) recalled researchers referring to bracketing as the adoption of an attitude of openness that allows the event to emerge with a meaning and structure not pre-determined by a certain theory. To bracket, the researcher engaged in the epoché or freeing the mind of already perceived notions and experiences with the topic under investigation (Giorgi, 2009). The researcher wrote down preconceptions in a reflexive journal and talked to others about any biases or past knowledge. This practice enabled the researcher to check constantly between the analysis of the interviews and the preconceived notions.

Gaining a sense of the whole. After writing out the interviews, Giorgi's (2009) second step requires reading the transcription to gain an understanding of the whole experience. This process means reading through the entire text without stopping to make notations. Giorgi (2009) maintained that the phenomenological approach be holistic in nature, so gaining a sense of the whole gives the researcher a general sense of what the participant has said before breaking it down into pieces. At this point, then, the researcher did not look to find smaller themes or associations but to gain a sense of the big picture.

To complete this task, the researcher read each interview, ascertaining a complete picture of the individual's overall experience. This immersion with the data afforded the researcher the opportunity to "list meaningful, recurrent ideas and key issues" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 103) in a reflexive journal to return to this description later in the process. After recording the initial understanding, the researcher examined the transcription to make note of areas in need of further information for a follow-up interview or during the subsequent interview.

Determining meaning units. Once the researcher gained a sense of the whole, the analysis turned to the third step of determining meaning units. According to Giorgi (2009), these meaning units break the lengthy description in the transcribed interviews into manageable pieces,

identifying those aspects of the description that coincide with purpose of the study. At this step, the researcher must remember that a descriptive analysis does not go beyond information presented by the participant (Giorgi, 2009). Rather, this step condenses their words into smaller units (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) relevant to the research question. This condensing of the meaning units decontextualized the conveyed words in order to recontextualize them, or to place them in a new structure later that adds to disciplinary knowledge (Giorgi, 2009) and the description of the experience.

To perform this first cycle coding, the researcher studied the transcriptions at a slower pace than before to be able to ascertain these meaning units. Developing meaning units aligns to the In Vivo coding method, which allowed the researcher to use the participant's actual words in determining the codes or meaning units (Saldaña, 2016). The researcher marked on a printed interview transcription after having perceived a shift of meaning in the description. Giorgi (2009) suggested the use of a forward slash (/) to indicate these shifts, so the researcher utilized this mark as well as a number to denote the shifts in meaning. The process of delineating meaning units provided a way of getting at the essence of any word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or non-verbal change (Hycner, 1985). The researcher also highlighted specific words in the interviewees' answer, which provided the essence of the meaning unit. Moreover, an emergent descriptor code was placed in the margin of the printed transcript. The process of highlighting the In Vivo codes and producing initial descriptors allowed the researcher to begin describing the data from the participant's perspective.

Once the shifts in meaning had been properly marked, the researcher proceeded to form a multiple column table in Excel. The first column contained the meaning unit rewritten in third-person. The subsequent column condensed the first column meaning units, reflecting the

participant's own words. According to Giorgi (2009), a predetermined or fixed number of meaning units does not exist and all sections do have the same number of meaning units. At this point, Hycner (1985) and Giorgi (2009) both recommended erring on the side of having too many units than not having enough. However, both authors contended that these units may change drastically between this point in the analysis and the final reveal of the phenomenon's meaning and structure. Therefore, the researcher proceeded to include all meaning units at this juncture.

Transforming expressions. Lastly, the analysis involved transforming the participants' expression into terms embedded within the study. For example, Giorgi (2009) couches his studies with the psychological realm. Therefore, when he transforms the expressions, he does so in a manner that aligns with his field of study. The purpose of the study aimed to report the experience teachers have with the implementation of multiple initiatives so educational leaders and politicians can understand change and policy implications for those on the front lines. Therefore, educational change and teacher's response to change directed this study and subsequently, the transformation of the meaning units.

The first step in transforming the expressions required the researcher to review all of the meaning units to determine those relevant to the research question, eliminate any redundancies, and cluster together units with similar meanings. First, the researcher reread the research questions to determine that the delineated units truly reflected the participant's experience as relevant to the inquiry. Any units that did not confirm to the experience were eliminated, leaving only those that illuminated the research questions (Groenewald, 2004; Hycner, 1985). Next, the researcher clustered together units that were either redundant or expressed a similar gist (Giorgi et al., 2017). In this step, the researcher looked for common descriptor codes, themes or essences

among the meaning units aligned to the phenomenon under study. These codes were not interpretive in nature but an explication of the essences of the phenomenon (Holroyd, 2001). This themeing of the data (Saldaña, 2016) required the researcher to return to the original transcript to understand the unit's context within the whole interview and resulted in emergent descriptor codes.

After the initial descriptor codes were determined, the researcher created themes using the In Vivo codes, descriptors and meaning units determined previously. To theme the data, the researcher used a process described by Vaismoradi et al. (2016) in performing content analysis or thematic analysis as well as suggestions from Saldaña (2016). According to Vaismoradi et al., a theme provides an attribute or descriptor to organize a group of repeating ideas, analogies or shifts in topic. As such, a theme consists of "a common point of reference and has a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the subject of inquiry" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 101). Immersion with the data during the first phase of Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method and summarizing the interview after gaining a sense of the whole allowed the researcher to focus on the most important constructs, which begins the process of theme development.

With these initial constructs in mind, the researcher scanned the meaning units and In Vivo codes for key elements; positive, negative or indifferent comments; repeated ideas; and dimensions describing the experience. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) refers to this process as "coding and looking for abstractions in participants' accounts" (p. 103). Overall, according to Vaismoradi et al., this process included taking the concrete meaning units and narrowing them down to abstract themes that reduced the amount of raw data to manageable words or phrases that pulled out the information relevant to the research question. These manageable words or phrases

emerged from the descriptors codes, In Vivo codes and meaning units. Figure 5 shows the progression from the concrete meaning unit to the more abstract theme.

Each interview underwent this same analysis. Once the above steps on individual interviews had been completed, the researcher began to look for commonalities among the themes. The final step included reducing the number of themes in order to provide an overall structure for description of the phenomenon. Themes consisted of repeating ideas, analogies, or shifts in topic (Saldaña, 2016) and the researcher used these as guides in determining which themes would be combined. After determining these clusters, the researcher rearranged the previously created table to cluster themes together. Finally, the researcher wrote a summary of all the individual interviews, which incorporated these themes and how they integrated or related to one another (Hycner, 1985; Saldaña, 2016) in order to gain of sense of the whole experience from these parts. In other words, the analysis enabled the researcher to put the pieces (represented by the themes) back into the context of the whole or re-contextualizing the units. Appendix E provides a table of codes used to create the themes.

Meaning Unit

It makes feel like we're not professional, that we're not trusted. And we're supposed to be adults that can do our own thing and be trusted to get done what we need to do and for the most part we do.

↓

Condensed Meaning Unit

P9 feelswas not treated as a professional because P9 and colleagues were not trusted to do their jobs when in reality, they do.

↓

In Vivo Coding

| "not professional" | "not trusted" |

↓

Descriptor Code

Lack of professional treatment

↓

Theme & Subtheme

| Subtheme: Degraded or treated unprofessionally | Theme: Feelings and Emotions |

Figure 5. The progression from concrete to abstract characterizes the data analysis steps in this paper. The top item in the figure is the more concrete level, the meaning unit. As the figure progresses down, the levels move from concrete to more abstract with the very last item being the theme.

Limitations and Delimitations

While researchers would like to assume their study design prevents limitations, the fact remains that all research studies contain limitations. One limitation of this study entailed the sample size. As previously mentioned, picking a specific sample size in phenomenological

research can be premature prior to conducting interviews. Since the focus in this type of

methodology remains the phenomenon and not the individuals under study, the sample size

depended on gathering enough individuals to gains a rich description of the participants lived

experience (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The interviewees were selected on a voluntary

basis, which weakens the representativeness of the sample (Vähäsantanen, 2015), and also can

further limit the sample size. Another limitation of the study involved the researcher's

subjectivity (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008), especially in terms of being able to bracket past experience.

One last limitation of the study concerned the possible error in relying on retrospective data;

however, employing member-checking assisted in mitigating this concern (Giorgi & Giorgi,

2008).

Delimitations refer to areas not included by the researcher for various reasons. Initiatives

have affected teachers throughout the United States; however, the author chose to limit

participants to those within a single district and cap the sample size at 15. Another delimitation

placed on this research concerned the study's timeframe. The district involved within the study

still deals with initiative implementation; however, the author's main concern resides with the

period between 2003 and 2010, but the time period could extend to 2018. These years are

significant to the study because they represent a time when teachers managed a plethora of

district-mandated projects.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Establishing the quality of research supports the acceptability in the scientific or

academic worlds, or by practitioners within a certain discipline. However, quality looks different

in quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative quality standards reside in looking to the

internal and external validity of a study, subsuming reliability within these. Achievement of

internal and external validity derives from certain procedures such as triangulation, consistency

of data, sampling procedures, replication of research process and generalizability of research

findings (Adams & Lawrence, 2015). Applying these same methods in qualitative research can

be difficult given the purpose of such methods compared to those in quantitative methods.

Qualitative measures do not seek to confirm a hypothesis or explain a relationship or confirm

conclusions based on a pre-determined theory, so internal and external validity may not be

relevant. Rather, the approach for this type of research lies in exploring and interpreting a

phenomenon in order to gain a comprehensive description not based on a previously determined

theory (Sousa, 2014).

Moreover, qualitative methods may not be generalizable outside the context of the study,

thus not meeting the standards for external validity. In research, external validity refers to the

generalizability of the findings to a wider audience through comparability and transferred ability

to other situations, participants, and settings (Cohen et al., 2007). In some qualitative methods,

Bodgdan and Biklen (1992) contend that generalizability does not need to be to the widest

possible audience but to settings, people, and situations for which the qualitative research results

may apply (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, while these methods within qualitative

research differ from those employed in quantitative research (Häggman-Laitila, 1999; Krefting,

1991; Sousa, 2014), researchers should strive to meet the same ends—providing quality research.

The question remains then what can a qualitative research do to ensure quality if not employing

internal and external validity standards.

Many authors contend that the terms *validity and reliability* hold more applicability to

qualitative research and serve to ensure high quality that internal and external validity do for

quantitative research. According to Hays and Singh (2012), researchers define validity as

"evidence of authentic, believable findings for a phenomenon from research results from a strict adherence to methodological rules and standards" (p. 192). Within the qualitative world, this can take on various names. Krefting (1991) followed Agar (1986) in recommending that terms such as *reliability* and *validity* may not fit with qualitative research. To replace these terms, Agar (1986) used the terms *credibility*, *accuracy of representation*, and *authority of the writer* (as cited in Krefting, 1991). Rather than propose new words, Leininger (1985) replaced the definition of *validity* to fit with the qualitative goal of gaining knowledge and understanding of the phenomena under study (as cited in Krefting, 1991). Additionally, Guba (1981) offered an alternative model to validity in qualitative research which included four aspects of research trustworthiness. Sousa (2014) used Guba's definition of validating qualitative research through trustworthiness, specifically the method, and added the coherence of the results, and transferability and application of results as two addition notions.

Regardless of the research approach taken, validity addresses the authenticity or accuracy of the findings and without it, the research becomes worthless (Cohen et al., 2007). Giorgi (2002) contends the main question of validity within in phenomenological research should be: "How valid is the knowledge gained from a qualitative research situation?" (p. 10). For Giorgi, the description gleaned from the data should match the experience precisely, without interpretations outside what is given or supposition, as this stays true to Husserl's philosophical phenomenological method. By faithfully and consistently applying Husserl's original intent, Giorgi (2002) accepts reliability has been reached as well. However, as a novice phenomenological researcher and untested researcher in general, the researcher requires a bit more guidance in determining validity and trustworthiness.

Validation standards in qualitative research run akin to the traditions of the type of methodology applied in the study (Cohen et al., 2007). For example, qualitative principles include, but are not limited to, conducting the research in a natural setting, having the research be a part of the researched world, detailing results in rich, thick descriptions, and using the researcher as instrumentation rather than a research tool (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Cohen et al., 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some researchers, such as Guba (1981), Hays & Singh (2012), Krefting (1991), and Malterud (2001), used strategies that place the reader as the determiner of validity, especially with regard to transferability. However, as the researcher, the author can engage in several practices that will safeguard the validity and reliability of the study even while leaving some determinants in the hands of the reader. For this study, the validation strategies chosen employ trustworthiness strategies suggested by Guba (1981), Hays and Singh (2012), Maltrud (2001), Sousa (2014) and others. These trustworthiness strategies establish the credibility, transferability, confirmability, authenticity, and dependability (reliability), keeping in mind the need to remain faithful the descriptive phenomenological tradition in design, method, and results.

Validation through design. For Hays and Singh (2012), validity resides in the truthfulness of the findings and conclusions, exposing participants' experience to the maximum. For the educational researcher to do this, they must "find the 'holes' in their research designs and findings even while locating study strengths" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 192) in order to mitigate any question regarding procedural rigor. The researcher meets this demand for rigor in fully identifying the researcher's role and in staying consistent with the selected research method (Guba, 1981; Hays & Singh, 2012; Sousa, 2014).

Previous sections outline the researcher's intention to stay true to Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method. Sousa (2014) emphasized the need to ensure the credibility of the research process through consistency in the application of the chosen method. Unless a study uses a mixed-methods approach or overlapping instruments for data triangulation, then the researcher should faithfully employ one method (Giorgi, 2008) as has been done with this study. Moreover, previous sections also described in detail the researcher's role as instrument for data collection (see Instrument section) and the researcher's position as a learner in conducting the interviews (see Data Collection section). Lastly, Sousa (2014) suggested the research question should align with the method, achieving what Kline (2008) refers to as coherence (cited in Hays and Singh, 2012). The research questions guiding this study directly connect to the descriptive phenomenological approach chosen for this inquiry as the aim was to explore into the lived experiences of a specific phenomenon.

Reflexivity. Another way to achieve validity and reliability in a qualitative research involves practicing reflexivity, which the researcher undertakes through reflexive journaling. Unlike quantitative studies in which the investigator maintains an objective stance, the qualitative researcher plays a more subjective role, becoming a part of the research setting itself. Therefore, the researcher needs to hold a mirror up to oneself and be honest and authentic about biases, goals, shortcomings and roles played in the inquiry process (Malterud, 2001; Mehra, 2002; Tracy, 2010). Practicing phenomenological bracketing and detailing the motivations and purpose for studying this particular experience aids in this process. As previously mentioned, phenomenological bracketing involves putting aside past knowledge, ideas, or presuppositions about the studied experience (Giorgi, 2009) so as to come into the research anew. Mehra (2002) maintains that bracketing also allows for the researcher to monitor subjectivity and come to the

data as a learner discovering a new perspective or angle. In bracketing, the researcher reflexively journaled, logging prior conceptions and biases of the experience under review. This process allowed the researcher to show stances held prior to data collection to determine if the researcher had put these preconceptions aside when describing the phenomenon. Moreover, the researcher described the limitations of this study. Additionally, the researcher recorded via a research journal any foibles encountered while conducting the research.

Rich, thick description. Rich, thick descriptions deliver an in-depth illustration to test for credibility and confirmability. Accounts of the literature surrounding the study, purpose of the study, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis, implications of the findings, the study's implications for practice, and allows for the researcher to be open and honest in all aspects as well as provide a means to establish consistency to the arguments (Sousa, 2014; Tracy, 2010). Denzin (1989, as cited in Hays and Singh, 2012) identifies four components of thick description: "(1) it gives context of an act; (2) it states the intentions and meanings that organize the action; (3) it traces the evolution and development of the act; [and] (4) it presents the action as a text that can then be interpreted" (p. 213). All of this facilitates the determination of credibility, transferability, confirmability, coherence, and authenticity.

In the previous sections of this chapter, the researcher described in as much detail as possible the process taken in preparing for the research, gathering data, and analyzing the data. During the gather and analyzing phase, a reflective journal recorded the exact steps taken to create transparency and provide a detailed description for others to replicate. After conducting the actual research, the researcher rewrote the gathering data and analyzing data sections to fill-in any unanticipated details and disclose completely the processes employed. Malterud (2001) encouraged this transparent description, especially of the data analysis, to assist the reader in

knowing the findings come from the data itself. Sousa (2014) additionally contended that validation of data directly relates to the trustworthiness of the conclusions and so the researcher needs to be *clear and explicit* in how the findings relate to the data. Giorgi (2002, 2009) insisted that lack of coherence between the data and findings goes against phenomenological principles. Therefore, to ensure this match has been done, the researcher divulged the methods employed to reach conclusions.

As previously mentioned this action could also assist in transferability, which in qualitative research addresses the generalizability of the study. However, generalizability in this case does not mean that application of results can be universal. As Tracy (2010) indicated, transferability in naturalistic research allows readers to "make choices based on their own intuitive understanding of the scene, rather than feeling as though the research report is instructing them what to do" (p. 845). Therefore, transferability meant providing enough detail and description so that readers can apply to findings to similar situations and practices.

Member checking. Giorgi (1997, 2008) questioned some validation practices espoused by the authors, especially member-checking. This method to establish trustworthiness of the research utilizes participant verification strategies in which the researcher presents their description of the experience to the participants for confirmation. This reduces the expertise of the researcher by granting the participants power over the findings and meanings gleaned from an analysis of the meaning of their experience (Giorgi, 2008). Moreover, during this procedure, the participants may provide new data, which would cause the researcher to re-analyze the transcribed interviews and include this new information (Giorgi, 2008).

Despite these objections by Giorgi, other researchers such as Guba (1981), Krefting (1991), and Hays and Singh (2012) suggest this as a form for establishing reliability. According

to these authors, member checking involves more than just having participants authenticate transcripts. Rather, the act of member checking allows the study's participants to verify that the data analysis has captured the essence of their experience (Hays & Singh, 2012). Therefore, the researcher performed this task twice. The first time occurred during the data collection. As part of the interview process, the use of probing questions and clarifying statements helped to check the participant responses to questions. In this way, the researcher ensured authentic representation of the experience.

The second employment of member checking transpired during the data analysis. After creating a summary of the participant's experience, the researcher contacted the individual and presented the summary to each person. With the summary, the researcher asked the participant to look over the summary for the following three items: (1) whether the summary accurately represents their experience; (2) that the summary does not include information that could identify the person; and (3) if there was any detail that needed to be included, changed, modified or deleted completed. In this way, the individual could confirm the authenticity of the researcher's representation of their experience and provide insight to improve any discrepancies in the representation of the individual's experience. The final description incorporated any additions raised in the member check interview.

Ethical Issues

This study has as a goal to give a describe a phenomenon pertaining to teachers who have experiences multiple initiatives and mandates brought about by the changes at the district level in response to federal and state policies and goals. School leaders and politicians need to understand how their decisions and process involving education change and reform can have an effect on those charged with implementing top-down initiatives, reforms, and mandates.

Therefore, I aim to present a thick, rich description of the participants' experiences to shed light on this topic and ethically keep the trust of the participants.

Maintaining the privacy of individuals within a study should be a high priority of the researcher, especially if revealing details about the person or the topic of the research could cause harm to the participant. Under the regulations for human subject studies ("The Belmont Report," 2010), researchers have an ethical obligation of beneficence, which means research subjects should not come to harm as a result of their participation in the study. In the case of this research study, participants shared their experiences with conditions in their workplace, which may not sit well with their employers and could potentially cost them their positions. Thus, keeping their identity a secret is of utmost concern. To protect the confidentiality of participants, the author selected pseudonyms for each individual. Moreover, the researcher kept all data on a password-protected computer and maintain back-up files on a secure external hard drive.

Another ethical consideration involves ensuring the participation within the study presents a minimal risk to contributors ("The Belmont Report," 2010). A means to accomplish putting participants at risk resided in the informed consent letter, which stated that participants could exit the investigation at any time without consequence, and any data collected or recorded up until their point of departure would be destroyed. Moreover, the mental and emotional health of the participants would remain foremost in the researcher's mind. Should a participant show distress during an interview or profess psychological or emotional disturbances during the study, the researcher would stop the interview and if needed, would assist them in seeking proper help for their problems. The informed consent also served the purpose of being open and honest about the intent of the research and its use to guide practices among educational leadership and potentially political entities. This document clearly stated the participant's role in the study as

well as assurances that the author would not manipulate the information they provide or seek to use the status as researcher to coerce them into providing information they are not willing to give.

Chapter 3 Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the purpose behind this study, which ties closely to the research question: how do teachers described their lived experience with multiple initiatives implementation. To answer this question, this study employed a descriptive phenomenological. Purposive and convenience sampling methods provided the means to gain a sample from a population of K–12 teachers within a small district in Southwest Wyoming. Data collection and analysis aligned with the proposed descriptive phenomenological method by using semi-structured interviews and Giorgi's (2009) method of analyzing the data gained from these interviews.

In addition, this chapter outlined the limitations and delimitations of this study and outlined the researcher's methods for ensuring the validity and credibility of the results. Trustworthiness was a key component to listing these items. Employing the idea of reflexive journal throughout this whole process provided a means to ensure phenomenological bracketing occurred so as not to contaminate the findings and to provide trustworthiness. While novice researchers may find this method daunting, this chapter outlined the execution of the descriptive phenomenological method to ensure the results may inform administrators and politicians as to the importance of ensuring change occurs with teachers' well-being in mind. These results and findings from using this methodology, presented in Chapters 4 and 5, detail the accuracy of the execution of this plan.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives in a Wyoming school district. In exploring these teachers' lived experience, the researcher attempted to describe teachers' reaction to change in the presence of multiple initiatives and whether these reactions shed light on the construct of initiative fatigue. Therefore, two research questions addressed by this research included:

- How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with implementing multiple initiatives?

- How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue?

The research study utilized the descriptive phenomenological method to address these questions. This method placed the researcher in the role of research instrument and data analyst in order to collect and dissect data to answer the research questions. In performing these roles, the researcher gathered, analyzed and restructured the information obtained from interviews of the sample participants to create a rich, think, and detailed description of the phenomenon of multiple initiatives implementation as experienced by K–12 teachers. This chapter presented an explanation of the sample, the research methodology and analysis, the data and results, and a summary of the findings.

Description of the Sample

The researcher utilized purposive sampling as a means of narrowing the population of K–12 teachers in the United States down to a single district in Southwest Wyoming who

experienced the phenomenon identified in this study. This district employs over 400 classroom teachers whose time with the district varies from one year to over 40 years. The researcher sent recruitment letters to every teacher in the targeted Southwestern Wyoming district, which elicited twenty individuals who agreed to be a part of the study. Of these teachers, four worked in different elementary schools within the district and 16 individuals from the secondary schools (both the junior high and high school levels) agreed to participate in the study. After conducting all four elementary interviews and eight of the secondary interviews, the researcher concluded a level of saturation was reached and did not interview the remaining four volunteers, who worked at the high school level. Thus, the sample used for the study consisted of four elementary teachers and eight secondary teachers. Of this sample, four male teachers and eight female teachers were included; however, these numbers do not correspond to elementary and secondary demographics. Two of the individuals had worked in the district less than 5 years while the remaining individuals had worked in the district for 10 or more years. In an attempt to gain a more distributed sample among grade levels, a second recruitment letter was sent via email to elementary and junior high teachers within the district; however, these efforts did not gain new participants. Moreover, the researcher did not identify the sample by ethnicity or race as this information could potentially identify participants. Table 3 summarizes the information presented in this section.

Research Methodology and Example

Both academic researchers, such as Fullan (2016) and Reeves (2010), as well as non-academic entities, such as blogs and articles from newspapers and magazines, feared teachers have experienced initiative fatigue because of the way in which they face multiple initiatives brought to them by top-down means. Research does not adequately address teachers' experience

or reaction to multiple initiatives or begin to understand initiative fatigue. As Fullan (2016) noted, most research on educational change examines a single initiative, which does not reflect the reality of most teachers who experience many initiatives at once. Moreover, Fullan (2016) disparages of the lack of phenomenological studies regarding educational change. Therefore, the researcher used a descriptive phenomenological method to investigate K–12 teachers' experience with multiple initiatives implementation with an interest in exploring whether this description sheds light on the claims of teachers experiencing initiative fatigue.

Table 3

Participant Information

Participant	Gender	Level Taught	Years in District
P1	Female	Elementary	Less than 5
P2	Female	Elementary	10+
P3	Male	Elementary	10+
P4	Female	Elementary	Less than 5
P5	Male	Secondary	10+
P6	Female	Secondary	10+
P7	Female	Secondary	10+
P8	Male	Secondary	10+
P9	Female	Secondary	10+
P10	Female	Secondary	10+
P11	Female	Secondary	10+
P12	Male	Secondary	10+

Phenomenology. Phenomenological research strives to bring to consciousness the lived experience of individuals and places the cognition and perspective of human experience above the explanations brought to life through natural scientific methods. To gain an introductory understanding the lived of experience of implementing multiple initiatives, the researcher chose a descriptive phenomenological approach for data collection and analysis. Specifically, Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method provided the structure for data collection and analysis. According to Giorgi (2009), the phenomenological approach to research allows for the experiencer to bring to consciousness the inner dimensions of the experience so the researcher can then use these dimensions to create a general depiction of the phenomenon. Bringing together multiple experiences can assist in creating meaningful essential descriptions from which others can gain insight and see the lifeworld of the individuals involved (Giorgi, 2009). In utilizing this research approach, the researcher employed certain methods of data collection and analysis.

Data collection and analysis. The data collection and analysis process followed the steps outlined by Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method. This section offers a brief summary of this process while a more detailed description can be found in Chapter 3. Data collection involved using open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview with each participant. During these face-to-face interviews, the researcher asked the participants to relate their experience in as much table and used probes to further elicit details from the individuals. To capture the interviews for later analysis, the researcher used two digital recording devices. These recordings were used to transcribe the interviews and then deleted per IRB regulations.

Verbatim transcription of interviews	Initial listen of digital recording & transcription	Second listen for corrections	Third listen to ensure accuracy & note changes in voice
Determing meaning units	Read through to assess whole	Create summary for whole	Places slashes and numbers after each meaning unit in transcript
Condense meaning units	Reword units to 3rd person & experience friendly text	Use condense meaning units to create summary for member check	
In Vivo Coding	Select direct quotes from meaning units	Direct quote matched meanin g unit	
Theming the Data	Emergent descriptor codes created from condensed meaning unit and In Vivo codes	Emergent descriptor codes grouped together in to themes	Further clustering to four themes: implementation; impacts & effects; perceived problems; professional growth

Figure 6. Steps in data analysis proceeded from interview transcription to creating four main themes. These five steps are the right-most arrows. Within each of the five steps, the researcher carried out certain actions before moving on to the next stage. These actions are detailed in the arrows stemming from the main step. For example, verbatim transcription of interviews covered three actions, which are listed in the three arrows after the one entitled *Verbatim transcription of interviews.*

Data analysis began with the researcher transcribing the interviews verbatim, making one clean electronic copy and one print copy for purposes of analysis. Audio files of the interviews were destroyed per IRB regulations. The printed transcriptions allowed the researcher to break the participant's answers in to meaning units. These meaning units were further broken in to a condensed version and assigned In Vivo codes. Such a process allowed the researcher to further

break down the units into emergent descriptor codes. Three of these analysis points—condensed meaning units, In Vivo codes, and emergent descriptor codes—provided a basis on which the researcher wrote a summary of the individual's experience. Participants received a copy of the summary of their individual experience that corresponded to their interview and verified this document contained an accurate depiction of their experience. The researcher used this member check procedure to ensure reliability of the findings. Upon completion of the member check, the researcher further sorted the emergent descriptor codes in to themes; however, this process created too many themes. Therefore, the researcher further clustered the themes until four main themes were created: implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems and professional change. Lastly, the researcher assigned each participant a pseudonym consisting of a letter (P) and a numeral (e.g. P1 for Participant 1) to protect participant confidentiality. Figure 6 provides an illustration of the steps involved in data analysis.

Summary of the Findings

The main research question for this qualitative study asked to describe K–12 teachers experience with multiple initiatives implementation. The 12 participants in this study described in rich detail how they underwent this phenomenon during a period of heavy initiative adoption beginning in 2003 and continuing through the 2017-2018 school year. In doing so, four distinct themes emerged. The first theme, implementation process, described the initiatives origins, frequency, and integration into the classroom and included the subthemes of teachers' implementation participation and the integration of initiatives into teachers' practice. Next, the theme of impacts and effects focused on the influence implementation of multiple initiatives had on the teachers' professional and personal spheres. These impacts and effects addressed the themes of teacher professionalism, how teachers coped with this process, and feelings associated

with the initiatives. Subsequently, the third theme of perceived problems revealed the unintended consequences of issuing multiple initiatives in a fashion experienced by the participants. This group consisted of three subthemes: other duties and responsibilities, disconnect, and lack of follow-through. Lastly, the fourth theme consisted of groups of subthemes that described the extent of participants' professional change associated with the experience and was broken down into three subthemes: new teaching practices, mindfulness in practices, and change in teaching style. Appendix E provides a table containing a sample of In Vivo codes and emergent descriptor codes relating to a subtheme and final theme. The following section expands on each of these areas to provide a thick, rich account of the participants' collective experience.

Presentation of Data and Results

The teachers' rich and articulate descriptions of their lived experiences with multiple initiative implements derived from individual responses to open-ended and probing questions asked by the researcher during the data gathering phase of research. Taken collectively, the teachers' answers and description of this phenomenon includes information about implementation, impacts and effects, perceived problems and professional growth. Figure 7 illustrates the hierarchy of the phenomenon with the research topic, themes and subthemes.

Implementation process. For all of the participants, the implementation process began with the initiatives coming to them from the district or school level. The initiatives' origins came from top-down at the school or the district level for the majority of participants, with the exception of one individual who indicated one initiative manifested from the department level. Teachers experienced district level initiatives associated with Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), curriculum changes, reading and thinking strategies (i.e. Marzano), resource adoption, or classroom management practices, such as Kagan cooperative learning. At

the school level, initiatives included book studies, academic vocabulary, or changes in principal expectations.

Every year, the participants indicated new initiatives were introduced and others would fall away. P1 described this wave or cycle of initiatives:

With the exception of a couple of things every year was different. Like my first year, um, the Kagan kinda went to the back burner. Uh, they stopped using that reading program that needed all, all of the training and everything. Um, even the progress monitoring with DIBLES—THAT has changed a LOT over the three years I've been [with the district]. And [pause] if something wasn't changing it was stopping and something new was starting in its place.

Other participants voiced having a similar experience: "everything was happening at once. Like for the first quarter, we have one, the second quarter here comes another one," or "we started implementing initiatives upon initiatives upon initiatives," or "we had and it seems like every year we had new, ah, new initiative that we're supposed to implement."
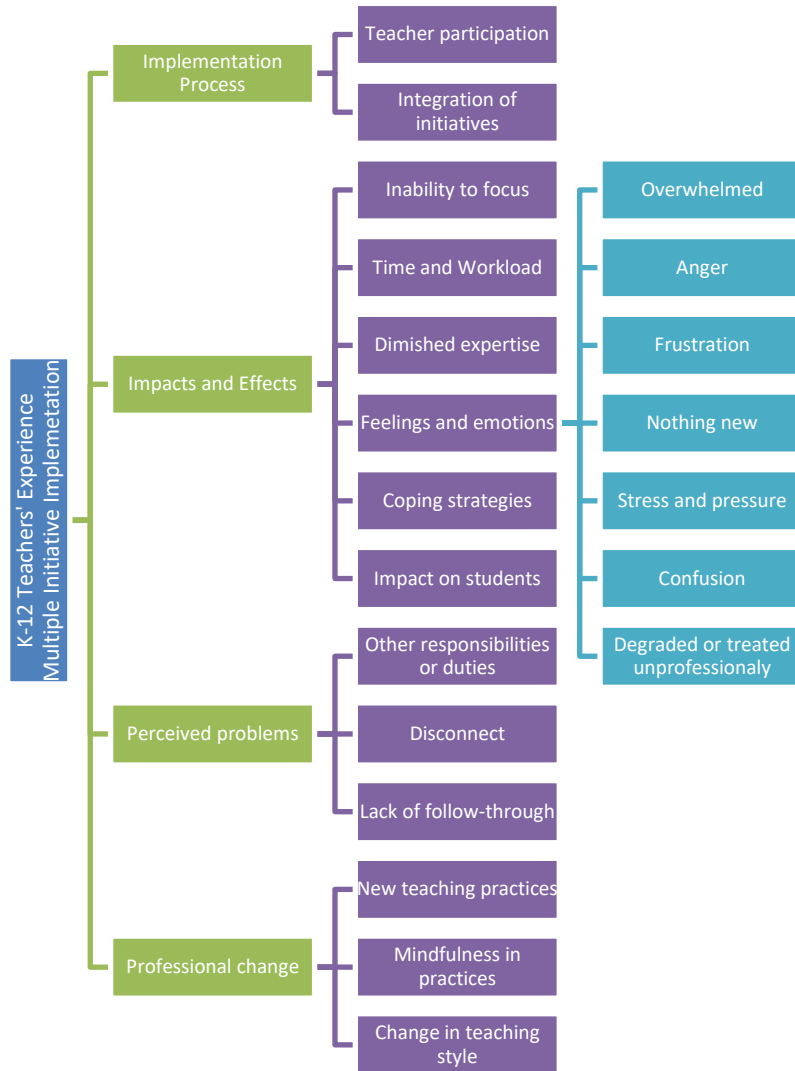
Figure 7. The relationship between phenomenon, themes and subthemes is illustrated in the figure above. The top of the hierarchy begins at the far left identifying the experience under study. Moving left to right, the subsequent levels show the four themes, followed by the subthemes and finally, the breakdown of one subtheme in to seven areas.

Because of the constant shuffling of initiatives in and out, many of the participants could not actually name all of the initiatives they had experienced. P6 conveyed this feeling in the following statement:

after about year 3 had you a gun to my head I couldn't tell you exactly what the

initiatives were at any given point in time through any of these years because they [the

initiatives] would only be around for about anywhere from six months to a year and then

we'd never hear of them again.

Like P6, other teachers indicated initiatives existed beyond the ones they could remember, but to

refer to them by name proved difficult.

Four of the participants had entered the district with initiatives in place and were amazed

at the amount of initiatives teachers were asked to implement. During teacher orientation week,

P6 indicated, "it was shocking . . . how many required classroom things were . . . being presented

to me." P10 said entering the district with all of the initiatives took her different directions,

leaving her focus split and fragmented between teaching and the initiatives. This participant

described being presented with curriculum mapping, reading and thinking strategies and then

Kagan strategies at the beginning of the year. With this many initiatives presented at once, P10

could not get comfortable with teaching in a new school because all three initiatives needed to be

learned at once. This split in focus caused P10 confusion and stress.

Implementing the initiatives in this manner provided little time for the participants to get

"comfortable" with integrating the initiatives into their teaching practice. P9 made this

comparison in with regard to the scattered implementation process, "[it] felt like you were

chasing a moving target. That you never felt like you were where you needed to be. You were

always about the time you thought you were figuring it out, oh, something new came along."

Some teachers complained about the lack of time to be able to focus on an initiative. The

inability to focus did not allow enough time to learn the initiatives causing

confusion or struggles with how to implement. P3 stated,

For one thing, you, you didn't have time to even learn what they *were* let alone try to

implement them, find out if they were working then re-, you know, change what you

needed to do to make sure they were more effective.

Also, the constant changing or addition of initiatives did not allow to implement the initiatives

with fidelity. P1 expressed the lack of implementation with fidelity in this manner:

when you are doing a LOT of different initiatives at the same time you're not doing any

of them with excellence. You just can't, it's not possible. Um, so one gets more emphasis

than the others or none of them are given, you know, due diligence or whatever.

Many participants referred to this inability to learn an initiative adequately as becoming a "jack of

all trades, master of none," wherein the teachers could not master with fidelity or excellence any

one initiative because their focus was pulled in many different directions.

Teacher participation. One important factor resonated through each participant's

experience regarding implementation. Every participant "tried" or "attempted" to include the

initiative in their practice. However, many interviewees noted they did not implement the

initiative wholesale but rather included "bits and pieces" or "adapted it" to their audience, or

implemented what they "felt was worth it." Most participants adapted the initiative to fit their

teaching style. P5 readily admitted to implementing the initiatives but "modified to fit what I do

— to fit my classroom and the things I teach." Another participant made implementation work

by making it "something functional for me."

Teachers would also quickly drop initiatives that failed. As P2 laughingly announced,

"What do I do? I try to stick to it but it doesn't work so I close my door and do what I want." P12

shared this sentiment in the statement: "And if it work and it stuck and it was something that was

good, oh, yeah, we're gonna keep rollin' with it." Mostly, participants implemented the initiative

out of a professional duty or because administrators expected implementation. P8 expressed this sentiment:

> I've always felt this way, that if there's ever an initiative put in place I think that there is a reason and there is a purpose for it. Um, when I think about what is best for students and getting a clear understanding of what that's about for the initiatives, I truly feel that there's a benefit for the students.

P7 commented, "We were told to do it so we were going to do it, you know. It's what you try to do." Other interviewees like P1, P4, and P6 indicated the need to integrate the initiatives because they did not have tenure during a certain period while implementing the initiatives. For these participants, the need to conform or be fired led to their decision to implement the initiatives.

Two participants indicated the integration of initiatives did not always naturally fit into their curriculum and so the integration was not completed or became additional work. P7 said of her and her colleagues, "There were a couple of times that we figured unless we absolutely have to, we're not going to do it. We're just, yeah, we'll say we did." This attitude surfaced again when P7 saw implementing this strategy as being an awkward and unnatural fit and described this experience in this manner: "it just felt like, [pause] it felt like we were just trying to [pause] we were trying to make it fit rather than it have it be something we could use." P9 also experienced an "unnatural fit" as this individual had to "create special lessons" around initiatives to ensure "the little ol' requirement" was met, reassuring the administration implementation took place.

Despite these implementation lapses, participants always kept students' interest in the forefront of their decisions to change or adapt the initiative. P7 "tried to make it relevant" when referring to a reading initiative. Other participants realized the initiatives were taking more of

their time to work with students. As a result, the individuals altered or dropped the initiative in order to do activities or perform tasks they felt were necessary for the students. For example, P2 realized implementing one initiative took time away from one-on-one conferences with students. These conferences were important to P2 because the information this participant gained from P1 indicated the need to change the lessons in a district adopted resource because this program "just was failing them [the students]." Therefore, P1 used parts of the program but supplemented as needed.

Integration of initiatives. In attempting to integrate the initiatives, teachers reported that rarely did they implement the initiatives wholesale in to their practice. At first, some participants attempted integration of all initiatives, but soon became overwhelmed as P12 described:

And that feeling of overwhelm[ing], of 'Oh My Goodness', of are we going to be able to do anything? You know are we going to have to try to rob Peter to pay Paul type of deal? And it was, it was a big 'Oh My Goodness' for I know myself personally.

When the initiatives were integrated in "bits and pieces", the teachers expressed different reasons for including some parts and discounting others. P2 wanted initiatives that made life easier and worked. This participant described this view, "I went alright if this does make my life easier and . . . as long as I don't have to struggle with it, I kept it." P6 kept an initiative as long as that initiative was beneficial for students; however, this teacher did not like the prescribed steps learned as part of the initiative and thus only kept the idea:

I liked the idea of it and I listened enough to go, *oh, yes, part of literature is reading*. I had those stupid prescribed steps of ridiculousness. So, I did something different but it actually got me thinking, *OK, let's, let's work in some reading*. And for especially for my advanced classes, I pull in a lot more reading than I do with the non-advanced.

P8 also described filtering the initiatives. For example, this participant only used reading and thinking strategies during an advisory/study hall period and not for content area teaching: "Boy, for academic options, that was it, the thinking/reading strategies that's the only time I ever used it." Still other participants just used the "bits and pieces" that worked for them. P10 described doing so in this regard:

> I've taken something from every one of them . . . I've kinda found something that works and then I've used that as I've gone on. But not all of them and I haven't used every piece of that in what I do.

P12 determined which initiatives to use or drop in a different manner:

> But . . . if it [the initiative] was a 'unh' . . . and you have this many and it's an 'unh', you just go . . . to the next one. If it was a 'unh' and it wasn't very many, if I had two things to do and it was 'unh', I'm gonna come back and say OK, look at—what went wrong, why did it go wrong, how can I try it again . . . But when you have a lot of initiatives, when you have . . . five, five is a lot with what's going on, but still that 'unh', you know, you don't wanna, you don't come back to the table on it.

For this participant, any initiatives that did not work were cast aside because time was not given to evaluate and fix the initiative.

Overall, the participants experienced the initiatives being introduced in waves. While some initiatives overlapped, some programs or strategies would be used for a few months or a year and then disappear. This continuous introduction of initiatives caused teachers to be selective in implementing parts of the initiatives as well as completely dropping initiatives that did not work rather taking the time to evaluate and try a different approach to successfully use the initiative.

Impacts and effects. Participants mentioned several impacts and effects during their

individual interviews, but P11 summed up these areas by stating, "I think not only did it take a

professional toll but it definitely took personal tolls on us. On all of us." Immediate reactions and

lasting effects of the experience dominate the subthemes, which include an inability to focus,

factors associated with time or workload, diminished expertise, feelings and emotions, coping

strategies, and impact on students.

Inability to focus. One of the impacts experienced by teachers at this time included an

inability to focus or being fragmented. Several participants indicated their focus turned toward

the initiatives or tasks inherent in the initiatives implementation pulling their focus away from a

more important aspect of their job. P9 indicated the initiatives pulled the focus away from lesson

planning:

> When you get directives that you have to at least one Kagan activity a week you have to
>
> do this every week and that every week and this on that day and this. . . . And, you're like
>
> goin', well . . . you couldn't focus on your lesson anymore you had to focus on the
>
> initiative.

Additionally, P4 mentioned an inability to organize lessons effectively due to having to input

data as part of one initiative:

> I felt like I was spending so much time on inputting data into the Google Drive and, and
>
> here, and progress monitoring these kiddos and putting it in the Google Drive. I was like I
>
> spent so much time on data, I felt like I'm not spending time with kids or again, with the
>
> lesson planning then.

P9 also indicated one initiative, book studies, cut in to planning time at school. Instead of using

prep time to prepare by "trying to read my textbook and put together a big lesson and attack that

in a way that, that it works better for kids," this participant spent prep time reading a chapter that was never discussed.

Other participants shared similar circumstances. P10 describe having a lack of focus in this manner:

> You can't FOCUS on any one thing and so, you have all of your classroom planning, all of your classroom grading, you have all of your classroom management and discipline, you have all of the meetings you're supposed to go to for your school . . . most people have their families outside of that and then you have . . . the administration telling you that you have . . . to do this, this, this, this and this in addition to all of those other things. And . . . it's almost like looking through a prism because there's so many focuses that you're supposed to have that you can't, you can't put [a focus on any of them].

P1 indicated having a lack of focus due to having multiple initiatives made the job of developing expertise "hard." Lacking focus inhibited the ability of "honing in right" which made P1not give any of the initiatives the excellence needed to perform them correctly because of "doing them all at once." P8 also experienced a shift in focus away from an important aspect of teaching. This participant lamented:

> I felt that my strength was . . . developing relationships and getting to find interests within students and motivating them. I think this particular piece would be more initiative driven and having more initiatives took that away from me. . . . I got more focused on what we were we were trying to do within these initiatives that I stepped away from really trying to build relationships cuz it was such a focus on what we need to do to get students to learn that I lost that piece of it. . . . I felt like once when . . . we were

becoming pretty initiative laden . . . I really was losing that opportunity to really build

relationships with kids.

For P8, building relationships is vital to being able to reach students and engage them in the

classroom content:

I think that is {pause} you know, to me, it's one of the largest components in education.

Um, you've got a teacher that can build relationships, professionally, very effectively.

You can, the old saying, you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink. If you

develop a proper relationship, you can make that person drink. You can make that student

drink and they want to learn. [But] if you don't do that well enough it's a struggle. It's

hard to do.

Thus, a vital element in teaching and personal strength for this participant lessened due to an

intense focus on the multiple initiatives.

Factors associated with time and workload. Another impact with the experience of

multiple initiatives implementation related to time and workload. Specifically, participants

commented on an increase in workload related to implementing multiple initiatives as well as the

impact this increase had on their personal lives. P5 discussed the implementation of one initiative

in this manner:

Making things a little more project based and I know I went to a project based training

back in 2011 that was beneficial but you know it as well as I do you only have so many

hours in a day to do all the front end preparation for it. Boy, it can be very time

consuming. And that's just if you're a teacher. I look at I'm a coach, two sports, I'm on

the board of directors of two different boards and they're pretty time consuming and then

you have a family you know so balancin' all of that can be a challenge.

Other participants also mentioned "a lot of. . .setting up" or "just more on our plate" in regards to implementing initiatives. P11 and P12 commented that there is "not enough time in a day" to "put in to the things" needing to be done or to "try to be everything to everyone." P4 said, "I wasn't enjoying my family time on the weekend because I was stressed about Monday coming and what I needed to have done and what hasn't been done." Another participant, P2, mentioned doing "more at home or come in on the weekends to do a lot of things" thus taking personal time to accomplish what cannot be done during school hours.

Additionally, P3 indicated the amount of time to implement an initiative in class was not always possible:

Then I realized. OK, if I only have the kids for 50 minutes I can't do all of these things. I may be able to hit on it once in a while, but every day I'm not going to be able to do a Kagan with these kids or [chuckles]. There's just other stuff to do.

P2 also indicated time spent more on implementing the initiatives in class, "I was not spending the extra time with reading groups, I was letting them [the students] do like Daily 5 independent things so I could get what we needed to do done." P9 also commented on time one initiative took to complete:

I'm so glad passports went away because that was another one of those state-mandated crap that was so time consuming. Painfully. . .all those hours the teachers spent on those projects carrying them out in class and grading them with ALL those CRAZY rubrics. . .so I'm so glad those went away because now it's, now it's been up teaching and moving on and not stuck in the same mud for three weeks.

Also, P4 mentioned implementing the multiple initiatives increased this individual's work time to "probably more than 60 hours a week", when normally this time would be "usually 50/55 hours."

Multiple initiatives implementation also increased participants' workload outside of school or contract time. P2 also described the loss of time after school:

I didn't have 20 minutes after school to sit down and talk to a parent cuz I had to be in the library listening to a new thing that the [district administration] came out with or a new training. . .So, it took all of my after school time and that was all free time that I had to give.

This participant also indicated trainings for the initiative affected the workload as "more time had to get sub plans" because of being pulled out of the classroom for said trainings. Additionally spending time having to learn and integrate the new initiatives meant P2 "didn't have time to design, make, cut, do anymore" after work so "kids had crafts and things like that" the next day. Another initiative took paraprofessionals out of the buildings. P2 lamented the fact that now time had to be designated for doing jobs paras usually completed, like laminating, and reading groups could not be conducted because these individuals were not in the building to help. In addition, P10 talked about the experience as being "more labor intensive" and mentioned "always taking things home and working on them from home." P6 related a similar experience. For P6, the multiple initiatives were a "huge, huge addition" to the workload, especially outside of school, "simply because trying to fit in all of the extra paper work and showing how I was implementing these steps and proving that I was doing all these [initiatives]."

Other mentions relating to time and workload were given by P12 and P1. P12 saw an increase in the amount of planning needed to implement the initiatives:

But, workload wise, yeah, it, it definitely changed things because it's more planning. It is.

You can't just say here's this piece and I'm going to try to implement that and it's not a

seat of the pants deal. You have to really put a lot more thought in to what was

comfortable. You know, what I used to do that's easy. Here's my concept—oh, what I'm,

I'm doing exponential notation, shoo, that's nothin'. Yeah, I can roll with that. But now,

let's add this piece in to it to try to drive that concept. Ah, now I have to go back and

some of the things with our curriculum. . .So, it was, yeah, that changed everything in

that planning piece a little.

P2 also expressed that "there is not enough time for planning" because the time for planning was

taken up by meetings or professional collaboration. P1 experienced a workload increase when an

initiative was suddenly dropped:

then we're scrambling going, "OK, so what am I doing next year in place of that. What

am I gonna do?" and nothing's provided as a replacement so I'm creating my own

program, finding my own curriculum for free somewhere.

Overall, P11 felt the district "wasted five years cuz [they] were boucin' around and [they] had no

intentional focus."

  Diminished expertise. According to this study's participants, the phenomenon of multiple

initiatives implementation decreased their ability to perfect initiative implementation in order to

reach mastery or expertise in employing the initiatives. P10 explained:

we had all of this stuff thrown at us and we get a little bit of training up front and then

say, 'Run with it.' And then, we would move on to the next thing before we even had a

chance to really perfect that.

P11 also discussed the lack of time to become an expert at using the initiative:

Because then I think you have the opportunity to, if you get good enough at something then you can actually use it. Um, and there's nothing that you could get good enough at. There was nothing that you knew enough about cuz there wasn't enough time. You were being constantly pulled from one thing to another. And so. . .I think having that time, what gives you the opportunity to. . .actually know what you're doing, to learn more about what you're being asked to do and to actually be able to use it.

P1 explained the multiple changes to just one initiative that created an inability to train students on a safety drill:

. . .every time, every month when they had an evacuation drill of some type, one of those safety drills, um they were adding changes. OK, so THIS time, they're gonna put their hands on their head when they leave the building. The next month, THIS time they're gonna put their hands on their heads when they leave the classroom. Well, THIS time, they're not swing out way out to where the fence is they're gonna hug the building and so, it was so confusing cuz I had to train my kids. I had four classes, train all of them to this new thing and then practice it but it wasn't every month cuz sometimes they had. . .not just the fire drill, but we had the other drills too. . .and those had some changes but not as much as the fire drill. Um, that was just like are you kidding when can they just say "OK, no more changes this is how where gonna do it.". . .Let's just drill one way. . .that was hard to keep in mind, "OK what are they doing now? I can't remember that last thing that they said."

Not being able to become an expert at an initiative or master using the initiative created feelings "like they were never getting good at anything" or being "comfortable." As P1 stated, "[When] you are doing a LOT of different initiatives at the same time you're not doing any of them with

excellence. You just can't, it's not possible." Mastering an initiative becomes important to using it effectively and in a manner that will benefit kids.

Feelings and emotions. All of the participants indicated an array of feelings and emotions surfaced while experiencing multiple initiatives implementation. "Negativity", "horrible", "grumpy", "overtired" and "hectic" were some of the singular words used to describe feelings and emotions related to the experience. A couple of participants felt boxed in by the initiatives, fitted into a particular mold, which limited the teachers' individuality and became a "giant irritation." P11 experienced being in survival mode and just trying to get through one day at a time. One participant, P1, felt guilt over not being as effective of a teacher. The remaining areas of this section described the feelings and emotions felt by a majority of the participants.

Overwhelmed. Several participants expressed feelings of being overwhelmed. P12 described this feeling:

> Let's just say overwhelming. Overwhelming in the sense that for us. . .we are data driven, we are looking at the numbers, we are looking at all of the things to try to reach every single kid, that that was our main focus. That was a huge focus for us. So, as we were trying to reach kids, close the gap, and do those things and please our boss within our building with our book study, trying to grow as a teacher with what she was giving us in our book study that the different initiatives that we were doing as a district was almost like towards the back.

P5 indicated this same feeling saying, "I think not only me but a number of teachers felt a little overwhelmed because there was so much being thrown at us it was like *aw, could we just narrow it down to focus on one thing*." P11 also indicated being overwhelmed with all that was being asked in implementing the initiatives:

And so, trying to prioritize, what needs to come first and you're being told all of these

things are a priority. You can't. Nothing is done with fidelity. Nothing is done with, um,

any kind of, um, thoroughness. It's you're, you're skimmin' the surface. You're, you're

hangin' on by your fingernails. And you, you get through every day. That's, that's all you

can do is just get through because you can't focus, there's not time to get in to depth with

anything.

Anger. Anger describes another feeling expressed by participants. P2 declared feeling

anger because meetings about the initiatives prevented spending time with students:

Pissed off. It did because, um, I was gonna teach after school four days a week could only

three days or two days a week and that's what I could volunteer because the other days

were free time that I had to be sitting with them [people in trainings or meetings]. So,

yeah, it made me angry. Couldn't help the kids, had to work for free.

P1 expressed feelings of anger due to being limited in making changes when experience told this

participant a certain initiative would not work:

I think angry is another feeling that I had because I know what works and um, was not

able to step in to that. You know with all of my experience. . .by 20 years of experience,

you have figured out a LOT that works and a lot that doesn't work and then suddenly

your hands are tied and your like THAT's not gonna work, it doesn't, it's not working,

you know, but you're limited.

P9 offered another source of anger in trying to work the initiatives into lesson planning:

Of course, negatively just you're kinda angry, you're kinda, you're tryin' to put a lesson

and "oh, yeah, I gotta figure out how to throw this in there." You found yourself side

lined doing somethin' you would have never wasted time on you would of just naturally

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wove it in as you went. . .I had to like create special lessons around that. . .it just made

you angry that like you were being steered to do something that just could have been

folded in naturally but the way it, it made a bigger thing out of it than it should've been.

P11 indicated feeling "angry a lot." The source of this teacher's anger stemmed from not being

treated as a professional by administration:

The anger stemmed from being not treated as professionals because we weren't

accomplishing what they wanted us to do because we didn't have a way to accomplish it.

. .I think the anger was from that. I mean I went to college, I know what I need to do in

the classroom, I know how to look at a standard and make those things happen in my

classroom. I know how to do that.

Moreover, P11 felt like her and her colleagues "were being lied to" when promised that their

time would be honored but administration kept giving them more initiatives to do.

Frustration. Besides feelings of being overwhelmed or angry, the participants

experienced frustration. P7 felt frustration in trying to "find where they [the initiatives] fit" with

the curriculum. In addition, this participant felt frustration during professional development for

the cooperative learning initiative because the presenters talked down to the audience and treated

them "like elementary students." P10 felt frustration because "there wasn't enough feedback in

how to do [the initiatives] the right way." For P11, frustration came from not getting enough

training to implement the initiatives:

I know that one of the things they had started looking at was data analysis, which I'm *still*

asking to have training on so I know what I'm looking at for my kids. How I can change

my instruction to better help my students and I STILL haven't had [the training] and it's

been twelve years, fifteen years I've been at the high school. And I've been asking for

training.

P3 expressed frustration and defensiveness at having to do the work of other departments:

We thought English and Math were taking over and, and we were just supposed to be

doing *their* job. It just always seems like we're always told well, now help these people

teach, help these people teach. And I'm like, I wanna do my own teaching! I've got my

own curriculum, I've got my own things, I don't need to take time off to help them.

Another feeling of frustration came from not being able to help students. P1 mentions, "[It] has

been very, very frustrating and I resented it because who loses? It's the kids. The kids lose."

Frustration for P5 came in the form of the initiatives being "in essence. . .something that's

already been done before [with] maybe a few tweaks to it." P11 felt frustration from all of the

extra meetings associated with the initiatives:

I remember feeling frustrated because. . .[the administrators] were giving us more things

to do but less time to do it because they were taking our prep hours. We were having to

meet, we were having to do, you know, Monday meetings and then Wednesday meetings

and then after school meetings and then before [school] meetings.

The frustration P11 felt eventually led to anxiety, which was treated by medication, and a

doctor's note excusing the participant from further meetings.

Nothing new. Several interviewees expressed the feeling that many of the initiatives were

not novel ideas. P7 indicated that the initiatives nothing new, reincarnations of past initiatives, so

"if you waited long enough, this too will pass." Regarding the Marzano strategies implemented

by the district, P7 said, "I have used them and I continue to use them but then I've always used

them. So if you look at it, it's just really not doing anything I haven't done." P9 mirrored this

same sentiment with regard to the Marzano strategies using the phrase, "just the same cabbage being chewed again." Moreover, this participant exclaimed:

> Well, a bunch of the Marzano stuff I was using before he ever came along with his stupid book. I learned those things in college, I learned them as a student in my lifetime. I liked it, helped me learn so I use a lot of those techniques. . .

Other participants mentioned veteran teachers indicating the initiatives had been recycled or were being using by colleagues before the period of implementation talked about in the interviews.

Stress and pressure. Some participants disclosed feelings of stress and pressure. P4 noted, "There was a just a lot of things that we had to learn at the beginning of this year. And it was very stressful. Really stressful." Furthermore, P4 indicated wanting to return to a previous job to reduce the stress:

> I'm like this is too much stress. You know, I'm like, it, it's not worth it. I can go back to preschool and yeah, I make ten thousand dollars less a year but I didn't have this kind of stress and pressure just feeling like, E4'm just [drowning in everything].

P12 expressed the stress in this manner:

> for myself personally, doing all of this and trying to do my job outside of school being a coach. WHOA! My goodness! Yeah, so. Thank God I'm bald! So nothing shows.

P1's stress flared because "the material keeps changing so you are learning brand new something it takes two or three years to really get good with that material and then it's removed and something replaces it." For P2, the stress and pressure came from an internal drive to ensure the initiatives were executed correctly:

The pressure comes from internally. Because I want to do what's best for the kids and

I'm one of these people that believe that they're my kids and if I don't do justice by my

kids then I've failed them and I don't ever want to fail them so I keep the internal

pressure to that point.

Stress and pressure also caused some individuals to rethink staying at their school. These

participants noted some colleagues left because of these feelings.

Confusion. Confusion was a feeling expressed during the interviews. P1 described

finding three different writing texts and not knowing which one to use because the initiatives

came and went so quickly. For P2, confusion stemmed from hearing other people saying the

initiatives should be implemented in a way opposed to this participant's understanding of how

the initiatives should be implemented. When the number of initiatives being implemented

swelled to eight, P9 felt confusion as to which one to focus on. Moreover, this participant felt so

many initiatives were a way to tell teachers that they were not doing their jobs correctly, so

adjustments via the initiatives needed to be made. This message made P9 feel confused because

any evaluations received by this individual did not suggest adjustments needed to be made. Still

another participant, P11, felt confusion in implementing the initiatives because the professional

development did not provide enough information for this participant to implement the initiative

successfully. P3 echoed P11's sentiment with regard to the professional development not being

enough and being "just kinda lost" to implement an initiative if one did not ask enough questions

at the initial trainings. Likewise, P8 mentioned a struggle needing questions answered about one

initiative and not getting the questions answered before the next initiative came along. After a

certain point, P8 admitted:

I'm gonna say that I became somewhat, I don't want to use the word overwhelmed, but

just highly confused. I didn't have a clear direction as to what we needed to do or where

we needed to go.

As a result, P8 put aside the first initiative despite having questions and focused on the new

initiative instead.

Degraded or treated unprofessionally. The last set of feelings expressed by the

participants involves feeling degraded or demoralized. No longer were the teachers trusted to

perform their job in a way they knew how. P8 contrasted this time to experiences as a beginning

teacher:

When I think back on my teaching, from it, it was largely when I was hired, it was like

OK, you know your content, you take care of your content, you teach a content. Um, and,

you were kind of left to your own.

During the time with multiple initiatives, P8 felt controlled and micromanaged. Instead of being

able to exercise professional judgment and creativity, this participant was given a canned set of

steps and procedures to implement. P6 expressed a similar sentiment of being controlled to

implement the initiatives via prescribed steps. In this participant's mind, administration did not

have to need to provide a prescribed program and expect exact compliance with the steps in that

program. Instead, P6 described a way to implement the initiatives that allowed the teachers to

exercise autonomy and expertise:

a better way to use this whole idea of initiatives and improvement and that kind of thing

is present an idea to me and then give me an hour to massage it, work with it, um figure

out a lesson with it, figure out a way to implement it, but let ME make it mine and you

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hang out and we can talk about what I'm going to do with it and talk about ways that you

can come in and help me out with it.

Similarly, P9 felt like P6 in experiencing professional disregard:

You know we were trained to be professionals, we try to think that we ARE, but when

they keep giving you a new list things to do and how to do them, it's frustrating to feel

like you're never where you need to be.. . .It makes feel like we're not professional, that

we're not trusted. And we're supposed to be adults that can do our own thing and be

trusted to get done what we need to do and for the most part we do.

As mentioned in the previous section, P9 also felt the initiatives were telling the teachers that

they were not performing their job to a certain standard. P7 also felt this emotion and used these

words to express this sentiment: "What we are is degraded, degrading. The message was

obviously not doing what you're supposed to do so we all have to do it the same." P11 felt the

demoralization stemmed from teachers' not knowing exactly what they were supposed to do and

thus, not acting professionally:

It leads to teacher's demoralization. I mean it just is they're at each other's throats

because nobody knows what they're doin'; they're runnin' crazy.

P1 noted that in a previous district, teachers previously were allowed to "figure out" their own

teaching style, the learning style of the kids and what worked or did not work. In this manner, P1

felt teachers could really "begin develop a craft of being able to, um, evaluate things and find

things that are effective." Instead, this professional freedom was not extended to P1 while

working with multiple initiatives.

Coping strategies. In order to manage implementing the initiatives, participants engaged

in different coping strategies. Two participants indicated keeping a positive attitude. Another

teacher mentioned segmenting time to ensure all that needed to be done in a day was done. A third participant used exercise to alleviate stress. P2 coped by keeping in mind doing what is best for kids:

I've taken a really good look on what's important for the kids in schools, what's important for me, so I don't break down and become more calm, then worry about am I gonna be able to use all ten thinking strategies this year. If it happens, it happens but I have matured enough in my education for teaching too to know how to put them within what I'm already doing instead of trying to find more time which is impossible.

Other participants used colleagues and certain individuals to make the experience manageable. P8 indicated department colleagues assisted in making the initiatives more effective:

I think in our particular department, my department, we were pretty well structured. I know that there was communication given by other departments that felt much more um segregated, just torn apart, didn't know where to come together. We were able to come together a little bit more so it seemed to be somewhat effective.

P2 also indicated the strength of a grade-level team in helping to adapt a testing initiative:

. . .thank goodness we had a strong team in kindergarten when we first started because we'd get together and we'd go OK this isn't gonna work so what are we gonna do for the little ones? Um, how are we gonna do all this amount of testing which is one-on-one? You can't hand 'em a piece of paper in kindergarten.

Similarly, P7 noted a reliance on "really good colleagues" to assist with working the initiatives into their respective curricular areas.

P2 also mentioned maintaining flexibility to all the changes and venting to individuals. Likewise, P11 indicated turning to certain colleagues for support and in particular, the department head:

> She was my support. When I lost my, completely lost my shit, and I didn't know where I was going, she is where I went. Because she was like, "[P11], you have enough on your plate. Don't worry about this." Because also I think she saw that there had been, this is another thing, she'd been around long enough too, so as my department head, she was, she was, she's where I went.

This participant also mentioned keeping in mind advice received from veteran teachers:

> I remember them saying education will always be education. The pendulum swings. In fact, it was J—B—. He said, "[P11], in education you have a pendulum and it swings one way with one name and it comes back with a new name.". . .I just had to keep telling myself I just gotta ride this out, I just gotta ride this out. Cuz the pendulum's gonna swing.

Some participants coped by simply reverting to what they had always done within the classroom. P6 mentioned, "Here [the study's district] it took me about three years before I was like, 'OK, this is dumb. I'm just doing me.'. . . I stopped being a good soldier and worrying so much about here are the boxes that somebody wants me to check off." P2 related a similar feeling, "I try to stick to it but it doesn't work so I close my door and do what I want [Laughter]." Furthermore, P2 indicated using classroom activities known to benefit kids over initiatives that did not:

now, I just says oh, well, you [meaning those mandating the initiatives] can want it all

you want and you can fire me if you want to [laughter] but I'm doing this first because it

benefits my kids, this [initiative] does not benefit my kids.

In a similar way, P11 described this attitude:

I fell back on what I knew. I had twelve years of teaching already and my kids were

succeeding. They were doing well and so I knew that what I was doing in my classroom

was OK and I just had to wait and see where the confetti fell. . . .I gotta have that control

and I had no control over any of that stuff so I had to focus on the things that I could

control which is my classroom so I did what I knew and I let the rest kinda roll off my

back.

Like others, P11 tried to keep the classroom an area of control. Unfortunately, some teachers

indicated the initiatives did affect students.

Impact on students. According some participants, implementing the multiple initiatives

meant ensuring harm did not come to the students. P2 suggested the initiatives brought additional

learning opportunities for the students rather simply having fun for fun's sake:

There wasn't a whole lot of fun crafty things anymore. It was right to the point. . . .It isn't

a side round of ok, they're [the students] gonna have fun today. If they do, it's STEM

projects where they have to work as teams and learn to socialize better, learn jobs, learn

how to keep up their end, set their own goals, and meet their own goals.

Moreover, this participant observed:

a good, great growing curve. . .from when I first started teaching 3rd grade and having

different initiatives, different thinking strategies than I do now, the growth wasn't as

quick. I'm watching the kids grow faster and they're able to do it.

P12 said students have benefitted from a technology initiative, which has made this participant a more effective teacher. This participant has embraced technology and has been able to use this tool as a means of increasing engagement and differentiating instruction for the benefit of students. In P12's words:

> I'm there, I feel like I am a very effective teacher because of technology, because of the idea of or of the things that are out there that are live data and the things that I can pose when I'm doing my presentations. You know, we had our Promethean boards, and we have the Promethean stuff and that was a great tool, moving forward but you still missed, you missed a lot of kids. . . .I do all my presentation through Nearpod. So now Nearpod is allowing me live data, _unbelievable_ conversations with my students based off of questions because now. . .I can see everyone engaged in my classroom and that kid that is not engaged, I can move over there and "hey, what's up? Let's talk."

Despite these benefits to students, P2 did express a struggle and collapsing of timeworn teaching structures during the initial implementation phase did hurt this participant's students.

Other teachers expressed sentiments that students did not benefit from the initiatives. P1 indicated the strict implementation guidelines meant supplementation for the students did not occur:

> My intervention guys came to me on a third grade level. . .I have to fill those gaps in before they can get there [the sixth grade level]. And by the time, you know, they were just not ever ready for that and so I would give the test so all of them bombed it and it's like how is that making the kids feel you know.

Moreover, another initiative caused P1 to change writing programs. With this change, P1 felt students did not turn out writing as good as under the previous program.

Participants also indicated the initiatives indirectly harmed students as well. P7 saw students tune out over initiative overkill:

> So, and I don't think the kids took it that seriously either cuz they were being asked to do closed readings in every period so they were like, "Alright, well, whatever, this must be the close reading day," you know. And, and I don't think the kids got one thing out of it either.

P4 felt the initiatives took time away from activities that this participant felt made for an effective teacher:

> The thing I do feel like it affected is my quality of teaching as far as good lesson plans and um, sometimes, a lot of times this year, I'm just like flyin' by the seat of my pants because it's all I feel like I can do, you know.

Likewise, P11 mentioned an increase in days absent, which meant less time for this teacher to be in the classroom with students. P11 also indicated being in survival mode affected classroom activities:

> I don't think I was as effective a teacher . . . because I did let my frustrations get in the way, which is unfortunate. I wouldn't say I'm normally that kind of a teacher. But I did, I got to a point of I didn't care . . . but my focus became, I didn't really even have one. It was just to get through . . . there were things that I normally did in a classroom that I just didn't do that year. Didn't have the energy.

Being effective was important to P11 and all the other participants and each worked to do what was best for students.

Perceived problems. During the interviews, several participants described problems with implementing the multiple initiatives. P12 mentioned not being able to fit all the initiatives in at

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once; instead, "it had to be spotted here and there and it was touch and go." Thus, this participant used initiatives sporadically, only implementing them when they fit into lesson plans and when time allowed the teacher to plan to implement the initiative. Another problem was expressed by P2 who felt the experience revealed a lack of district-wide compliance as this participant saw students transferring in to the building without the background skills addressed in the curriculum maps. Moreover, in a district meeting, P2 talked with other teachers in the district who confessed to not implementing the district common assessments. In addition, P2 expressed experiencing a moral dilemma between doing what is best for kids or implementing the initiative:

> OK, if they walk in and I'm doing a conference [with students] what's gonna happen? What are they gonna say? You're not doing what we asked you to do. So, the intimidation on that was difficult for me because alright did I close my door and do what I want and do what's right or do I leave it [the door] open and they walk in and I'm doing something that they don't see where it fits in to what they're trying to do? That was hard. . .you are trying to please everybody. Trying to do what's exactly right for your kids so that they can achieve and not give up and have them fall through the cracks. Or do what they says going to work.

P11 faced problems related to functioning in survival mode, wherein this participant withdrew from friends and colleagues while struggling to get through each day. Like P1, P7 and P10, this participant experienced thoughts of leaving the district and moving elsewhere. Other circumstances caused P7, P10 and P11 to stay, but P1 decided to leave the district. These singular problems surfaced during analysis as well as three problems mentioned by multiple participants: other duties or responsibilities, a disconnect and lack of follow-through.

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Other duties or responsibilities. One problem encountered in implementing multiple initiatives stemmed from participants having other duties or responsibilities. These other factors made focusing on execution of the initiatives difficult. For some teachers, work completed at home led to decreased time with family or in coaching. P7 implemented the initiatives but did not completely focus on them due to numerous problems with department colleagues:

> But this was also at the same time though that I was dealing with a sex offender in the next room, two sex offenders in the next room, um I had other things to worry about. So, it was kinda like I will do what I need to do.

Rather than draw attention, P7 simply tried and attempted to implement the initiatives to "keep below the radar" as this participant's department was already under scrutiny. P5 and P12 mentioned coaching duties and family outside of school that lead to having to juggle working with the initiatives at home and these other responsibilities.

In the classroom, other duties clashed with time to implement initiatives. For example, P11 said:

> In addition to all of those initiatives, I was asked to mentor new teachers, um, I was given a student teacher, I was in counseling myself, um and it was crazy. It was absolutely crazy and I withdrew a lot.

Moreover, P11 indicated the initiatives caused feelings of depression and anxiety, which took a personal toll: "I actually did have my doctor write me a note to excuse me from meetings because it was out of control and I had a daughter that needed me and it was not OK." Likewise, P12 felt pressured to integrate the initiatives, focus on analyzing student data, and ensuring content was taught. P12's principal added to this already full schedule of initiatives by mandating book studies to help this participant and colleagues grow professionally. In addition,

P4 was trying to teaching a new grade level, which meant learning a new curriculum, as well as implementing the initiatives.

Disconnect. Some participants experienced disconnects of various degrees. P2 explained two such problems. First, this participant felt the administration could not understand the experience of today's teachers within the classroom:

> They don't, they don't know so having people really and they say they taught and do
>
> things, but they never taught with initiatives. None of the people that are ruling us today
>
> have taught under what we're teaching. . .

As a result, P2 felt the expectations with integrating the initiatives did not involve what really needs to be accomplished in a classroom. P3 also felt a disconnect between implementation expectations from administration and a curricular area. According to this participant, the expectation to implement the initiatives was spread evenly among all teachers and all subject areas. However, as P3 noted:

> Everybody's doing guided reading, so everybody's going to be doing whatever those
>
> initiatives are. And that's coming from the administrators that that's the expectation they
>
> have of everybody. Not specifically, I don't feel specifically for like the specialists, the
>
> PE, the music, because some of the initiatives really don't have a lot to do with the
>
> subject areas that we have.

Making blanket statements for all curricular areas to implement initiatives also caused problems for P7:

> it felt like busy work to me and, and it did not feel natural or a part of the curriculum. It
>
> felt, it felt like busy work. And then when we had to do the reading circles I about died.
>
> Because my job is to teach a foreign language basically. I teach a foreign language. I

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already do language, symbolism and all that stuff. And it just. . .to have them say well,

you have to do a reading circle. What?! It didn't fit with my curriculum at all.

P11 saw a disconnect between the initiatives themselves, as if the administration simply was

throwing out ideas to see what would stick with teachers. For P11, this disconnect meant that

nothing stuck long enough to improve classroom instruction and management.

    Lack of follow-through. Several interviewees raised the problem of lack of follow-

through or follow-up. As mentioned previously, the initiatives came in waves one usually

replacing another within a year's time or even sooner. This constant shifting of focus from one

initiative to the next left teachers without a chance to evaluate whether or not an initiative

actually worked. P8 described this phenomenon:

> Like I said, I think it was really important to note that there was never really any kind of
>
> follow up to it. It was just like OK, this year we're gonna put a focus on this, next year
>
> we're gonna put a focus on this, this year we're gonna put a focus on something else and
>
> there was never any follow-up to any of those other things.

For P8, the initiatives became more of a strategy to try rather than a mandated initiative to be

used continually:

> It was just kinda like now you got, now implement it, use it. But how effective was it?
>
> Did we ever have an opportunity to review it and say OK, was it, was this working or
>
> not? It was just something for you to be able to try and if it worked, it worked, if not, it
>
> didn't.

P8 remembers at one point in time, the central administration building sending out a reminder

that certain initiatives still be used while other initiatives were being introduction. However, this

message served as a reminder not necessarily as a mandate. P10 also noted the lack of follow-up

by making comments such as "there wasn't enough feedback in how to do it the right way" or "sometimes without the follow up on initiatives though it's difficult to know if you've gotten it done."

P6, P9, and P11 described experiencing lack of follow-through in other ways. Like those participants mentioned in the last paragraph, P6 felt follow-through did not occur with "952,000 initiatives that no body checks on, nobody cares." This participant further hated the lack of follow-through, as the paperwork became busy work:

> Oh, I HATED it because it was just. . . I was given all these prescribed things that you need to do this and you need to show me proof that you're doing it and. When I knew specifically, well I knew immediately, six months in to working with the district that the papers I was handing them were going in to a giant binder that nobody ever opened ever again and I have no idea where those things are. There was no measure of how I was implementing it or if.

For P9, lack of follow-through meant the district did not see the initiatives to a successful end:

> And then they'll start somethin' and they wouldn't ride the whole process out. Like when we started small learning communities with 9th graders, over and over and over, and the last two years we don't even ride those kids all the way through the whole four years cycle of high school to see if, so we could measure did it really help. We start a lot of stuff and we finish very little.

Moreover, P9 noted another lack of follow-through on the district's part in answering questions about implementing initiatives. This participant said, "And we kept asking the question and nobody could even come and tell us what to do with this data." P11 also experienced not having questions answered:

I know that one of the things they had started looking at was data analysis, which I'm still

asking to have training on so I know what I'm looking at for my kids. How I can change

my instruction to better help my students and I STILL haven't had it and it's been twelve

years, fifteen years I've been at the high school.

Without the training, these two participants found implementing the initiatives difficult.

Professional change. P4 voiced the opinion that, ". . .everything you do even the hard

things helps you to grow in some way. . ." Thus, while many of the aspects of the experience

may be perceived as negative, many participants underwent positive changes in their

professional selves. Participants mentioned becoming more aware, analytical and purposeful,

reflective, or effective. This section discusses the various ways the teachers felt they grew during

the implementation of multiple initiatives.

New teaching practices. P5 mentioned adjusting teaching practices in order to avoid

being "left behind." For this participant, finding the time to learn about new teaching ideas or

methods was not always possible. Bringing the initiatives to the teachers provided P5 with the

means to grow in practice and thinking:

And I think positively too it opens my eyes to other things that are goin' on because when

life gets busy you don't always have time to sit down and read educational journals and

see what the latest and the greatest, and what's best for kids and teaching and learning.

And so, when the district does come in and bring those, I have to have an open mind and

I think that's helped, you know, me become a better educator.

P12 also felt an initiative made for better classroom practice due to an increase in mindfulness of

certain actions:

I would say, mindfulness in the sense of as I'm presenting, as I'm having conversations, as I'm looking and gauging my classrooms, to be mindful of not staying at the board and just teaching and turning around and talking. Floating around, being around, floating within the classroom, which then cuts down on your classroom behaviors. But seeing students work and that proximity, now that kid that maybe didn't quite get it is right there because you're close, they might [ask for help].

Others also thought the initiatives gave them ideas to grow their teaching practices or continue effective current practices. P6 mentioned including more subject related vocabulary in to lessons due to an initiative. Likewise, P8 used parts of certain initiatives to increase engagement and adapt instruction. P3 liked having the knowledge of the initiatives:

And more than anything it's, it's knowledge. You know about these things. Whether you use them or not you know that they exist, you know that they're there, you can try and pull them off.

P9 credited the initiatives with reinforcing the benefits of some teaching practices:

I've always, well, I've always been the teacher that has really high standards. I've always implemented reading and writing in my classroom. So like the Common Core English to me that felt like it was supporting things I was already trying to do.

Mindfulness in practices. Furthermore, participants mentioned being more purposeful or reflective of their practice. P8 mentioned becoming more analytical in selecting teaching strategies:

what I think it did more for me is, is to find out there's all sorts of different things and what may work for one may not work for another. And so it allowed me to become more analytical to it and to sit there and say OK, this works, this doesn't work. Um, I like this

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piece but I don't like this piece. This piece fits really well with this particular group of

kids, this piece doesn't.

In a similar way, P5 said, "I think the good that has come out of it is the fact that it's made me

reflect on the way I teach." Likewise, P7 thought the positive benefits of one initiative made this

participant more purposeful in using the various strategies in the initiative:

I did, I did think a little more about what do I do, how do I teach and.. it did give you a

chance to look at and say are you being purposeful in what you do. Or are you just

providing. . .are you winging it? So, it, it did help me maybe become more purposeful

about making sure I was using the different ways to reach kids.

Change in teaching style. Lastly, exposure to certain initiatives changed participants'

teaching styles. P4 experienced co-teaching for the first time and while difficult to adjust to at

first, eventually became a positive change because "when you have another teacher coming in to

your classroom, you see their teaching style and so that gives you things you can learn off of,

you know, learn from." P5 described becoming more of a facilitator in the classroom:

. . .instead of being the sage on the stage I try to be more facilitator and then, let the kids

do the inquiry and the research and finding out and solving their own problems. . .I think

you have to find more ways to get kids doing things that are gonna be beneficial for them

in the future in terms of when you go out into college you're gonna have to be doing

group projects, you're gonna have to learn how to work with teams and have what I

consider the 21st century skills, you know, soft skills and problem solving and critical

thinking. And so trying to gear things more towards that a little ya know and being in the

academy and some of the things they do has lent itself to that.

P10 also indicated a change in teaching philosophy and style. Instead of delivering content, P10 sees building student skills as a necessary component of teaching. This idea was expressed by P10 in this manner:

> I would DEFINITELY say it. . .had that influence on me as like I thought of myself as a teacher because in the perfect example is that reading and thinking strategy. Because in college, I went to school to be a social studies teacher and I was focused on learning content. That was my job is to learn content and then my job would be to teach kids that content. And then when those initiatives started, it made me rethink and say, "Well, you know what? My job is not just to teach content. . .it's to teach skills. It's to teach kids how to pick information out of a text that's important". . .I think in that respect that yeah, it did help me see that there's more to teaching than just content piece of it.

In these ways, teachers grew because of exposure to the initiatives. However, despite this growth, the participants still do not endorse implementing multiple initiatives in the manner they experienced. P10 said:

> I definitely think we need to consistently look and see what we can do to improve but if you do too many things at once it's just hard to focus on any one thing and really you spin your wheels.

Therefore, the implementation of initiatives needs to be completed in such a way that improvement does not stop, or teachers become "stagnate" and teacher growth becomes an intentional outcome.

Data Summary

While these teachers expressed some professional growth, the overall experience proved to be negative, affecting the teachers' cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. The description

of the 12 participants' experience with multiple initiatives implementation reveals top-down mandated changes caused various reactions. Administration, mostly at the district level, introduced the initiatives in a cyclic fashion or participants came into the district when many initiatives already existed. Often, the introduction of new initiative caused participants' attention to move from an old initiative to this new one. Participants expressed difficulty becoming comfortable with implementing a program or strategy within their classroom although bits and pieces were used and are a still a part of many participants' teaching practices. In addition, the continual changing of initiatives meant teachers did not have time to evaluate the effectiveness of an initiative and administration did not follow-through with answering questions or giving feedback on teachers' implementation practices. As a result, the teachers expressed feelings of frustration, anger, stress and pressure, to name a few. Overwhelmed participants experienced an increase in their workload and felt more time and energy was dedicated to implementing the initiative than performing more important duties such as lesson planning. The teachers in this study also encountered a feeling of not being valued for their expertise or of being degraded or professionally untrustworthy. Because of these reactions, teachers may not have performed up to their personal standard within the classroom or thought about leaving the district to find work elsewhere. These changes in work-related behavior meant students were given lessons that were not structured effectively or the teacher could not devote as much time to working with students in the classroom. The fallout from these changes meant students were not provided effective instruction nor needed assistance, which in turn could affect their learning.

Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter presented information regarding the study's sample, research methodology and data results or findings. The 12 participants provided detailed interviews that when analyzed

using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method created a rich, thick description of the phenomenon of experiencing multiple initiatives implementation. Four categories emerged from the analysis providing a structure for this description: implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems, and professional growth. This structure depicted an experience consisting of waves of initiatives presented on top of each with little time to assess the effectiveness before the appearance of the next one. Within this environment, teachers felt the impact on their classroom practices, their professional selves, their emotional state, and their students. Despite seeing limited professional growth, the 12 participants conveyed a mostly negative experience. The results of this study could assist future educational leaders in understanding change from the teachers' perspective. Moreover, educational leaders could benefit from the description in this study to understand the importance of facilitating change efforts in order to minimize the impact on teachers and students. Chapter 5 offers further information regarding the implications of these results as well as providing a summary of the results, a discussion of the results in relation to the literature, limitations and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to describe the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives in a Wyoming school district. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews that were recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Analysis occurred using In Vivo coding and theming to paint a picture of this phenomenon as experienced by the study's participants. Using Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method, this study presents a depiction of multiple initiatives implementation focused around four distinct categories: implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems, and professional change. This chapter provides a summary of the results gleaned from the data and results presented in Chapter 4; a discussion of the results in relation to the literature; study limitations; implications of the results for practice, policy, and theory; and recommendations for further research. Concluding remarks round out the information contained in this chapter.

Summary of the Results

Reform and change appear to be common themes in education environment in the United States (Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2016; Katz & Rose, 2013; Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014; Ravitch, 2016). From the early 1980's to 2018, pressures from reform agendas and political policies have prompted US schools to rethink their policies and practices (Mendez et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2018; Ravitch, 2016; Rury, 2016) with teachers ultimately being the ones charged with making the changes successful. However, most studies on change from the teachers' perspective do little to reflect the reality of their lives in the classroom during initiative implementation (Fullan, 2016).

Studies investing the effects of change or reform on teachers tend to focus on a single initiative, which as Fullan (2016) noted, does not reflect the reality for educators in 2018. Moreover, Fullan (2016) contended that more research needed to be conducted using a phenomenology perspective. The intent in conducting this study was to do exactly as Fullan suggested—reflect teachers' reality by studying multiple initiatives and use a phenomenological lens to do so. Thus, this study sought to gain a portrayal of teachers' lived experience with the implementation of multiple initiatives.

Individual responses to open-ended and probing questions asked by the researcher provided rich, descriptive contextual data used for understanding the teachers' lived experiences. Data analysis culminated in several emergent descriptor codes, which were grouped to create themes. Further clustering of the themes created four categories that provided the structure for recounting the teachers' lived experience. As a whole, the depiction of this phenomenon included information about the implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems and professional growth. Results from this study describe the experience of K–12 public school teachers working with multiple initiatives implementation as affecting their professional and personal lives. These findings provided answers to the two research questions addressed in this study:

- How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with implementing multiple initiatives?

- How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue?

The next sections renders the data and results presented in Chapter 4 as answers to these research questions.

Discussion of the Results

Qualitative descriptive methods purport to "contribute to description and interpretation of complex phenomena, developing and revising understanding" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 100). Phenomenological methods of qualitative research accomplish this purpose by revealing the individuals' lived experience of the phenomenon in question. In the case of this research study, the claim that teachers' experience initiative fatigue due to frequent and multiple initiatives being implemented provided the focus of the study. In order to answer this question, the researcher first determined the need to understand teachers' reality with reform initiatives and educational change, as most studies of the impact of initiative implementation looked at a single incident of reform. Second, the researcher proposed another question to begin to connect this experience to initiative fatigue without suggesting a cause/effect or correlation between the two subjects. The data obtained during the collection phase contributed answers the two research questions. Table 4 and Figure 8 summarize the findings associated with the research questions.

How do K–12 public school teachers describe their lived experience with implementing multiple initiatives? Teachers experienced cycles of reforms consistently between 2003 and 2010 with reforms continuing to come and go from 2011 to 2018. Most of these reforms proved to be mandated change efforts or those reforms introduced at a rapid pace from top-down entities (Clement, 2014). For the 12 participants in this study, the initiatives came from either a district level or a school level and rarely from the teachers themselves, with one exception. As a result of the constant shifting, teachers' focus extended in many directions taking them away from their main job, instruction. As one participant mentioned, the experience could equate to "chasing a moving target." The educators could not master any of the initiatives because they could not concentrate or evaluate the effectiveness before another initiative took

precedence. Because of not being able to master the initiatives, teachers lacked confidence in fully implementing programs or strategies and evaluating any initiative's worth in terms of increasing student learning.

Teachers attempted to integrate every initiative with as much fidelity as possible, but problems arose in accomplishing this task. Most participants selectively used bits and pieces of the initiatives, making the strategies and processes accommodate content and teaching style. Teachers were not provided with enough direction in how to put most reforms in to practice, indicating they were not getting enough information up front to make the initiatives work effectively. Thus, the participants integrated what they perceived as the initiative's important elements and what they could get comfortable with in the time given for implementation. For example, P10 indicated one particular initiative, reading strategies, was a foreign concept because this teacher does not teach reading; therefore, P10 struggled with integrating the strategies into classroom activities. P10 did see that evaluating information and implementing close reading strategies would benefit students and thus, fulfilled the purpose behind the initiative albeit P10's actions in doing so did not exactly match the close reading process presented in the original initiative. One participant noted that the Kagan cooperative learning initiative emphasized the importance of engaging students. Feeling this idea was worthwhile, P8 integrated Kagan in bits and pieces, eliminating those elements that did not fit with the grade level of the students.

Implementing the initiatives in bits and pieces may appear as if the teachers are resisting or completely ignoring the changes brought about by the reform. The teachers in this study did not resist the changes, despite the negative feelings and emotions professed by the individuals. Instead, the implementation process overwhelmed and confused the participants to an extent that

they did not feel comfortable with the initiatives and altered the strategies to make them work. Lack of follow-through left the teachers with unanswered questions and no feedback on their implementation performance.

The constant shuffling of reforms left teachers frustrated, confused, and angry. Teachers could never get comfortable with reforms because they did not last long enough or dropped abruptly. P11 expressed the lack of depth in executing the initiatives because the time was not taken to assess, evaluate and adapt for successful implementation. Often workload increased, sometimes due to paperwork associated with proving initiative implementation or in causing extra planning time. This increase in workload caused teachers, like P9, to go through the motions simply to check off that the initiative indeed was implemented. When the initiative went away, then the teachers' focus shifted to the new initiatives. Teachers put time and effort in to implementing an initiative that went away, causing resentment and anger.

Because the initiative did not always naturally fit into the teachers' content area or teaching style, the natural flow teachers had developed in their instruction and conveyance of content was disrupted. P9 and P7 consistently discussed having to make special lesson plans in order to show administration their implementation of a particular initiative. P7 attempted to make the initiative at least relevant to the content area, but sometimes failed because the timeline for implementation did not fit with other activities. For P9, this disruption increased the time spent on lesson planning, which triggered feelings of anger and stress. P12 also discussed an increase in lesson planning time as the initiatives altered this participant's teaching methods and new lessons had to be prepared rather than using ones P12 always used.

For some educators, the increase in workload affected their personal time. Working outside of school conflicted with after school responsibilities and obligations. P2 discussed

frustration with having to spend time after school in professional development meetings for initiatives rather than helping students or communicating with parents. This participant also noted family members expressed anger because P2 needed to work instead of spending time with them. P4 also mentioned personal time with family on the weekends was not quality because of worry about facing work on Monday.

Table 4

Summary Statements of Answers to First Research Question

Teachers experienced top-down initiatives that came to them in a rapid, cyclical fashion.
Teachers' focus veered away from instruction, lesson planning, etc. and turned towards implementing the initiatives instead.
Teachers could not concentrate on one initiative and evaluate the effectiveness before another initiative took precedence.
Teachers could not evaluate the effectiveness of an initiative on student learning because the initiative did not stay a focus long enough to do this appraisal.
Teachers attempted all initiatives without much resistance despite trivial guidance or lack of follow-through on implementation.
Teachers did not integrate the initiatives in a complete fashion, but altered the initiatives to fit teaching style or content.
Teachers felt overwhelmed and frustrated with implementation so made the strategies work for them.
Teachers put time and effort in to implementing an initiative that went away, causing resentment and anger.
Teachers' workload increased due to having to make special lessons or to figure out initiatives on their own.
For some teachers, this increase in workload interfered with other obligations and responsibilities, including interrupting family time.
Teachers experienced some professional growth and changes in their teaching style as a result of implementing the initiatives.

Despite these apparent negative points, the experience did give teachers some areas of growth. Some teachers said the initiatives had them rethinking various strategies or they found the importance of changing their teaching style. P5 indicated taking more of a facilitative role as a teacher rather than being the "sage on the stage" who imparted content to a passive classroom full of students:

> I think the good that has come out of it is the fact that it's made me reflect on the way I teach and like I said instead of being a teacher I'm more of a facilitator in some ways and sometimes you have to be that sage on the stage and say hey, because those kids need that direct instruction but other times no.

P6 also indicated making vocabulary a more prominent part of unit lessons as well as increasing the amount of reading for students after two initiatives discussed the importance of these two ideas increasing student achievement. Lastly, P10 mentioned changing the focus of classroom lessons to teach skills more than content. Other participants, likewise, indicated the initiatives brought new strategies into their teaching toolbox like engagement ideas or strategies for student independent work. P3 summarized the professional growth best in saying the initiatives gave the participants tools that they could fall back on or take out and utilize when situations presented the need for such practices.

The growth that occurred did not appear, however, to outweigh the instructional interruptions, personal time, and the toll on emotions and work-related well-being. The experience left a lasting impact that as P11 expressed will take a great deal of recovery time. P1 left the district due to negative feelings brought about by this experience. Others, such as P4 and P11, also felt the urge to leave the district if the situation did not improve.

How does the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers implementing

multiple initiatives help to understand whether teachers are experiencing initiative fatigue?

Academic and non-academic entities have implied that teachers around the world are experiencing initiative fatigue due to an increase in reform initiatives. However, few studies actually attempt to back up this claim and especially not in Wyoming. Part of the purpose behind this study resided in beginning to understand whether teachers indeed are experiencing initiative fatigue due to the constant shuffling of initiatives. Often, top-down initiatives require teachers to change their practices and in some cases, instructional and educational beliefs. The participants in this study experienced top-down initiatives that asked them to change instructional practice, such as Kagan cooperative learning strategies or close reading activities, or to change assessment strategies. Other participants experienced changes in their beliefs regarding instruction when they professed being more facilitator than lecturer (P5) or focusing more on skills than content (P10).

The data unearthed by the researcher did suggest the description of the teachers' experience resembles initiative fatigue symptoms:

- Many initiatives over a short period of time with little recover time in between

- Feelings of stress, apathy or lack of focus

- Negative view of further change

- Leaving the profession or changing jobs

- Focus dispersed or lack of time

Figure 8 illustrates the matching qualities between initiative fatigue and multiple initiatives implementation. While this data suggests teachers could be suffering from initiative fatigue, further research needs to be conducted in order to solidify a cause/effect relationship or

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show a correlation between the two subjects. These resemblances are expanded upon in the next section.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Chapter 2 conveyed literature relevant to this study's topic of multiple initiatives implementation, including but not limited to academic literature on change and the effects change has on those tasked with implementation of change. This discussion of the pertinent literature assisted in clarifying the construct of initiative fatigue and the experience of change on individuals and reactions to a single change initiative. Moreover, the experience of the participants in this study paralleled many concepts in the change literature, providing a first-hand, phenomenological account of educational change. The following section takes the participants' experience and connects the data with the previously presented literature on initiative fatigue, change research and educational change.
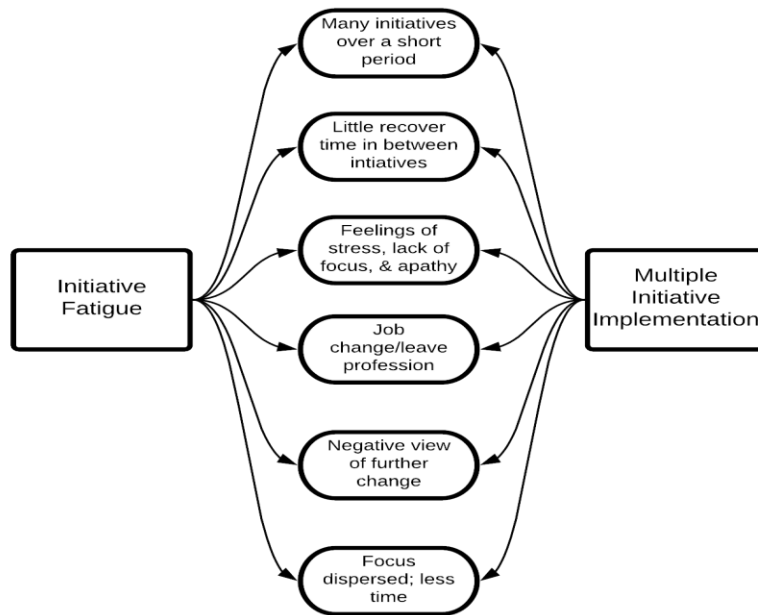

Figure 8. Characteristics of initiative fatigue and characteristics of individuals' experiences of multiple initiatives implementation have some areas in common as illustrated in this figure.

Initiative fatigue. Continual presentation of change initiatives with little time to adjust before a new one is presented underlies the nature of initiative fatigue (Johnson, 2016). With this overload of tasks, an individual's focus scatters into many different directions. Because of this split focus, individuals caught in this cyclical notion of change often find themselves experiencing psychological and physical alterations (Johnson et al., 2016). Moreover, Reeves (2010) contended a relationship exists between the number of initiatives an individual is asked to manage and the allocation of resources, time, and emotional energy spent in successfully implementing a change initiative. When an individual's focus disperses between many initiatives, the time to spend on any one initiative, allocation of resources, and emotional energy diminishes. Thus, excessive change threatens a person's ability to cope with change causing the depletion of an individual's physical, psychology, social, and motivational stores, health and well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The participants in this study experienced some of these concepts presented in the literature on initiative fatigue, especially Reeves' (2010) Law of Initiative Fatigue. Participants experienced a continual presentation of initiatives. Every year or even every semester a new initiative was introduced and teachers were asked to integrate this concept into their instruction. P1 noted that "every year was different" while P8 described "implementing initiatives upon initiatives upon initiatives." As such, participants could not focus on one initiative for a long period.

The continual presentation of initiatives made some participants feel like they were being asked to be a jack-of-all-trades and as a result could be master of none of the initiatives. P1 expressed the feeling that one could never get comfortable because an initiative was never around long enough to judge success of implementation. P3 struggled with this inability to focus,

which resulted in not enough time to learn the initiative or evaluate the effectiveness of the change. Reeves (2010) noted as the number of initiatives increase individuals experience a decrease in time allocated to all tasks as P3 experienced.

Reeves (2010) Law of Initiative Fatigue also appeared in decreased time for other classroom activities not just the initiatives. A split in focus also meant teachers were not able to concentrate on lesson planning or other classroom activities, such as grading. P9 expressed the inability to focus on lessons because they were given the directive to include a Kagan activity every week and on certain days. With all of the additional work brought on by the initiatives, P11 expressed an inability to focus on one activity at a time meant nothing got done:

> And so, trying to prioritize, what needs to come first and you're being told all of these things are a priority. You can't. Nothing is done with fidelity. Nothing is done with, um, any kind of, um, thoroughness. It's you're, you're skimmin' the surface. You're, you're hangin' on by your fingernails. And you, you get through every day. That's, that's all you can do is just get through because you can't focus, there's not time to get in to depth with anything.

As a result, many participants experienced an increase in their workload as well as decreased emotional and motivational energies. P3 expressed not really implementing an initiative but just pretending to do try the initiative due to being overwhelmed with normal duties in addition to the new initiatives. P6 also mentioned getting to the point of no longer "playing the good soldier" and implementing every initiative, a loss of motivation discussed by Demerouti & Bakker (2011). Instead, this participant simply taught as normal with picking bits and pieces of initiatives to use in classroom activities. P9 mentioned that while currently the drive to

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implement new initiatives has decreased in the district, this participant fears future policies or new state standards may cause the implementation of new initiatives to increase once again.

Change Research. The type of change, which corresponds to frequency of change, and the depth or impact of change determine whether individuals could experience initiative fatigue. These aspects of change bring about reactions in individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral spheres as well as in their work related well-being. Organizational science literature reveals much about the types of change, the depth of change, and reactions to change.

Types of change. Four types of change are recognized in the literature: organic change, teleological change, evolutionary change, or disjointed change. The types of change experienced by the K–12 teachers in this study could be described as both teleological and evolutionary. According to Burke (2014), teleological type change consists of planned changes meant to lead the organization towards a desired state, but runs the risk of keeping the organization in a constant state of change. Evolutionary change is change that comes about as a desire to remain competitive (Burke, 2014). Like teleological change, evolutionary can be a never-ending pursuit of change leaving employees in a state of disequilibrium as change turnover occurs frequently and often overlap each other. Multiple initiatives implementation as experienced by the study's participants could be describe as both teleological and evolutionary. Between 2003 and 2010, the teachers constantly experienced change with initiatives overlapping to a point where initiatives completely dropped from their radar.

Depth of change. The depth of change can also impact how the change recipient reacts to change. Two types of change are stressed in the literature: first-order and second-order. Teachers in this study described more second-order type changes rather than first-order change. Second-order change causes a change in schemata. During multiple initiatives implementation,

this replacing of one frame with a completely different frame occurred for two of the participants. P5 expressed a change to more of a facilitator role as a teacher rather than a strict lecturer. P11 experienced a schemata change:

> I would DEFINITELY say it, it, uh, had that influence on me as like I thought of myself as a teacher because in the perfect example is that reading and thinking strategy. Because in college, I went to school to be a social studies teacher and I was focused on learning content. That was my job is to learn content and then my job would be to teach kids that content. And then when those initiatives started, it made me rethink and say, "Well, you know what? My job is not just to teach content, um, it's to teach skills. It's to teach kids how to pick information out of a text that's important." Uh, and I think in that respect that yeah, it did help me see that there's more to teaching than just content piece of it.

Other participants experienced changes in classroom management techniques or changed their view on the importance of including reading strategies.

While second-order change may have been more prevalent in teachers' descriptions, the initiatives were implemented more in a manner consistent with first-order change. This type of change consists of alterations in the surface level structures that do not ultimately change the whole system but bits and pieces at a time (Burke, 2014). Due to the rate at which initiatives were presented, most of the participants did not have time to practice the initiatives or get good enough to implement the initiative as a whole. One participant described not being able to deeply put the initiative in to practice due to all initiatives being a priority:

> Trying to prioritize, what needs to come first and you're being told all of these things are a priority. You can't. Nothing is done with fidelity. Nothing is done with, um, any kind of, um, thoroughness. It's you're, you're skimmin' the surface.

Other teachers discussed not being able to get a chance to evaluate an initiative for effectiveness. New initiatives came along too quickly so the participants could not take the time to get questions answered or use data to know what was working and what was not working. In this way, the initiatives added first-order changes and teachers integrated the initiatives in "bits and pieces" utilizing what worked and putting what did not "on the back burner."

Reaction to change. An abundance of data from the interviews produced information regarding the impact and effects on the participants in terms of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. Previous literature limited the exploration into these reactions to change in terms of singular change instances or by investigating only one or two effects from that singular instance. The experience of the participants in this study revealed that in multiple initiatives implementation similar cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses occurred.

Cognitive reactions. Cognitive appraisal of change can determine an individual's reaction to change either in a positive or negative way (Fugate and (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). Those participants who approached the multiple initiatives in a positive manner tended to find some professional growth benefits in them. For example, P5 mentioned having an open mind toward possible improvements the initiatives could bring, which helped to pull in practices and strategies that work in the classroom. Likewise, P10 (Liz) indicated the needs to look positively on the initiatives as a first step towards coping with mandated change. As a result, P10 did find professional growth and change in schemata regarding the teacher's role in the classroom.

Cognitive appraisals of change further affected emotional and behavioral reactions to change (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). Mostly, these appraisals were negative in nature. When participants perceived an initiative was not working, they quickly dropped the activity and fell back on what they knew worked prior to attempting the initiative. As P2 stated, "I try to stick

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to it but it doesn't work so I close my door and do what I want." Cognitively, P11 experience was negative and as a result, this participant shut down, moving in to survival mode and developing anxiety. This teacher described not performing up to personal teaching standards due to not caring anymore:

> I got to a point of I didn't care and I think that, that's you see that with kids too, you know, you hit survival mode and you just don't care. You're in survival mode and I, I very clearly remember that year, uh, I had updated my resume and I was gettin' ready to leave. I was done with that school.

Fugate (2013) stated positive appraisal of change often implies the change recipient perceives the experience as being fair. Additionally, Michel and Gonzalez-Morales (2013) remarked on the ways in which a positive appraisal of change could lead to fewer sick days and decreased drug abuse. P11's appraisal of the multiple initiatives proved to be negative because this participant perceived the implementation of the initiatives as being unfair. For P11 and colleagues, the expectation from administration was to implement the initiative; however, P11 indicated this was difficult to accomplish because they were not given enough training to implement any initiative. In talking about the PLC initiative, P11 stated,

> we had asked for training, we got yelled at in our PLC, um, when we met as our department because we had an eye-roll, because the frustration was out, through the roof. We weren't getting the help that we had asked for and then we're getting yelled at for it. And it was awful, it was awful. And as soon as that happened, everyone shut down. I don't think we, we didn't move.

As a result of the experience, P11 indicated the biggest classroom impact was being absent more: "I would say absence, absence from the school was probably one of the biggest impacts it had on

my classroom." Other negative appraisal indicators from participants stemmed from indicated the leadership did not treat them fairly. For example, P9 perceived that administration felt teachers could not be trusted to do their job and thus, brought the initiatives to rectify the areas in which teachers needed to improve.

Emotional reactions. Additionally, emotional impacts of change as recorded in the literature surfaced in the experiences of this study's participants. Change can trigger emotions ranging from satisfaction and contentment to ambiguity, uncertainty, distrust, irritation, and stress (Petrou et al., 2015; Vakola et al., 2013). The frequency, depth and understanding of the change influence the emotional reaction. Classroom level changes tend to increase the positive or negative intensity of the emotional response (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). Moreover, Atal Köysüren and Deryakulu (2017) revealed changes involving increased workloads and altered roles and duties lead to more negative emotional response. Furthermore, continual change can cause feelings of being out of control and overwhelmed, which in turn leads to stress and anxiety (Smollan et al., 2010). Frequent change over a short period time can lead to emotional weariness and exhaustion (Smollan et al., 2010).

The 12 teachers in this study expressed mostly negative emotional reactions to change. Words such as frustration, anger, stress, confusion, and being overwhelmed all point to a more negative emotional response. As was described by several participants, they experienced frequent changes over a short period time. Because the multiple initiatives came close together, participants could not find a focus or have time to fully comprehend the initiatives intent or the benefit initiatives may have to teacher practices. These reactions caused anger and confusion. Stress for the participants came with the increases in workload, which also triggered feelings of being overwhelmed.

Behavioral reactions. Behaviorally, individuals react to change either actively or passively. An active reaction to change means individuals work to ensure the initiative's success while a negative reaction to change means individuals either passively or intentionally sabotage or resist the implementation process (Vakola, 2016). The participants in this study actively tried to implement the initiatives but some eventually exhibited passive behaviors. These negative behaviors stemmed from feelings of being done with trying. P6, for example, stopped attempting to do all of the initiatives all of the time once this participant reached tenure. After tenure was reached, P6 figured firing her would be more difficult and thus, to maintain sanity, did not always follow the initiatives or top-down administrative mandates.

Work related well-being reactions. Work related well-being was another area in which the teachers in this study noted how they were impacted by multiple initiatives implementation. Literature defines work-related well-being as connecting to professional identity, agency, and satisfaction or motivation for the job (Michel & González-Morales, 2013). The change experienced by these participants altered professional identity but for the most part teachers still saw their role as unchanging. One teacher, P8, discussed not being able to form relationships, which this individual considered an important part of being a teacher. P1 expressed guilt at not being able to provide students and parents with the best instruction because this participant was unable to adjust content to meet the students' academic level. P2 and P4 also indicated not feeling as if they were able to reach students. P2 said the initiatives did not provide time to conference with students, a vital activity for this participant to get to know students. P4 discussed spending more time inputting data and less time crafting quality lesson plans, which this teacher needs to feel confident and successful in the classroom.

While data showed participants experience reactions to change similar to those already presented in the literature, the cumulative impact and effects as well as the intensity in which some participants experienced these forces contributes to the literature. Most research studies on the effects of change focus on one single initiative and explore individual impacts on either cognitive, behavioral, emotion or work-related well-being aspects. Infrequently, the literature will explore two impacts (i.e. cognitive and behavioral) with a single initiative. This study reveals that during multiple initiatives implementation the teachers experience impacts and effects from all of these areas. Moreover, the importance of this collective impact could indicate a possible connection to determining if educators are experiencing initiative fatigue.

Educational Change. More research on educational change has begun to include the impact of change on teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, but rarely has educational change literature sought to provide a first-hand account of such experiences. Literature has studied the effects of change on teachers (Atal Köysüren & Deryakulu, 2017; Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Buchanan, 2015; Clandinin et al., 2009; Datnow, 2012; Day, 2002; Day & Smethem, 2009; Dicke et al., 2014; Fives & Buehl, 2016; A. Hargreaves, 2005; Ilies et al., 2015; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005), how change is managed (Clement, 2014; Coburn, 2003; Crockett, 1996; Cuban, 2013b, 2013a; Dale & James, 2015; Fullan, 2016; M. Jones & Harris, 2014; Murphy, 1997; Robinson, 2010b, 2011), and the way in which the educational community views change (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Fullan, 2016; Shepard, 2017; Wedell, 2009). However, these studies have not provided a phenomenological lens in which to view these effects, which Fullan (2016) indicates needs to change. This research was conducted with the intent of providing such a view as well as contributing to the literature on educational change management, reform failure, teacher demoralization.

Change management. This study depicted how frequent change and mandated change can affect teachers. The participants' experience demonstrated the need for leadership to allow teachers to have some say in change. As Schmidt and Datnow (2005) noted, positive responses to change came from a high-level of teacher involvement. P9 viewed one change as positive because this participant was a part of trying to implement the initiative district-wide.

Also, participants indicated leadership needs to follow-through with ensuring the initiatives are successful or not. Several participants indicated a need for administration to check on the progress of implementation in order to answer questions (P11), provide feedback (P8), or show an interest in how teachers are implementing the initiative (P6). This latter requisite becomes necessary because if not present, teachers tend to not worry about implementing the initiative. P7 stated,

> Like, if, if somebody came in to the room, then we were sure to say the buzz words. We were sure to make sure that. But we never would normally do that. You know, it was a dog and pony show.

Like other participants, P7 felt like just going through the motions or checking off a box to say the initiative was implemented.

Reform failure. A second contribution this study could have to educational change literature is a depiction of why reforms may not make desired changes to classroom practices. When teachers' focus is spread in a multitude of directions, their ability to give equitable and needed attention to any one task diminishes. P10 described this idea in such a manner:

> I definitely think we need to consistently look and see what we can do to improve but if you do too many things at once it's just hard to focus on any one thing and really you spin your wheels. [That improvement stops.] It does completely.

Moreover, teacher resistance to change is sometimes blamed for slowing down educational reform (Clement, 2014; Terhart, 2013); however, the teachers in this study did not resist implementing the initiatives or at least not deliberately and implementation was still not successful. Participants indicated that only bits and pieces of the initiatives have become a permanent piece of their practice. Additionally, Nolan (2016) observed administrators may have a misconception of teacher reaction to change, slanting more towards teachers as resistors. They may have passively not implemented the initiatives but they did not impede the implementation process. Instead, their cognitive, behavioral and emotional reactions suggest another reason for lack of successful implementation. Thus, the teachers' experiences highlighted in this study could support Spillane et al.'s (2002) argument that policy implementation may not be as cut and dry as numerous factors may contribute to implementation actors' lack of success with implementing policies.

Teacher demoralization. The concept of teacher demoralization lends another personal aspect to how change could be handled to avoid initiative fatigue. Overton, du Toit and Smit (2012) claimed the *how* of change should include information on how individual's cope and react to change. Knowing this aspect of handling change assists in successful implementation. Often research on personal reactions to change focus on the internal individual changes, or reactions that reside within the person such as emotional or cognitive reactions. One area of research, addressed mostly in educational change literature and not organizational change literature, focuses individual's reactions and coping mechanism influenced by the context of the change or the environment created because of the change. This reaction to change has been named *demoralization.*

Teachers enter the profession with certain values and moral ideals of what constitutes good teaching and teachers. However, education reform efforts of the past decade have created environments in which these ideals and values cannot be realized. Santoro (2011, 2018) claimed that these conditions within education have led to teacher demoralization, defined as the inability of teachers to access their moral rewards. Moral rewards are gained from being able to reach the professional values or ideals that teachers hold dear, using them as motivation and inspiration to continue working. Other researchers, such as Tsang (2018) and Schussler and Murrell (2016), have also written about teachers' inability to act as moral agents or make positive moral decisions, which lead to demoralization.

This study could contribute to the teacher demoralization literature as an example that such a reaction to educational change, especially with multiple initiatives implementation, could be occurring. P10 was the only participant to mention feeling demoralized; however, other instances of teacher demoralization appeared in the data as well. P10's demoralization stemmed from being unable to perform the tasks this participant felt made for good teaching. In fact, P10 indicated one administrative evaluation questioned reading aloud to students, an important and invaluable practice for this teacher. This questioning led P10 to feel that the administration did not value this participant's professional knowledge. Other participants felt demoralization as well because they could not access the feelings, practices, or ideals that make them feel successful as a teacher. P4 indicated not having the time to create good lesson plans. As a result, this participant felt her teaching "sucked" and student suffered. P1 felt extreme guilt over having failed students because conditions did not permit her to provide necessary remediation or teach lessons on the students' level. Santoro (2018) indicated veteran teachers who feel demoralized either drop from the profession or change schools to be away from the conditions that caused the

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demoralization. A 27-year veteran of education, P1 left the district for better teaching conditions elsewhere.

Limitations

Four main factors limited the study. First, the sample's representation and size contributed to one-sided outcomes. The study's participants included elementary and secondary teachers working in public schools, but more secondary teachers volunteered. In addition, secondary representation consisted mostly of high school educators. Furthermore, female participants ($n = 8$) outnumbered the male participants ($n = 4$). Therefore, the results reveal the experience of multiple initiatives implementation from a high school female teachers' perspective despite attempts by the researcher to gain a more varied sample.

Second, the purposeful sampling technique utilized to obtain the participants concentrated on one geographical area (Southwest Wyoming) and participants came from the same district. Thus, study results reflected the view of individuals only from this area who all experienced the same phenomenon. Having all participants from the same location and mainly homogenous in the experience restricts the transferability of the results to other cases.

Third, the study's descriptive phenomenological method provided a limitation. The main objective with this type of method is to bring to consciousness or reveal the lived experience being researched (Giorgi, 2009). Therefore, this study has not attempted to provide a solution to a problem, show a cause/effect relationship, or develop a theory as other qualitative and quantitative studies strive to accomplish (Hays & Singh, 2012). Rather, the purpose of this inquiry was to delve in to the human experience of a particular phenomenon to learn more about what this experience is like for individuals and begin to connect this state caused by change to the claim of initiative fatigue.

Lastly, the data also presented some limitations. Within a phenomenological study, data needs to be free of bias by the researcher as well as honest answers from the participants. In this study, some participants knew the researcher from working together in the same building or in the same department. One consequence of this limitation was some of these individuals want to give the "right" answer during the interview. Comments such as "I hope this is helping" or "I hope I answered that right for you" possibly led to participants not being completely honest in their answers, wanting to please the researcher rather attending to the questions. Participants were not as elaborate in their answers or assumed the researcher had the same experience. Probing questions helped coax the participants into explaining their answers further when this occurred. Bracketing through reflexive journaling and member-checking assisted the researcher in mitigating these problems with potential biased data, albeit in a limited capacity.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

This study's results have implications for practice, policy and theory. For practice, the results show that the *how* of change does affect individual's reaction to change. The implementation process of continually introducing new initiatives led to negative emotions and responses. Educators in this study indicated the need to be able to evaluate and feel a sense of mastery before introduction new initiatives. The constant addition of initiatives to teachers' workload and not providing time to self-evaluate performance fostered teachers' confusion and diminished the ability to assess instructional success. These reactions to multiple initiatives implementation caused some participants to feel unmotivated to try more initiatives or to put all their effort in to trying to integrate new initiatives.

Moreover, the practice of implementing an initiative wholesale may not be the best way to respond to mandated change. As Golann (2018) contends, "Teachers can benefit from

acquiring a more practical set of teaching tools, but they should also be afforded the flexibility to use these new tools in a way that aligns with their preexisting cultural toolkits" (p. 29). Thus, the idea of allowing teachers the freedom to integrate change in way that best fits with their instructional style and classroom management style may be more beneficial instead of forcing teachers to conform to a set standard.

Additionally, administration should practice the art of listening to teachers and their experience in implementing change to increase student achievement. Nolan (2016) observed that administrators may have a misconception of teacher reaction to change, slanting more towards teachers as resistors to change rather than another explanation. The data extends humanistic psychology theories within educational change by describing the truth of the experience from the vantage point of those individuals experiencing the change. Thus, educational administrators can learn from looking at the change recipients view points and adjust how to conduct change to decrease the impact on individuals and reduce initiative fatigue.

The data unearthed in this study further illuminates a need for policy makers to consider exactly what the reform policies are asking the teachers to do. Should the reform be about implementing the chosen program or about the idea behind it? One participant agreed with the need to engage students but not necessarily in the manner asked for by the initiative. Student engagement could be accomplished by implementing different programs. Giving teachers freedom to choose programs that allow them to perform to their best could increase implementation success rate. Administration and policy leaders need to have a broader scope than simply focusing on one program that has worked in one area but may not be feasible in their district.

Lastly, this study contributes a phenomenological perspective of educational change. Fullan (2016) contended that understanding why educational change initiatives fail means understanding educational change from those individuals tasked with making the change successful. Any educational improvement efforts needs to be aimed at developing teachers in order to improve student learning (Wagner et al., 2006). The data from this study extends the knowledge of change from the perspective of educators. Individuals in this study did not successfully manage reforms due to the way in which change was thrust upon them.

Recommendations for Further Research

Since this study included 12 participants from the same district in Southwest Wyoming, the first recommendation for further research could be to increase the size of the sample. Moreover, future research could include individuals from various districts around the state or even around the United States. The participants also worked in public schools and so a recommendation for further research would be to expand the study to individuals working in private schools or charter schools.

Further research could also extend the correlation between the experience of multiple initiatives implementation and initiative fatigue. In order to understand whether teachers indeed are experiencing initiative fatigue, the need presented to the researcher first focused on giving a true depiction of teachers' experience with initiatives from their viewpoint. Fullan (2016) recognized that most studies to not depict teachers' reality with initiative because most studies only look at one initiative's effect on teachers' behavior, emotions, mind and work-related well-being. In reality, most teachers experience multiple initiatives rather than one at a time. The phenomenological nature of this study was meant to bring to light the lived experienced of the participants as they participated in multiple initiatives implementation. While the data shows

similarities with the construct of initiative fatigue, the phenomenological method does not strive to show cause/effect relationships. Future studies could choose methods that would further make such correlations and connections.

Chapter 5 Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to describe the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have implemented multiple initiatives in a Wyoming school district. A secondary research question sought an understanding of whether this description contained similarities to symptoms of initiative fatigue. Participant responses to semi-structured interview questions provided rich detail to be able to answer these research questions. After analysis of this data using Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological method, the researcher proceeded to form a description of this phenomenon structured around four categories: implementation process, impacts and effects, perceived problems, professional growth. These four areas revealed a depiction of the participants' efforts in attempting implementation of multiple initiatives despite negative appraisals of the situation and difficulties. These difficulties arose from a lack of information, workload increase and perceived unprofessional treatment. The teachers in this study felt the initiatives provided professional growth but did not feel the cost to time, emotions and mental energies where necessary to gain this knowledge and skills.

Moreover, the description of the experience did contain similarities to the signs of initiative fatigue, warranting the need for further research to establish a direct cause/effect relationship or correlation. Further research could also shed light on other teachers' experience outside of this particular district and within other school institutions such as private schools. Overall, this research study has shown a need for administrators to understand change from a

teachers' perspective in order to ensure reform efforts succeed and policies become reality for

the benefit of students and the growth of the educational institution in the United States.

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Appendix A: List of Pre-Designed Interview Questions

General Questions

What initiatives were you asked to implement during the time in question?

How did you integrate these initiatives in to you classroom?

What professional development were you provided to integrate these initiatives?

Could you describe for me how this made you feel about your work and identity as a
teacher?

Could you describe for me what your felt your role was in making the initiatives work?

Could you describe for me how you made sense of what the initiatives were asking you to
do?

Could you describe for me how you integrated the initiative into your daily work, if you
did?

Could you describe for me how you went about implementing one initiative?

Could you describe for me your emotions/feelings/moods during this time?

Could you describe for me how your workload changed?

How did the experience make you feel regarding your role as a teacher?

Could you describe how the initiatives helped you grow as an educator?

Could you tell me the positive or negative impacts these initiatives had on you as a
teacher?

Could you describe for me how the initiatives increased your effectiveness as an
educator?

What initiatives are you still using today and why?

Probes

When did . . . ?

Who else was involved?

Where were you at that time?

What do you mean by . . . ?

Could you tell me more about . . . ?

Why exactly did you feel . . . ?

You mentioned . . .so can you tell me more about this?

You mentioned you felt . . . so can you tell me what that was like for you?

CONSENT FORM

Research Study Title: Teachers' Description of Multiple Initiative Implementation: A Phenomenological Study
Principal Investigator: Angie. M. Spann
Research Institution: Concordia University–Portland
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicholas Markette

Purpose and what you will be doing:

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study is to explore the lived experience of K–12 public school teachers who have been a part of multiple initiatives implementation over the course of several years in a Wyoming school district. I expect approximately 15 volunteers, but will accept a minimum of three. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on March 1, 2018 and end enrollment on July 31, 2018. To be in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview inquiring about the time you experienced multiple initiative implementation. Specifically, during this interview, you will first be asked a series of questions about your teaching experience, experience with initiatives prior to the time in question, and what grades/content you teach. Next, the interview will turn to the focus of the study, and you will be asked to describe your experience with implementing multiple mandates (approximately the period between 2003 and 2010). Follow-up questions could be asked to elicit more information. The initial interview should last approximately ninety minutes to two hours. The possibility exists that I may contact you for a follow-up interview that should last no more than one hour.

Risks:

There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. I will record interviews. The recording will be transcribed by me, the principal investigator, and the recording will be deleted when the transcription is completed. Any data you provide will be coded so people who are not the investigator cannot link your information to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption on my password protected computer locked inside the cabinet in my office. The recording will be deleted as soon as possible; all other study documents will be kept secure for 3 years and then be destroyed.

Benefits:

Information you provide will help administrators understand the importance of learning how to implement change. Moreover, it will provide policy makers with information regarding how their legislative mandates effect classrooms by understanding how their efforts are implemented on by front line professionals. You could benefit this by being open, honest and detailed in the description of your experience.

Confidentiality:

This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell me of abuse, neglect or emotional distress that makes me seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is greatly appreciated, but I acknowledge that the questions I am asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, I will stop asking you questions. Should to choose to leave the study, I will destroy the documentation immediately upon your termination with this research.

Contact Information:

You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions, you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Angie Spann, at email [Researcher email redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_____   _____
Participant Name   Date

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Investigator Name   Date

_____   _____
Investigator Signature   Date

Investigator: Angie M. Spann; email: [Researcher email redacted]
c/o: Professor Nicholas Markette;
Concordia University – Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221

Appendix C: Letter Requesting Permission for Off-Campus Research

[Research location redacted]

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear [Superintendent's name redacted]:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in your school district. I am currently enrolled in the Online Doctorate of Education program at Concordia University in Portland, OR, and am in the process of writing my Doctoral dissertation. The study is entitled Teachers' Description of Multiple Initiatives Implementation: A Phenomenological Study.

I hope that the school administration will allow me to recruit at least 15 teachers from the district to complete at most 2 interviews. Due to the nature of the study, I will need a minimum of 3 participants, and their identity would be kept confidential. Interested teachers, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form (copy enclosed) to be signed prior to conducting any interviews.

If approval is granted, teacher participants will complete at least one interview at a site designated by the individual. The possibility exists that this could be a district facility. The interview process should take no longer than two hours; however, a follow-up interview may be required. This follow-up interview will only be an hour in length. The interview results will be analyzed and pooled for my thesis project. Individuals may be quoted in the final paper, but they will remain absolutely anonymous to protect confidentiality. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either your district or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study and use district records to identify individuals who fit the population would be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me on [Researcher phone redacted] or at my email address: [Researcher email redacted].

If you agree, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study in your district.

Sincerely,
Angie M. Spann
Concordia University–Portland

Enclosures
cc: Dr. Nicholas Markette, Research Advisor, CU–Portland

Appendix D: Sample Recruitment Letter or Email

Dear Colleague,

My name is Angie Spann and I am a student from the Doctorate of Education program at Concordia University–Portland. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about teachers' experience with multiple initiative implementation. You are eligible to be in this study because you may have been employed by [Study location redacted] at a time when this district had several initiatives being implemented at one time (2003-2010). I obtained your contact information from the Human Resources Department at [Study location redacted] with permission from the Superintendent (see attached).

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews. The first interview will last approximately 90 minutes. During this time, you will be asked to recount your experience with implementing multiple initiatives at one time as well as any further questions to ensure a detailed description of this experience. The choice of where this interview will take place is left to you. I would like to audio record your interview so that I can use the information to describe the experience for the study's findings. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to me as a researcher. Therefore, I will not share this recording with anyone and will keep any copies of this recording on a personal device, not district owned. I will also use pseudonyms to refer to you in any documentation produced from this interview. You will be compensated for your time.

Your participation in this study is **completely voluntary**. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please respond via my personal email ([Researcher email redacted]; subject: Research) or contact me at [Researcher phone redacted].

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Angie M. Spann

Appendix E: Sample of Codes in Relation to Themes

Final Theme: Implementation
Process

Subtheme	In Vivo Codes	Emergent Descriptor Codes
	"it never got comfortable"	Changed every year
	"this is what they wanted to do"	Lack of ability to gauge success
	"we didn't have an option"	
	"Still have to remember"	Top-down mandate
	"here's more stuff"	Three distinct initiatives
	"our school had a lot of little things"	Added stuff
	"a lot of expectations"	
	"brought to them"	
	"went away . . . before the end of that semester"	District and school initiatives
	"everything was happening at once"	School initiatives
Frequency & Where	"really hard"	Top-down mandate
	"pick three of them at once"	
	"struggling"	Revolving door
	"it was district"	
	"cookie cutter"	Happened at once
	"chasing a moving target"	Many sources for initiatives
	"never felt like you were where you needed to be"	Top-down
	"thought you were figuring it out, oh, something new came along"	All the same
		Rapid switch
	"barrage of implementation"	Never comfortable
		Implementation

Final Theme: Implementation
Process

Subtheme	In Vivo Codes	Emergent Descriptor Codes
	"really pop to the top of my mind"	Can't remember all the initiatives
	"move on to the next thing before we had a chance to really perfect that"	Couldn't master/perfect
	"all kinds of directions"	Many directions
	"so fragmented and split"	Too many to remember
	"couldn't tell you exactly what the initiatives were"/"never hear of them again"	Feelings/initial impressions
	"was interesting"	Feelings/initial impressions
	"intriguing"	
	"shocking"	
	"required classroom things"	
	"overwhelming"	
	"Wow, I just don't get much time to teach here at all, do I?"	

<h1 style="text-align:center">Appendix F: Statement of Original Work</h1>

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

> As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does "fraudulent" mean?

"Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.

What is "unauthorized" assistance?

"Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Angie M. Spann
_____
  Digital Signature

Angie M. Spann
_____
  Name (Typed)

November 6, 2018
_____
  Date