

A MULTI-CASE EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF  
NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION  
ON THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING

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Doctor of Education

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By  
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined  
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**A MULTI-CASE EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF  
NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION ON THE  
PROFESSION OF TEACHING**

presented by CYNTHIA J. THOMPSON a candidate for the degree of DOCTOR OF  
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## DEDICATION

*Destiny is not a matter of chance, but of choice. Not something to wish for, but to attain.*

*--William Jennings Bryan*

Achievement of this Ed.D. is a dream long in the making realized only due to the persistent encouragement and support of my husband, Jim Thompson, and the resolute confidence of my son, Jeff Gray. I dedicate my finished dissertation to both of them with gratitude for inspiring me to keep looking forward.

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Through my experiences in pursuit of this doctoral degree, I have realized that true leadership cannot exist without a heart that considers others. It is with great appreciation and respect that I acknowledge one who truly leads from the heart, Dr. Barbara Martin, my dissertation supervisor, for her time, patience, high expectations, and willingness to allow this process to evolve. I would further like to thank members of my committee, Dr. Lonnie Barker, Dr. Diana Garland, Dr. Beth Hurst, and Dr. Cynthia MacGregor for their time and most valuable input. All of you challenged me to excellence and I thank you.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification on the profession of teaching through a multiple case study examination of the career paths of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs). The researcher viewed the impact of the NBPTS through the lens of teaching as a profession.

The study population consisted of four NBCTs in a Midwest state who had held NBPTS certification for at least five years. Data triangulation was achieved through on-site interviews with the NBCTs, their administrators, and colleagues as well as document examination. Data collection methods provided information and insight into the career paths of these educators, as well as the participants' perceptions of the extent to which NBPTS certification influenced said career paths.

The study findings revealed a positive impact on the profession of teaching in multiple areas as well as shortcomings in the professional support for teachers desiring extended roles. The implications of this inquiry for the profession of teaching were identified to reach the areas of leadership, finances, and allotment of time.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction to the Study

#### *Background*

There are 47,510 teachers in the United States certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as of November 2005 (NBPTS, n.d.e). The most recent available data on the size of the teaching force in the United States counted 3,048,549 teachers as of the 2003-2004 school year (Hoffman & Sable, 2006). Statistically, teachers achieving this voluntary, advanced certification offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) represented less than 0.02% of the teaching profession, yet national education policies set NBPTS certification center stage in an era of increased accountability for educators (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; State of the Union Address President Bill Clinton, 1997; The Teaching Commission, 2004; U. S. Department of Education, 1998).

The NBPTS was a product of educational reform policies initiated by the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. With that report, a cry went out for increased accountability for student achievement via higher standards for the United States system of education spurred by the evolution of the industrial era into a knowledge-based era due to ever increasing global competition. The working conditions of teachers were highlighted as unprofessional and unacceptable for meeting the needs of students in this new era strongly influenced by the business community's demand for knowledge workers in an expanding technological society (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The perception of failure in education was based on the assumption that "better

results are necessary because in a world made smaller by science and technology, an educated citizenry is essential to the sound functioning of a democracy and to economic growth” (NBPTS, 2004, p. 5). Additionally, the teaching profession was singled out as the most influential aspect of education in determining student achievement (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Heller, 2004; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Stronge, 2002). Thus began the examination of teaching as a true profession and the subsequent drive for teachers to set standards of practice that represented accomplished teaching.

Chapter one of this study introduces the conceptual underpinnings, the problem, purpose, research questions, limitations and assumptions, design controls, and key terms pertinent to this study of the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers and thus on the teaching profession. Background information on the movement toward standards of practice representing accomplished teaching and the influence of education reform policies on the teaching profession guided this inquiry. In this investigation, the concept of teaching as a profession was used as a lens through which to interpret the impact of NBPTS certification on teachers’ careers.

### *Conceptual Underpinnings of the Study*

The concept of teaching as a profession was the conceptual framework guiding this examination of the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching and teachers’ career paths as reported by National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in one Midwest state. This evolution of professionalism in teaching reflected an overarching crisis in the public’s perception of professionals in general and provided a

context for the emergence of the NBPTS in educational reform. As a result of national education policies, the career paths of teachers have evolved over time. Thus the importance of the subsequent impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers guided this study.

Early in the standards-based reform movement the role of teachers and their work environment were examined (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Working conditions were proclaimed unacceptable and the stereotypical role of teacher as factory worker was recognized as outdated (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession; National Commission on Excellence in Education). This dissatisfaction with the teaching profession reflected a changing society due to conditions resulting from an economic globalization shift from the industrial era to the knowledge era (Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Preskill & Torres, 1999). While the industrial era emphasized materials and structures, the knowledge era was based on intellectual or human capital (Lieberman & Miller), which was the “collective brainpower of organization members” (Preskill & Torres, p. 7). Furthermore the importance of school faculty and staff expanded into assets labeled knowledge workers (Lieberman & Miller; Preskill & Torres), or knowledge practitioners (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Adding urgency to the call for a change in teaching and learning was a widespread “crisis in confidence in the professions” (Schön, 1983, p. 4). Scandals and other “visible failures of professional action” (Schön, p. 4) resulted in skepticism, loss of confidence, and a questioning by professionals of their own expert status (Schön). The

inherent need for professionals to contribute to the betterment of society was cited as one explanation for the crisis in professions (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Specifically, this need was manifested as a strong desire on the part of teachers to make a difference in the lives of students (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Sergiovanni, 2000).

Discontentment was widespread among professionals (Argyris & Schön, 1974) and contributing to the crisis was a disconnect between professional preparation and the real world practice of professionals. This discontent was compounded by a lack of shared knowledge and experience among professionals, especially with regard to inadequacies rooted in preparation for practice (Argyris & Schön). Furthermore, discontentment in professions was attributed to established behavior by professionals characterized as Model I (Argyris & Schön) or single-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Morgan, 1997). This type of behavior characterized by withholding information and rational, unemotional behavior that inhibited exploration and fostered outcomes that maintained the status quo, resulted in little opportunity for reform (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Morgan). Participants that were defensive, exhibited low levels of internal commitment, and a reduced willingness to take risks or support public scrutiny were also a result of this exhibited Model I behavior (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Conversely, double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Morgan) incorporated the reflective practice of self questioning (Morgan). This process provided avenues for questioning the relevance of norms and for reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987) regarding values and actions necessary for changing the status quo as the call for educational reform demanded (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Moreover, Heller (2004) contended that “it is natural that society does not treat teachers as professionals” (p. 87) due to a system in which schools are run by boards with annual changes in membership, making job decisions in schools primarily as a result of personalities, by people not trained in the field of education. Furthermore, teachers have been called upon to hold themselves to greater accountability in order to increase the perception of professionalism among the general public and teachers themselves (Heller; Wise, 2005). Likewise, as policymakers repeatedly distinguish quality teaching through policies that do not necessarily reflect the values of educators (Wise), teachers have been called upon to strengthen their profession through establishment of standards that inspire public confidence (Wise). Teachers, rather than continuing to be controlled by government mandates, were challenged to set the standards themselves and “expect policy makers to enforce them” (Wise, p. 321).

This influence of standards-based reform on teachers’ expectations for their career paths was evident in an examination of the changing teacher population. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* the teaching workforce has undergone a shift best described as the co-existence of two distinct generations of teachers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005). One generation of teachers entered the profession prior to *A Nation at Risk* and consists of teachers eligible for retirement. Another generation of teachers came to the profession in the mist of the reform movement initiated by *A Nation at Risk*, including teachers currently entering the workforce. The probability of multiple careers during their work life separates the new generation of teachers from the retiring generation (Johnson & Kardos) who characteristically entered teaching immediately post college expecting a single, long term career at a time when most other professional fields were closed to

women and minorities. Conversely, many in the new generation of teachers began teaching following other work life experiences with a variety of professional options other than teaching bringing with them expectations of higher pay, a well-resourced work environment, and the opportunity for advancement on the job. As a matter of course, the new generation of teachers prefers working with colleagues in teams, desires varied roles and responsibilities, and expects to gain professional influence over time. This view of teaching is in sharp contrast to the culture of a flat profession (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 2004) that does not foster development of specialized teaching roles, views colleagues as social support only, and values the isolation of the classroom representing the work environment with which the retiring generation of teachers is accustomed.

Emerging from this new generation of teachers, the leadership role of teachers in schools has been recognized as a valuable contribution to school improvement (Barth, 2001; Lambert, 2003). A teacher leader has been defined as one “whose dreams of making a difference have either been kept alive or have been reawakened by engaging with colleagues and working within a professional culture” (Lambert, p. 33). Others have described teacher leaders by the roles and responsibilities teachers willingly assume, such as department head, mentor, or professional development planner (Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Reeves, 2004). The emergence of teacher leadership has occurred in the face of impediments stemming from heightened accountability in the form of standardized tests that increased scrutiny on teachers’ daily actions (Barth, 2001). However, both generations of teachers were found necessary for sustained professional accountability in teaching called for by policymakers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005).

Currently, no policy has garnered more attention than the mandates of President George W. Bush's agenda for education known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). The legislative action of NCLB tied federal funding for school districts to standards-based reform mandates in the reauthorization of federal education programs originally established in 1965 by the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (The White House, n.d.; Owens, 2004). Within the mandates of NCLB was the requirement for school districts to employ only highly qualified teachers in all classrooms by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (The White House). The culmination of professional reform mounting since *A Nation at Risk* provided teachers with the opportunity of taking control of their professional destiny through an organized level of professionalism based on peer monitoring and fostering of high quality teaching. The NBPTS, already in place, thus was poised to lead the "revolution in teaching and learning" (NBPTS, 2004, p. 5).

While seeking to determine the validity of the NBPTS as a catalyst for professionalism in teaching, researchers examining the impact of NBPTS certification of teachers have investigated constructs related to assessment of entries (Ballou, 2003; Bohlen, 2000; Davis, Wolf, & Borko, 1999), characteristics of candidates (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Goldhaber, Choi, & Cramer, 2004; Goldhaber, Perry, & Anthony; 2003; Humphrey, Koppich, & Hough, 2005; and Wayne et al., 2004), methods associated with successful achievement of certification (Goldhaber et al., 2003; Humphrey et al.; Pyke & Lynch, 2005; Rinne, 2002; Wayne et al.), NBPTS certification as an indicator of high quality teaching (Bohlen, 2000; Bond, Smith, Baker, & Hattie, 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Craig, 2003; Goldhaber & Anthony; Humphrey et al.; NBPTS, 2001a; Richie, 2004; Rinne; Smikle, 2004; Vandevort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004; Wayne et al.),

and the impact of NBPTS certification on teachers post-certification (Bond et al.; Kennelly, 2001; NBPTS, 2001b; Richie; Rinne). Even though much research has been conducted since the first teachers were certified in 1994, in the face of a crisis in the perception of teaching as a profession accountable for student achievement neither the evidence of lasting reform as a result of NBPTS certification nor the impact on teachers' career paths have yet to be adequately documented by researchers.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002, required school districts to employ only highly qualified teachers. The NCLB definition of a highly qualified teacher stated that the teacher must have full state certification, hold at least a bachelor degree, and demonstrate “competence in all the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches” (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MDESE], 2002, p. 10). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has worked closely with state educational policymakers to incorporate provisions based on the Five Core Propositions of NBC into standards nationwide (NBPTS, n.d.b). In seeking to recognize high quality teachers, the NBPTS recognizes through its certification process teachers' commitment to students and their learning, knowledge of pedagogy as well as content knowledge, management of student learning through reflective practice, and active involvement in the greater learning community (NBPTS, 2002).

The Core Propositions were established to represent professionalism in teaching—what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do (NBPTS, 2002). The educational reform movement during the time in which the NBPTS was formed

identified teaching as a flat profession (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; The Teaching Commission, 2004). Teaching as a flat profession was nested in the fact that “effective teachers who dramatically raise student achievement and who make other teachers better through their knowledge, leadership, and skills are treated exactly the same as those who make no positive difference in their classrooms” (The Teaching Commission, p. 16). In other words, the professional expectations were virtually identical for veteran or first year teachers in an educational system that provided little support for continued professional growth (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession; Lieberman & Miller).

The problem of teaching as a flat profession (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 2004) had resulted in burnout, attrition, and loss of expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Heller, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003) at a time when the emphasis on highly qualified teachers was highlighted in NCLB. While teachers with more experience demonstrated higher quality planning skills, flexibility of teaching strategies, greater understanding of student’s learning styles, and more effective problem handling (Stronge, 2002), between 40 and 50 percent of all teachers left the profession within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll). Also it is known that student achievement is benefited by 30 percent when teachers have had more than three years of teaching experience (Stronge); therefore, “allowing the veterans to leave with all their knowledge and wisdom is short-sighted” (Heller, p. 8). Darling-Hammond (2003) suggested increased teacher retention and decreased attrition were cost effective in the long run, impacted students positively and were therefore, beneficial to school districts.

Furthermore, National Board Certification of teachers was found to be an issue of policy as it related to cost effectiveness in allocation of educational funds. The initial cost of NBPTS certification to the education system included an application fee of \$2300, substitute pay for release days providing time for candidates to work on certification, and pay for facilitators to mentor candidates through the process (NBPTS, n.d.d). Goldhaber and Anthony (2004) approximated the cost of identifying a NBCT in North Carolina to be \$8800 per teacher based on full funding of test fees, a 12 % salary increase to the teacher for the life of the certificate, and a 50 % pass rate resulting in additional fees for teachers reapplying. Furthermore, Goldhaber and Anthony's research correlated an increased student achievement when taught by a NBCT at a cost of \$7300 per pupil to raise student achievement on a standardized reading test by one standard deviation. They concluded that any return on the investment in NBCTs to the education system depended upon the career path of the teacher following certification. While indirect benefits to school districts utilizing NBCTs as mentors and models extend beyond the achievement levels of the students in the NBCT's classroom, Goldhaber and Anthony postulated even this benefit is lost if the NBCT does not remain in the classroom. They suggested more research was needed to assess the impact of National Board Certification (NBC) on teacher's career paths.

As the 10 year life of the first certificates began to expire in 2004, educators throughout the nation and the profession of teaching in general faced the dilemma of deciding the worth of NBPTS certification at a time when the emphasis on highly qualified teachers was magnified by political policies such as NCLB. While the short term effects of achieving NBC were well documented, past studies neglected the

implications of the long term impact on teachers, their career paths, and on the teaching profession. The reason for the absence of research on long term impact of NBC logically may be due to an inadequate passage of time necessary to assess potential effects; however, the time is now for studies involving the teachers who achieved certification in the early years of the NBPTS.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching through a multiple case study examination of the career paths of NBCTs in a Midwest state. The overarching questions guiding this investigation centered on inquisitiveness about the career paths of NBCTs and the impact of NBC on teachers' careers. The researcher viewed the impact of The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards through the lens of teaching as a profession. The paradigm of professionalism, the evolution of standards-based education reform focused on accountability, the influence of subsequent policies on the teaching profession, and the evolving career paths of teachers as leaders provided an overarching conceptual framework for this investigation.

Career paths of teachers were generally defined in this study as a change in the roles and responsibilities of NBPTS certified teachers over time. A deeper understanding was sought through investigation of the extent to which NBC status did or did not affect the attainment of such positions by those teachers. Additionally, the broader impact of NBC on the teaching profession was probed in order to reveal the teachers' perceptions of NBPTS as a catalyst for lasting reform within the profession.

### *Research Questions*

Qualitative research demands open-ended questions that evolve to accommodate the emergent design inherent in qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). The overarching questions guiding this investigation centered on curiosity about the career paths of NBCTs and the impact of NBC on those teachers' careers. Following an intensive review of literature pertaining to the NBPTS, the concept of professionalism in teaching through educational reform policies emerged as a framework for investigation of NBC on teachers' careers. Guided by a synthesis of research on teaching as a profession, career paths of teachers, an examination of the policies of the standards-based reform movement which influenced teaching, and the available research on the NBPTS, the following questions guided this study:

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?
2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?
3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers' roles and responsibilities over time?
4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?
5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

### *Limitations and Assumptions*

Qualitative research is based on the assumption that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). A case study is

characterized as a type of qualitative research seeking a deeper understanding focused on a particular person, program, or phenomenon in a natural setting (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam). A multiple case study involves collecting and analyzing data from multiple cases as a unit for understanding a phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen; Merriam). Typically, a multiple case study adds validity to the study and enhances prospects for generalizability of subsequent findings (Fraenkel & Wallen; Merriam). The following limitations and assumptions were inherent to this case study:

1. It was assumed that all participants communicated honest and open responses based on their personal experiences.
2. The study population was geographically limited to NBCTs in one Midwest state achieving certification between the years 1994 and 2000.
3. The researcher was a NBCT in Missouri and therefore had a personal experience similar to the participants and brought personal biases to the study.

#### *Design Controls*

Qualitative research determines to explain the meaning of an experience as a whole through the lens of the researcher and tends to be specific to that particular situation (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Thick, rich, and descriptive data emerges during observation, field work, and interviews with participants in a natural setting (Merriam). Since the role of the researcher as the “primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam, p. 7) is essential to qualitative research, special care must be taken to ensure validity and reliability of findings (Creswell; Merriam).

Open-ended, semi-structured questions were utilized for data collection in this study. Confidentiality of all participants was provided by use of pseudonyms in

documentation in order to encourage candid responses by participants. Data were collected through one-on-one interviews which were audio taped and later transcribed and compared to field notes. Accuracy was verified through member-checking (Creswell, 2003) by submission of transcripts to interviewees. Consistency was enhanced by the use of only this researcher in conducting interviews. The use of multiple cases increased internal validity and generalization (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). The constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized throughout this study (Merriam). Once individual case analysis was conducted, cross-case analysis added deeper understanding to the data (Merriam). Researcher bias was reduced through systematic coding of data within and across cases (Merriam). Additionally, triangulation of data was accomplished through field interviews and field notes.

#### *Definition of Key Terms*

The following terms were identified by the researcher as important to the understanding of the investigation. The terms are as follows:

*Accountability.* An ideology in education based on efficiency, or the best return on the investment in schools, typically measured by student achievement (Fowler, 2004).

*Career path.* Career paths of teachers were generally defined in this study as the roles and responsibilities of NBCTs over time (Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

*High Quality Teaching.* Description of teacher effectiveness based on longevity in the profession, certification status, verbal ability, expertise in content area and pedagogy, and student achievement (Stronge, 2002).

*Highly Qualified Teacher.* A classification of teachers based on a NCLB requirement stating teachers must have full state certification, hold at least a bachelor degree, and demonstrate content knowledge in the subjects that they teach (MDESE, 2002).

*National Board Certified Teacher.* Teachers achieving NBC status between the years 1994 and 2000 were the subjects of this investigation.

*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.* An independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and non-governmental organization with the mission of maintaining rigorous standards of teacher quality, providing a national voluntary certification process for teachers, and advocating for educational reform.

*No Child Left Behind.* The 2002 federal legislation that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was based on mandates for accountability and scientific research in public education. The stated goal of *No Child Left Behind* was that every child would reach a set grade level on a standardized achievement test by the end of the 2013-14 school year.

*Profession.* An organized group of practitioners sharing an ideology of ethics and possessing expert knowledge and expertise in their field (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

*Reflection-in-action.* The process of thinking about actions in practice while the actions are taking place (Schön, 1983).

*Roles and responsibilities.* Formal and informal activities in which teachers participate related to curricula, programs, and materials for student achievement and school improvement.

*Teacher leader.* Teacher leaders may be formally defined by the role or position they hold, such as department chair, or informally through collaboration and interaction with peers for professional development (Lambert, 2003).

### *Summary*

Introduced in Chapter one of this study was the question of the long term impact of NBPTS certification on teachers' career paths and thus on the profession of teaching through background information on teaching as a profession and the influence of standards-based reform policies in education. The evolution of professionalism in teaching during a time of crisis in public confidence provided the context within which the NBPTS emerged and the teaching work force shifted into two distinct generations. The culmination of professional reform came with the mandate for highly qualified teachers in all classrooms as a component of the legislation action of NCLB. Research (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Heller, 2004; Stronge, 2002) noted the cost effectiveness and positive impact on student achievement when school districts maintained teachers' expertise in the form of veteran teachers. Further research (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004) raised the issue of cost versus long term benefit of supporting NBPTS of teachers in school districts. In addition, enough time has passed for initial certification of early NBCTs to expire. Determination as to the value for school districts of investing in renewal of NBPTS certification is left to be made in the absence of data reflecting the long term impact of NBC on teachers and their career paths.

In Chapter Two, literature is reviewed regarding the paradigm of professionalism, the evolving career paths of teachers, and the evolution of standards-based education reform focused on accountability. Emphasis on the influence of subsequent policies on

the teaching profession was traced to provide an overarching conceptual framework for interpretation of existing data on NBPTS certification of teachers. Following an explanation of teaching as a profession, information regarding the career paths of teachers, and a timeline of educational reform directed toward the profession of teaching, relevant literature pertaining to the NBPTS certification of teachers is presented in Chapter Two with gaps in the research identified as they were revealed. Embedded throughout the literature review is information pertinent to the evolving career paths of teachers as leaders. In Chapter Three a description of the research methodology including participants, instruments, procedures, and analyses is provided. Included in Chapter Four are the detailed reporting of data collected and analyses of the data. Discussed in Chapter Five are the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis. Implications for practice and recommendations for future study are also offered.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### *Introduction*

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was born of the standards-based reform movement (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986) and thus it was appropriate and necessary to trace the policies of the standards-based education reform movement for a better understanding of the influence of the NBPTS on teaching. While accountability reform policies have impacted all stakeholders (Fowler, 2004) in education, (Darling-Hammond, 2004), for purposes of this study particular attention was focused on the policies which influenced teaching as a profession. In this investigation, the concept of teaching as a profession was used as a lens through which to interpret the impact of National Board Certification (NBC) on teachers. Guiding this inquiry were questions focused around the influence of NBC on teachers' career paths. Investigating the framework of teaching as a profession was appropriate as it provided a context within which teachers were expected to achieve and maintain a certain level of expertise and special knowledge (Ballou, 2003; Benz, 2000; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Schön, 1983; Wise, 2005) which the NBPTS purported to recognize (NBPTS, 2002). The long term impact of NBPTS certification on the evolving career paths of teachers served as an indicator of the impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching.

Included in this review is background information concerning the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards followed by a synthesis of available research

regarding assessment of certification entries, characteristics of National Board Certification candidates, methods associated with successful achievement of certification, NBC as an indicator of high quality teaching, and the impact of NBC on teachers post-certification. Little information was found in the literature related to the impact of NBC on the career paths of teachers, specifically long-term impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching as evidenced by teachers' career paths was limited.

### *Teaching as a Profession*

Essentially, a profession was considered such due to “values to be achieved through the activities of the profession” (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 146). More recently, researchers (Ballou, 2003; Benz, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Schön, 1983; Wise, 2005) have differentiated between a job and a profession, with a profession maintaining standards of practice. Professionals are assumed to possess expert knowledge and expertise in their field and are assessed for competence as defined by members of that profession (Argyris & Schön; Ballou; Benz; Darling-Hammond; Schön; Wise). The profession of teaching was set apart from other professions due to continuous involvement with students (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) coined the term “interactive professionalism” to redefine the role of educators for school improvement. Interactive professionalism consisted of teachers making decisions in collaboration with colleagues based on expert knowledge of their students, and reflection on methodology, value, and purpose surrounding teaching. Additionally, teachers were expected to be committed to ongoing school improvement with mutual accountability for themselves and their peers through

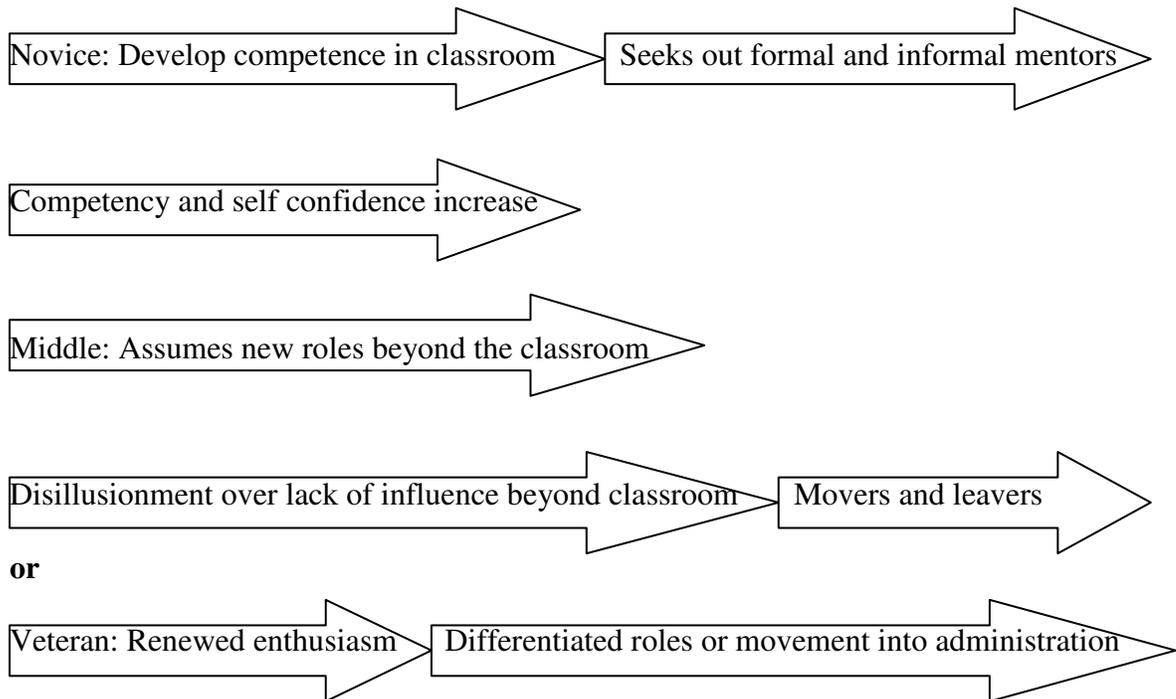
engagement in “dialogue, action and assessment of their work with other adults inside and outside their schools” (p. xi).

### *Career Paths of Teachers*

For all intents and purposes, the established career path open to a teacher was based on years of classroom experience and career ladders centered on organizational structure (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; The Teaching Commission, 2004). Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers [TPNGT] (2004) suggested this perspective of one, flat career expressed by a predominance of postulated research through the years failed to account for novice teachers and teachers who left the profession early in their careers, nor did this perspective reflect teachers’ aspirations for influence extending beyond the classroom. The importance of veteran teachers sharing experience and expertise with novice teachers was repeatedly noted by Johnson and TPNGT in a recent description of teachers’ career paths.

A timeline characterized by novice, mid-career, and veteran career stages more appropriately representing the present day career path of teachers is found in Figure 1. In research conducted by Johnson and TPNGT (2004) novice teachers reportedly did not feel prepared to function in the same capacity as veteran teachers, even though traditionally school districts differentiate little, if any, between the job description of a first year and that of a 30 year veteran. In the career continuum depicted by Johnson and TPNGT, as teachers approach mid-career, feelings of competency and self confidence increase resulting in anticipation of new roles and responsibilities, such as mentor, lead teacher, curriculum or content specialist, program planner, and staff developer. It is at

this mid-point, three to five years into a teaching career that Ingersoll (2003) discovered high levels of attrition occurred as teachers either experienced disillusionment or renewed enthusiasm for teaching.



*Figure 1.* Timeline of teaching career stages.

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*Note.* Adapted from Ingersoll, (2003); and Johnson and TPNGT, (2004) with permission of authors (see Appendix A).

Also, the context of teaching was found not to be routine, thus relying heavily on teachers’ decision-making ability and reflection-in-action for success (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). Reflection-in-action described the process of thinking and modifying an action while not interrupting the ongoing action (Schön, 1987). Such reflection was significant in allowing individuals to “still make a difference to the situation at hand—our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it” (Schön, p. 26). In other words, during reflective practice, teachers think about

what they are doing and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions making changes based on experience (Reeves, 2004; Schön, 1983). For example, if students were not meeting the objectives of a lesson, reflective teachers evaluate the possible causes of the failed lesson and make adjustments during the lesson. Likewise, if a lesson effectively addressed the designed objectives, the reflective teacher examines what worked during the lesson and possible reasons why that strategy was effective. Reeves (2004) further advocated reflective teaching as imperative for education in the wake of policy mandates that increasingly regulate the school day as “the interactions between students and teachers are to a large extent the result of the individual diligence, professionalism, and commitment of teachers” (p. 9). In this way, teachers hold themselves accountable for students’ learning (Reeves). The expectation of teacher accountability is an essential element of standards-based reform policies based on the assumption that teachers are the most important influence on student development (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

#### *Standards-Based Reform and the Teaching Profession*

In order to better understand this inquiry, the evolution of accountability through standards-based education reform was traced as a policy process with emphasis on the influence of subsequent policies on the teaching profession. Public policy was defined as “the dynamic and value laden process through which a political system handles a public problem” (Fowler, 2004, p. 9). Fowler’s stage model represented the policy process as a chronological series of stages through which an issue once defined eventually becomes an implemented policy. The stage model takes into account the necessity of first defining a public problem as an issue to be dealt with by policymakers in the political arena. Once defined, an issue usually remains controversial thus requiring policymakers to set an

agenda for consideration of diverse interests prior to the formulation of a written policy. Chronologically, an issue must become a written policy before it can advance to the adoption and implementation stages; however, Fowler postulated that the policy process requires time and many problems advance only to revert to an earlier stage or never progress to the advanced stages of policy formulation and adoption. While the policy process for standards-based reform in education first began in the early 1980s, it was neither methodical nor orderly and remains ongoing; nonetheless, the stage model provided a framework around which the evolution of accountability issues could be discussed.

### *Issue Definition*

In the early 1980s, *A Nation at Risk* served as a catalyst for moving education from a social problem to a public policy issue (Fowler, 2004). Publication of the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 initiated an ideological shift in society from individualism to accountability, or efficiency in education (Fowler). Fowler stipulated that efficiency in education depended on the best return on the investment in schools, typically measured by student achievement. Thus in the era that followed, reform based on standards of what students should know and be able to do in specific content areas emphasized accountability through achievement testing (O’Shea, 2005; Reeves, 2004). Additionally, questions of efficiency in the quality of teaching practices that produced student gains were raised (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Once education became an issue of efficiency, the agenda was set for standards-based reform (Fowler). The emphasis on efficiency continued to impact educational policy regarding

the teaching profession well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as “the direct financial costs of paying America’s public school teachers approaches \$2 billion per school day. On top of these dollars are the benefits that might accrue to students and societies if teacher expenditures were allocated in a more effective manner” (Guthrie, 2005, p. 7).

### *Agenda Setting*

Therefore, the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* issued in 1983 clearly set education reform at the center stage of public attention (Fowler, 2004; Owens, 2004). In relation to the teaching profession, the authors noted “the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, ¶ 5), also cited a teacher shortage, teacher candidates of low ability level, inadequate content coverage in teacher education programs, low average salaries, and teachers teaching subjects for which they were not qualified. Recommendations made in this report included specific standards in subject areas, standardized testing of students, more homework for high school students, professional development for teachers, an increase in teachers’ salaries, and basing teachers’ salaries on performance of students (National Commission on Excellence in Education). Due to the focus on inequities in education in the United States and subsequent recommendations detailed in *A Nation at Risk*, Owens maintained the public awareness was clearly focused on a need for educational reform and greater accountability for educators.

As a result of this increased public awareness and focus on educational reform generated by *A Nation at Risk*, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) published *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Again the education

system's failure to keep pace with demands of a changing world economy was reiterated as justification for a restructuring of schools (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession). Continuing the emphasis on standards and accountability, this report focused on changes to the teaching profession, including a call for creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), a restructuring of schools to provide a more professional environment for teachers, greater teacher accountability for student progress, and incentives for teachers linked to student performance (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession).

Thus, *A Nation Prepared* framed reform from the assumption of teaching as a profession as evidenced by additional proposed reforms for creation of Lead Teachers, the requirement of a bachelor's degree before entering teacher education, establishment of a Master Degree in Teaching, increased emphasis on preparation of minority teachers, and alignment of teacher salaries with other professions of similar educational level (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986). Creation of the NBPTS was called for to "establish standards for high professional teaching competence and issue certificates to people who meet those standards" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, p. 66). The NBPTS was also expected to "represent the views of the developing profession itself on the question of what standard of practice can be considered fully professional" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, p. 66). Lead Teachers would be NBPTS certified and expected to "guide and influence the activity of others, ensuring that the skill and energy

of their colleagues is drawn on as the organization improves its performance” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, p. 58).

The emphasis on accountability continued into the 1990s with the publication of *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996) and the passage of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (U. S. Department of Education, 1998). *What Matters Most* called for “an accountability system that ensures attention to standards for educators as well as students at every level—national, state, local school district, school, and classroom” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, p. 10). Within its recommendations was a call to use the standards of the NBPTS as the “benchmark for accomplished teaching” (p. 11). The Commission envisioned a career continuum for educators linking compensation with professional expertise. One suggested continuum included initial license, resident teacher, professional teacher, tenure, advanced certification (designated as NBC), and lead teacher that would enable experienced teachers, as well as administrators, to remain in the classroom. Time for optional professional roles, such as opportunities for involvement in peer coaching, mentoring, development of curriculum and assessment, teacher education, consultant, researcher, and school leadership positions would be available to teachers and administrators. Finally, the report acknowledged that in order for a restructuring “to take hold and survive longer than in past eras of reform, policymakers must incorporate them into policies that govern teaching and schooling” (p. 69).

#### *Policy Formulation and Adoption*

After years of defining the issue (Fowler, 2004) of greater accountability in the United States education system, a formulated policy (Fowler) was adopted with the

legislative action of *Goals 2000*. The purpose of *Goals 2000* was to fund standards-based educational reform initiatives developed by individual states (U. S. Department of Education, 1998). School improvement based on what all students should know and be able to do was the platform upon which *Goals 2000* was built. A prerequisite for approved funding of local policies was standards-based methods and measurable assessments for accountability (U. S. Department of Education). Implementation of approved policies was left up to the states. Policy directed at the teaching profession included President Bill Clinton's facilitation of higher standards for teachers through designated funding enabling 100,000 more teachers to pursue NBPTS certification (State of the Union Address, 1997).

#### *Policy Implementation*

With the adoption of *Goals 2000* the evolution of standards-based educational reform with an emphasis on educator accountability reached the implementation stage (Fowler, 2004). However, "sometimes a policy issue advances for a while and then moves back to an earlier state" (Fowler, p. 14). Such was the case with the reform movement for greater accountability. With the election of a new president, standards-based education reform was once again in the policy adoption stage with a new formulation for higher accountability (Owens, 2004).

This higher accountability resulted in new policy in the form of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) which was signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002. The purpose of this act was to reauthorize federal education programs originally established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (The White House, n.d.; Owens, 2004). It was hailed as the most comprehensive legislation to effect

education since 1979 when the Department of Education was established (Owens). It was also termed a “breathtaking intrusion by the federal government into the rights of states to control education” (Owens, p. 24). Once again defining the issue of a failing education system, NCLB cited low student achievement in reading and math as the impetus for reform (The White House).

One conspicuous difference between the federal emphasis on accountability provided by NCLB and that of *Goals 2000* rested in the NCLB expectation of a specified result rather than the *Goals 2000* emphasis on implementation of standards-based methods and assessments (U. S. Department of Education, 1998; The White House, n.d.). The NCLB goal of all students reaching a specified performance level was tied to receipt of federal funding, thereby raising the accountability stakes for educators (The White House). The authors of NCLB continued to emphasize educator accountability and the importance of professionalism with a requirement for school districts to employ only highly qualified teachers in all classrooms by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (The White House). With this mandate, NCLB addressed issues surrounding teacher quality raised in *A Nation at Risk* and *A Nation Prepared* by stipulating that a highly qualified teacher must have full state certification, hold at least a bachelor degree, and demonstrate “competence in all the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches” (MDESE, 2002, p. 10).

Subsequent to NCLB, *Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action* (The Teaching Commission, 2004) called for “better guidance and a more extensive set of standards specifying what it means to be highly qualified” (p. 5). Citing teacher shortages, NCLB mandates, and once again, an education system that had failed to keep pace with other

industrialized nations, the report continued the emphasis on efficiency in education citing the significance of economic data that determined “the costs of a poorly educated population are huge” (The Teaching Commission, p. 13). While *Teaching at Risk* defined teaching as “our nation’s most valuable profession” (The Teaching Commission, p. 12), recommendations centered on “making improvements in three areas that continue to undermine the professionalism of teaching” (The Teaching Commission, p. 21) These areas included compensation and performance in the form of increased base pay for teachers and performance-based teacher compensation, skills and preparation by raising standards in teacher education programs and higher standards for state licensure and certification, and leadership and support focused on authority granted to principals over personnel decisions including the responsibility for teacher professional development and teacher involvement in decision making.

Therefore, as early as the 1980s, education reform was clearly defined as an issue by the public’s sense of a failing educational system as reported by *A Nation at Risk*. The agenda set for increased emphasis on standards and greater accountability and professionalism of educators was reinforced in *A Nation Prepared* and *What Matters Most*. Policies in support of standards-based reform were formulated and adopted in the legislative action of *Goals 2000* which funded standards-based reform efforts implemented by the states and provided funding for NBC candidates. The movement toward standards-based reform, greater accountability, and professionalism was strengthened by the passage of *No Child Left Behind* in 2002. The influence of accountability policies on the teaching profession culminated in the mandate for highly

qualified teachers in all classrooms by the 2005 school year and continued as an issue in *Teaching at Risk*.

Subsequently the establishment of the NBPTS called upon by reformers resulted in the first issuance of advanced certification of teachers in 1994 (NBPTS, n.d.e). The number of teachers engaged in the process of NBPTS has risen each year as evidenced by a certification rate of 177 teachers in 1994 growing to 8066 teachers in 2003 (NBPTS, n.d.e). As a result of the increase in the number of teachers participating in the process of NBC, multiple aspects of NBPTS certification have been scrutinized in an effort to evaluate the impact of the NBPTS on education in the United States. Consequently, the purpose of this investigation, to assess the long term impact of NBPTS certification on teachers' career paths, effectively begins with an overview of the literature regarding the NBPTS.

#### *Overview of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*

Upon review of the pertinent literature pertaining to the NBPTS, the following constructs emerged: historical background, assessment of entries, characteristics of candidates, methods associated with successful achievement of certification, NBC as an indicator of high quality teaching, and the impact of NBPTS certification on teachers post-certification.

#### *Historical Background*

The NBPTS was established in 1987 in response to recommendations made in *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986). In seeking to recognize high quality teachers, the NBPTS recognized through its certification process teachers' commitment to students

and their learning, knowledge of pedagogy as well as content knowledge, management of student learning through reflective practice, and active involvement in the greater learning community (NBPTS, 2002). Teachers eligible to participate in NBPTS certification must hold a baccalaureate degree, have at least three years teaching experience, and have held a valid state teaching license for at least three years (NBPTS, 2004).

Since its inception the Board has developed research-based standards for 27 different certificate areas covering a variety of subject areas and age groups (NBPTS, n.d.c). All standards were rooted in the Five Core Propositions of what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, making NBPTS certification a performance based process (NPBTS, n.d.c). The NBPTS promoted its certification as a process that fostered collaboration, reflection, and recognition of effective teaching practices among teachers across the nation (NBPTS, n.d.c). Teacher performance is evaluated through a portfolio documenting teaching practices over a set period of time within the context of the individual teacher's classroom (NBPTS, n.d.f). A written reflective commentary on each entry provides further pedagogical knowledge assessment. Following submission of the portfolio, content knowledge is assessed in a computerized test format at an independent assessment center (NBPTS, n.d.f).

#### *Assessment of Entries*

Scoring is guided by a rubric designed to recognize the teacher's ability to analyze and reflect on the act of teaching as pictured by the Five Core Propositions, not to reward any one particular method or style of teaching (NBPTS, n.d.f). However, critics have charged the standards favor constructivist, learner-centered pedagogy over

traditional lecture methods (Ballou, 2003). Constructivist theory stated learning occurs when students interact with their environment to construct new knowledge (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Preskill & Torres, 1999). Yet, an extensive synthesis of research (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) determined instructional practices that increased student achievement included learner-centered pedagogy such as kinesthetic activities, cooperative learning, as well as note taking and summarizing. The NBPTS seeks to control for teaching method bias on the part of assessors through use of the scoring rubric and guidelines for determining who may participate in the assessment process (NBPTS, 2001b).

Guidelines determining who is eligible to participate in the process of assessing entries were established by the NBPTS in order to create and maintain integrity in the certification process (NBPTS, n.d.g). Research revealed a description of the average assessor as having 15-20 years teaching experience and likely to hold a master's degree (NBPTS, 2001b). Assessors receive instruction regarding bias in scoring and practice using the rubric by scoring sample entries at special Scoring Institutes (NBPTS, n.d.g). Also, assessors must be practicing teachers in the field at the age level in which they are scoring entries and meet the same eligibility requirements as candidates for certification (NBPTS, n.d.g). Assessors are not required to have participated in the NBPTS certification process and, in fact, a current candidate or a non-achieving candidate is not allowed to act as an assessor (NBPTS, n.d.g).

There have been various criticisms of the NBPTS related to the assessment of entries (Ballou, 2003; Bohlen, 2000; Davis et al., 1999). Portfolio entries are separated and distributed to different assessors for scoring. Ballou questioned whether or not a

complete picture of the teacher's practice can be assessed with entries divided instead of grading the portfolio as a whole. Furthermore, portfolio entries are weighted to 60% of the total score with the assessment center exercises compiling 40% of the total score (NBPTS, 2005). Ballou further questioned whether this weighting of entries provided an advantage to a candidate based on the written commentary accompanying the portfolio evidence even if the teacher's content knowledge was extremely weak. Many researchers (Ballou; Bohlen; Wayne et al., 2004) dismissed the heavy emphasis placed on the written commentary as a weakness which merely reflected a candidate's ability in the area of written communication and not an adequate representation of teaching skills. Furthermore, Wayne et al. found the emphasis on written communication to be a source of high anxiety for candidates during the certification process with the potential to discourage otherwise high quality teachers with weak writing skills from pursuing or achieving National Board Certification. Ballou asserted another weakness of the process associated with the written commentary surrounded the potential for cheating. The increase in number of candidates, opportunities for collaboration and mentoring, involvement of higher education in facilitating NBC were factors Ballou questioned regarding the National Board's ability to control cheating.

In addition, candidates have expressed dissatisfaction surrounding the lack of specific feedback in the score report (Bohlen, 2000; Davis et al., 1999.). Assessment feedback is provided to candidates in the form of a numerical score report without specific reference to elements of the candidate's entry due to potential legal liability of the NBPTS if any comment was interpreted as disrespectful or unfounded (Ballou, 2003; Davis et al.). Ballou argued this lack of specific feedback diminishes the potential for

professional development. Additionally, Bohen reported the length of time between completion of the process and notification of scores, approximately six months, was a weakness. Similarly, Davis et al., articulated that candidates expressed a “strong personal investment in this effort” (p. 116) for NBC and valued personal feedback. In the same way, Johnson (2001) and Rinne (2002) reported candidates’ investment of between 100 to 300 hours of time completing the certification process increased their desire for more immediate, personal feedback. Meanwhile, candidates themselves became the subject of studies seeking to better understand the process of NBPTS certification.

#### *Characteristics of NBC Candidates*

A review of studies investigating candidates achieving certified status identified distinct characteristics associated with candidates pursuing NBPTS certification and also specifically those candidates successfully achieving NBC status. Goldhaber et al. (2003) found white female teachers with high standardized test scores were the most likely to apply for NBPTS certification and to achieve certification. In contrast, male teachers were the least likely to apply and the least likely to achieve certification when they did apply (Goldhaber et al.). No significant research was found that investigated possible causes of this gender imbalance. Additionally, when compared by ethnicity, Goldhaber et al. and Wayne et al. (2004) determined African-American teachers were the most likely to apply for NBC but the least likely to achieve certification. These findings reflected an uneven distribution of minority representation in NBCTs when compared to the percent of minority teachers across the United States (Goldhaber et al.; Wayne et al.).

Additional inequities were evident in data based on characteristics of school districts in which NBCTs teach (Goldhaber et al., 2004; Humphrey et al., 2005; Wayne et

al., 2004). These researchers found that NBC teachers were more likely to teach in districts considered affluent with higher pay and higher spending per pupil (Goldhaber et al.; Humphrey et al.; Wayne et al.). Additionally, Goldhaber et al. (2003) ascertained that NBCTs were more likely to teach in districts where student achievement on math and reading tests was higher, and a greater number of students performed at or above grade level. These same researchers discovered the majorities of NBCTs were employed in school districts with fewer minority students, fewer students with learning disabilities, and a smaller percentage of the student population eligible for free or reduced lunch (Goldhaber et al.; Humphrey et al.; Wayne et al.). Furthermore, Goldhaber et al. found this description of the student population in the districts employing NBCTs extended to the individual classrooms in which those teachers were teaching. Consistent with these findings, the unequal distribution of NBCTs was also evident when the data were disaggregated by Wayne et al. for minority NBCTs working in high-poverty schools. While the National Board promotes its certification based on accomplished teaching (NBPTS, n.d.a), data suggested the expertise of those accomplished teachers was not being utilized in areas with the greatest needs (Goldhaber et al.; Humphrey et al.; Wayne et al.). While no significant research was found to account for the unequal distribution and utilization of NBCTs, research examining the methods employed by candidates successfully achieving certification was noteworthy.

#### *Methods Associated with Success*

In addition to investigation into the characteristics of candidates for NBPTS certification, discovered in this review of literature was research that focused on methods utilized by teachers during the certification process. In particular, Goldhaber et al. (2003)

noted interest in distinguishing methods associated with successful attainment of certification stemmed from the fact that approximately half the candidates that pursue NBC are unsuccessful. Collaboration and incentives repeatedly surfaced during this inquiry as factors associated with successful achievement of NBPTS certification.

*Collaboration.* The impact of collaboration on learning and its importance for educators has been documented (Bruffee, 1999; McCombs & Whisler, 1997). Preskill and Torres (1999) further recognized that “learning is maximized through opportunities to share individual knowledge and experiences with others” (p. 23). Multiple studies have shown candidates successful in achieving NBC worked collaboratively throughout the certification process (Humphrey et al., 2005; Pyke & Lynch, 2005; Rinne, 2002; Wayne et al., 2004). Specifically, a study by Pyke and Lynch (2005) focused on NBC candidates in the fields of mathematics and science. Significantly, their study indicated higher mean scores on the NBPTS assessment for candidates preparing for certification in a group. Bruffee postulated that those individuals participating in collaborative groups “exceed, with a little help from their friends, what no one of them alone could have learned, accomplished, or endured” (p. 9). This recognition of the benefits of collaboration was reflected in the opinions of teachers who, when forced to complete the certification process alone stated “working with others provides a deeper experience when it is shared” (Rinne, p. 8) and strongly advised against individual preparation. The value of collaboration was underscored by the reported perception of teachers that collaborative activities improved their teaching (NBPTS, 2001a; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1999).

*Incentives.* While collaboration emerged as an important factor associated with successful achievement of NBC, studies have also revealed the impact of incentives on teachers involved in the certification process (Goldhaber et al., 2003; Rinne, 2002; Wayne et al., 2004). Federal funding in the form of candidate subsidies is available to all teachers seeking NBC (NBPTS, n.d.d). Dispersal of funds and additional compensation for NBCTs has been left up to the states and local districts to decide and varies from a one time bonus, salary increase, fees partially or completely paid, release days, and license considerations (NBPTS). In Rinne's study of NBCTs in Indiana, all respondents reported assistance of partial or full payment of fees. Comments included with the survey data indicated an inability or unwillingness to pursue NBPTS certification without such financial support. Likewise, Goldhaber et al. found candidates in North Carolina were 50 percent more likely to teach in school districts offering some type of financial incentive for NBC. Equally important findings by Wayne et al. were reports of salary bonuses and fee waivers as pivotal factors in the decision to pursue candidacy in 50 percent of teachers surveyed. In an effort to explain the impact of incentives on teachers pursuing NBC, Goldhaber et al. postulated that incentives for advanced certification offered a venue for additional pay and recognition based on proven skills in a profession in which teachers are generally paid based on years of experience and educational level without consideration for expertise in teaching.

In an additional inquiry into the impact of incentives on NBC teachers, Humphrey et al. (2005) investigated a policy in California designed to promote national certification of teachers already teaching in low-performing schools. Teachers in schools ranked below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the state achievement assessment received a bonus of

\$20,000 while other teachers achieving NBC received a bonus of \$10,000. Ohio was the only other state found to provide a bonus, \$1500, specifically for NBCTs agreeing to teach in low-performing schools (Humphrey et al.). These researchers were unable to draw conclusions as to the impact of the targeted incentives based on the available data but suggested other factors, such as working conditions, administrative support, relationships with colleagues, and proximity to home may also be incentives to attract and retain high quality teachers in combination with support for NBPTS certification.

### *NBC as an Indicator of High Quality Teaching*

The implication of NBC as an indicator of high quality teaching was reviewed in the literature through reported perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding NBC and research regarding teacher quality. Emerging during this review of literature surrounding high quality teachers were constructs of teachers as reflective practitioners (Bohen, 2000; Craig, 2003; Richie, 2004; Smikle, 2004; Vandevort et al., 2004) and as members of a learning community (Craig; Humphrey et al., 2005; NBPTS, 2002; Richie; Vandevort et al.). These constructs in the literature, along with perceptions of administrators and teachers, were correlated to the NBPTS Five Core Propositions in an effort to evaluate the validity of the National Board's Five Core Propositions as appropriate professional standards for teachers (NBPTS, n.d.a).

Research regarding teacher quality and effectiveness presented multiple definitions for study. The United States Department of Education defined teacher quality based on teacher preparation, certification, and teaching practices (NCES, 1999). Stronge (2002) also incorporated a teacher's background and preparation as major components of teacher effectiveness but additionally categorized traits of teacher quality as individual

characteristics and as professional skills. Notable research by Bond et al. (2000) confirmed the validity of the NBPTS certification system as a viable method for identification of high quality teachers based on generally recognized best practices of the teaching profession. Following an extensive synthesis of available research on assessment of teacher quality, Bond et al., classified 15 measurable dimensions of expertise in teaching which primarily described elements of teaching practices using two groups of teachers, NBPTS certified and attempted but non-certified. The results indicated statistically significant differences between the two groups of teachers in 11 of 13 comparisons measured; however, every comparison resulted in a higher mean score obtained by the certified group of teachers (Bond et al.). It was thus concluded “Certified teachers in this sample possess, to a considerably greater degree than non-certified teachers, those attributes of expert teaching that have emerged from the ever-expanding body of research on teaching and learning” (Bond et al., p. 140).

Stronge (2002) asserted that ultimately, student learning and achievement represented evidence of effective teaching while Tucker and Stronge (2005) considered student achievement a professional responsibility. Multiple studies have been conducted to determine whether a relationship exists between National Board Certified teachers and their students’ achievement (Bond et al., 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Pyke & Lynch, 2005; Vandevort et al, 2004). However, research on teacher effectiveness and student achievement tends to be difficult due to the number of variables affecting students’ outcomes over time and the difficulty in control and measurement (Bond et al., 2000; Guthrie, 2005; Stronge, 2002). In spite of this difficulty, studies have provided evidence that students taught by National Board Certified teachers have an

advantage over students that are taught by non-NBC teachers and have exhibited greater gains on achievement tests (Bond et al.; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Pyke & Lynch, 2005; Vandevort et al, 2004). Specifically, findings by Cavalluzzo indicated that students taught by NBCTs had made greater gains compared with students having teachers who failed or withdrew from the certification process. Also, Bond et al.'s results related to student outcomes, which extended beyond a single test score, indicated a significantly deeper level of understanding exhibited by students taught by NBCTs compared to non-certified teachers. Furthermore, researchers suggested that the NBPTS was, in fact, identifying teachers through its certification process "that are producing students who differ in profound and important ways" (Bond et al., p. 118). Bond et al., went on to describe students of NBC teachers as "students [who] appear to exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students" (p. 118). Other data related to the distribution of NBC teachers and student achievement found disaggregated student achievement scores provided evidence of a positive impact for students having NBC teachers in the subgroups of students eligible for free/reduced lunch, minority population, and third and fourth grade levels (Goldhaber & Anthony). In summary, research pointed to NBC as an indicator of high quality teaching based on a positive correlation between having a NBC teacher and student achievement (Bond et al.; Cavalluzzo; Goldhaber & Anthony; Vandevort et al.).

Furthermore, the NBPTS purported its certification to be an indicator of high quality teaching based on the Five Core Propositions (NBPTS, 2002) which perceptions of administrators and teachers supported. Inquiries into the perceptions of principals

supervising NBC teachers by Craig (2003) and Vandevort et al. (2004) confirmed that the majority of principals described the NBCTs as more effective teachers compared to other teachers the principals supervised. Vandevort et al. reported 85 percent of principals surveyed rated their NBCT as one of the best teachers they had ever supervised providing strong support for NBPTS certification as an indicator of high quality teaching. Equally strong support for the certification process was provided to Bohen (2000) by teachers describing NBPTS certification as powerful, transforming, credible, and rigorous. Additional inquiry into the perceptions of teachers by Bohen (2000) indicated teachers expected an increase in confidence regarding professional skill and knowledge as a result of participation in the process of NBPTS certification. In explanation, Bohen (2000) argued that the perception of NBCTs as knowledgeable about content in addition to pedagogy contributed to the overall perception of effectiveness.

Additional support consistent with the Core Propositions as an indicator of teacher effectiveness related to teachers' commitment to students and actions for managing and monitoring student learning (NPBTS, 2002). In Bohen's (2000) study teachers noted improved abilities in communication with peers, students, and parents had added to increased effectiveness in the classroom. In conjunction with improved communication, Bohen further reported teachers perceived an increase in reflection on teaching practices had also contributed to improved lesson planning. Furthermore, multiple researchers (Craig, 2003; Richie, 2004; Vandevort et al., 2004) provided accounts of perceptions expressed by principals of NBCTs that classified the certified teacher as more collaborative, reflective, and self-confident in practice than non-NBCTs

they supervised. Likewise, teachers, too, perceived themselves as more collaborative, reflective, and self-confident post certification (Bohen, 2000; Smikle, 2004).

Reflection in practice was depicted in the Core Propositions as a standard of teaching related to teachers' effectiveness in monitoring student learning, thinking systematically about practice, and learning from experience (NBPTS, 2002). Teachers, in this era of accountability, were challenged to "systematically examine their professional practices and their impact on student achievement, the results of such reflective analysis [would] finally transform educational accountability from a destructive and unedifying mess to a constructive and transformative force in education" (Reeves, 2004). The importance of reflection by teachers was buttressed by Schön's (1983) theory of reflection-in-action. Schön's theory recognized the process of thinking about actions in practice, while the actions are taking place. Research further identified reflective practice as a characteristic of high quality teaching that was "crucial to lifelong learning and a professional necessity" (Stronge, 2002, p. 21) for effective teachers. Reflective practice as an element of professionalism in teaching was defined by Stronge (2002) as "careful review of and thoughtfulness about one's own teaching process" (p. 20). For educators, reflection was noted by Reeves to be "an extraordinary amount of work and is a key to the transformation of accountability from a menial exercise in tallying test scores to an analysis of professional practices that offers insight and continuous improvement" (p. 53). Likewise, school improvement was noted by Fullan (2001) to be sustained through teacher participation in a broader learning community that enhanced teacher learning as well as student learning.

While evidence strongly supported the reflective aspect of the Core Propositions, other data concerning perceptions of teachers as members of a learning community (NBPTS, 2002) were limited. Learning communities have been described as “informal, continuous, and naturally occurring in organizations” (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p. 14). Such relationships inside and outside the classroom have been shown to benefit both the teachers and the community stakeholders (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Similarly, the environment of a learning community was described as consistent with “shared vision, inquiry, reflective practice, and collective responsibility” (Lambert, 2003, p. 36). Experts (Hargreaves & Fullan) proposed as an aspect of teacher professionalism in educational reform, “we must search for new and better ways to enable teachers to learn from their colleagues ... so they can belong in a real sense to a wider profession, with all the wisdom and learning it has to offer” (p. 17). There was no significant research found that investigated the relationship of NBPTS certification and professional learning communities; however, NBPTS certification related to continued learning and teacher quality was found in the literature.

Continued learning as an aspect of teacher quality has been identified as the “key to building educators’ capacity for effective teaching, particularly in a profession where the demands are changing and expanding” (NCES, 1999, p. 21)—in other words, high quality teachers are lifelong learners (Stronge, 2002). While statistics indicated teachers were equipped with appropriate degrees and certification for quality teaching, the demands of the profession continued to challenge teachers throughout their careers to learn more effective methods to meet the evolving needs of students (NCES). Bohen (2000) and Smikle (2004) both reported teachers repeatedly described the process of

NBC as the most valuable professional development activity in which they had participated, regardless of whether or not they had achieved certification. Moreover, research by Craig (2003) indicated that some principals perceived their NBCTs as having increased their level of involvement in professional development activities. In contrast however, Vandevort et al. (2004) reported some principals perceived a decrease in the NBC teachers' level of involvement. Similarly, in Richie's (2004) study the principals did not perceive the process of NBC as a professional development activity at all. Research of Borko (2004), Guskey (2002), and Stronge (2002) indicated the key to effective professional development was the context in which the individual experience occurred. The process of NBC occurring in the context of the individual teacher's classroom may be responsible for the perception by participants of the certification process as high quality professional development. Lewis and Day (2004) noted continued learning within the teaching profession "can help to enhance the perceived professionalism of individuals and the status of the profession generally" (p. 144). In the same way, teachers reported to Vandevort et al. (2004) that NBPTS certification was "a significant professional growth experience" (p. 25) which in addition served to monitor the teaching profession while also providing the profession with a national platform.

#### *Impact of NBPTS Certification on Teachers Post-Certification*

The impact of NBPTS certification on teachers' careers was again documented by multiple studies (Bond et al., 2000; Kennelly, 2001; NBPTS, 2001b; Rinne, 2002). Overall findings by Kennelly and by Rinne included immediate recognition in the form of newspaper articles, public recognition from school boards, and state officials, including the governor. These researchers attributed opportunities for leadership roles,

such as public speaking, awards, and special projects, to achievement of NBC. Additional roles as leaders of workshops, professional development facilitators, serving on committees, and mentoring other teachers were reported to Bond et al. and to Kennelly as opportunities teachers perceived to have resulted from the increased credibility of having achieved NBC. Notably, Kennelly reported NBC teachers most valued their role as mentors, perceived themselves as bearing the greatest responsibility for encouraging colleagues to remain in the profession, and as responsible for assuring all teachers had access to professional development. This finding was contrary to the *Teaching at Risk* report (The Teaching Commission, 2004) which called for increased accountability for principals in the areas of teacher retention and professional development.

In fulfillment of the vision for NBCTs as lead teachers expressed throughout the standards-based reform movement (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996) NBCTs were described in the literature by Danielson (2006) and also Johnson and TPNGT (2004) as master teachers with expertise that benefited the school as a whole. Leadership from a distributed, or shared, perspective views the leadership practice set within a particular context as the interactions between leaders and followers (Spillane, 2005). It was noted by Spillane (2005) that schools with a distributed leadership perspective valued relationships between many individuals. In the same vein, Lovely (2005) asserted that shared leadership was most effective in schools when teachers lead in accordance with their unique talent and interest. Teacher leaders "work with colleagues for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, whether in a formal or an

informal capacity” (Patterson & Patterson, 2004, p. 74). In this leadership capacity, Bernauer (2002) and Lambert (2003) agreed that teachers as professionals learn from one another, thus leading to a high-performing organization.

Kennelly (2001) found NBC teachers were, in fact, already engaged in leadership activities related to curricula, programs, and materials for student achievement prior to certification and appeared to remain active in those areas post-certification to a greater degree than movement into formal administrative positions. This finding suggested a majority of NBCTs desired to remain active in the classroom where studies by Bond et al. (2000), Cavalluzzo (2004), Goldhaber and Anthony (2004), Pyke and Lynch (2005), and Vandevort et al. (2004) indicated evidence of the effectiveness of NBC teachers’ expertise. Teacher expertise embedded within and supported by a culture of professional inquiry was observed to contribute to professionalism in teaching and benefit the school district as a whole in studies by Barth (2001), Danielson (2006), and Lieberman and Miller (2004).

A corroborating example of the impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers in one school was found in a recent study of school districts in North Carolina (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005). Teachers achieving NBPTS certification assumed leadership roles in a failing district when a new principal, also an NBPTS certified teacher, utilized strategies of collaboration and reflection to foster school improvement. Berry et al. found that as a result of principal leadership in support of the NBPTS Five Core Propositions, teacher leadership emerged even in teachers that were not NBC teachers, student achievement increased, and teachers in the district expressed increased job satisfaction and motivation. Also, it was noted by Berry et al. that the

credibility of teacher leadership was enhanced due to the principal's perception of NBPTS certification as a standard for quality teaching. Furthermore, Patterson and Patterson (2004) suggested the direct interaction between teachers and students provided a context within which teachers' capacity for influencing the effectiveness of a school exceeded that of an administrator. Additional support for this suggestion were findings by Richie (2004) that principals perceived the presence of NBC teachers on staff to be an asset to the school; however, in opposition, those same administrators did not regard NBC standards as guidelines for teacher evaluation or for placing teachers in leadership roles. Thus available research demonstrated evidence that NBPTS certification was an indicator of high quality teaching in the areas of increased student achievement, application of best teaching practices, and the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding teacher effectiveness. Nonetheless there were discrepancies found surrounding NBC as a professional development activity and the impact of NBC on teacher leadership roles.

### *Summary*

Reviewed in Chapter Two was relevant literature related to the evolving career paths of teachers and the paradigm of professionalism. Also examined was the evolution of standards-based education reform focused on accountability with emphasis on the influence of subsequent policies on the teaching profession to provide an overarching conceptual framework for interpretation of existing data on NBPTS certification of teachers. The framework of teaching as a profession was appropriate for this review of literature as it provided a context within which teachers were considered to possess expert knowledge which the NBPTS claimed to recognize through its certification

process. The fact that the NBPTS was established as a result of standards-based reform made it necessary to examine the movement toward greater accountability in education for an increased understanding of research regarding the NBPTS.

Also provided in this literature review was relevant information pertaining to the NBPTS certification of teachers including background information concerning the NBPTS followed by a synthesis of available research regarding assessment of certification entries, characteristics of NBC candidates, methods associated with successful achievement of certification, NBC as an indicator of high quality teaching, and the impact of NBC on teachers post-certification specifically focusing on the career pathways of NBC teachers. Embedded throughout Chapter Two was information pertinent to the career paths of teachers, specifically the emerging role of teachers as leaders. The literature examined in this chapter has served as both a foundation and a justification for the purpose of this study which is to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching through an examination of the career paths of NBC teachers.

Throughout the synthesis of the research gaps and inconsistencies were identified in many areas of research involving the NBPTS. Specifically, limited research was found regarding assessment biases (Ballou, 2003). Furthermore, available information related to the characteristics of NBC candidates revealed limited research investigating the root causes of inequities with regard to gender, ethnicity, and distribution of NBCTs across school districts, particularly those school districts with the greatest needs (Goldhaber et al., 2003; Humphrey et al., 2005; Wayne et al, 2004). In addition, the effectiveness of incentives targeted to attract NBCTs to schools with the greatest needs was narrowly

studied for long term effect. Moreover, information reported by the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding NBCTs as members of a learning community, NBC as a professional development activity, and utilization of NBCTs in leadership roles (Bohen; Craig, 2003; Richie, 2004; Rinne; Smikle, 2004; Vandervoort et al.; Wayne et al.) was mixed and inconclusive. While information was found concerning the short term impact of NBC on teachers' careers (Bond et al.; Kennelly, 2001; NBPTS, 2001b; Richie; Rinne), inquiry into the long term impact of NBPTS certification on career paths of teachers and thus on the profession of teaching was limited.

This deficiency of information regarding the impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching as represented by the long term impact on the career paths of teachers was the focus of this investigation of NBC teachers in one Midwest state. In Chapter Three a description of the research methodology including participants, instruments, procedures, and analyses was provided. Contained in Chapter Four are the analyses of the data collected. Discussed in Chapter Five are the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis. Implications for practice and recommendations for future study were also offered.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Design and Methodology

#### *Introduction*

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was established in 1987 to offer voluntary, advanced certification recognizing accomplished teaching (NBPTS, 2004). Currently, the NBPTS emphasizes the importance of high quality teaching for strengthening schools and increasing student achievement (NPBTS) as called for by the legislative action of No Child Left Behind (MDESE, 2002). Teacher quality was frequently cited by researchers as the most influential aspect of the United States education system with regard to student achievement (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Heller, 2004; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Stronge, 2002). Yet, efforts aimed at reforming an education system depicted time and time again as substandard (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; The White House, n.d.) have done little to address issues relevant to working conditions of teachers (NBPTS, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Subsequently, the career paths of teachers reflect an attrition rate of between 40 and 50 percent of all teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003). In response, the NBPTS claimed to be a catalyst for change that “by creating a new and more attractive career path for all teachers, National Board Certification (NBC) should improve the schools’ ability to retain able professionals”

(NBPTS, 2004, p. 8). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) echoed the position that educational reform had failed because it did not take teachers into account when formulating policies and argued that:

It is time for teachers as impassioned moral change agents to fight for the positive preconditions that will shape the profession for the next era: an era in which the learning of teachers will become inextricably bound to the learning of those they teach. (p. xiii)

Available research documenting evidence of any long term impact on teachers' career paths as a result of NBPTS certification is limited. While the National Board admitted "the broad implications of the presence of National Board Certified Teachers in schools will take several years to emerge and cannot be predicted with precision" (NBPTS, 2004), the Board continued to characterize its certification as the signal of professionalism in teaching. Thus this study was intended to examine the influence of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching through the long term impact of NBPTS certification on teachers' career paths.

In Chapter Three the rationale was presented for the study's design and methodology. A qualitative, multi-case study was utilized to address the overarching question: How has attainment of NBPTS certification influenced the career paths of teachers and thus the profession of teaching? A review of the problems and purposes of this qualitative inquiry provided a framework for evolving research questions. Additionally, the population and sample were explained along with the rationale for the chosen study design and a description of procedures for data analysis. Strategies to ensure

credibility and consistency and recognition of the researcher's biases and assumptions were discussed.

### *Problem and Purpose Overview*

This study was undertaken to examine the influence of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification on the profession of teaching. Furthermore, this study was intended to explore the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers, especially in regard to their leadership roles. Through inquiry, the impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers and thus on the teaching profession was identified and viewed through the lens of teaching as a profession fueled by the standards-based educational reform movement. Additionally, the process of inquiry provided a framework to address the overarching inquisitiveness guiding this investigation: How has attainment of NBPTS certification influenced the career paths of teachers?

### *Research Questions*

The overarching question directing this multi-case, qualitative study evolved as this investigation progressed. Guided by a synthesis of research on teaching as a profession, career paths of teachers, an examination of the policies of the standards-based reform movement which influenced teaching, and the available research on the NBPTS, five research questions emerged as a framework for this study:

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?
2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?

3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers' roles and responsibilities over time?
4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?
5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

#### *Population and Sample*

In qualitative research a statistical generalization is not the goal; therefore, nonprobability sampling is commonly utilized for selecting the population to study (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, Creswell (2003) commented “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites...that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). Merriam further stated “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore, must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). Therefore, purposeful sampling was used for this examination of the influence on NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers.

The population for the study will consist of four National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in a Midwest state who have held NBPTS certification for at least five years. This criterion delineated a pool of potential participants from which to draw of approximately 35 teachers (NBPTS, n.d.e). Thus, as defined by Merriam (1998), case study research was appropriate due to the limited number of people involved. Furthermore, focusing on teachers having held NBPTS certification for this extended length of time will make possible a deeper, more comprehensive examination of any

evidence of the long term impact of NBPTS certification of teachers. Further extension of the evidence will be accomplished through interviews with the building administrator and two colleagues of the NBCT to establish the perceptions of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status has affected the roles, responsibilities, and teaching practices of the NBCT.

The homogeneity of the sample will be improved by group stratification using well-defined criteria. Specifically, participants achieving NBPTS certification between the years 1994 and 2000 will be purposefully selected from an online directory of statewide NBCTs. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to select participants that represent differentiated teacher career stages at the time certification was achieved as well as a variety of certification areas. Additionally, an attempt will be made to represent both male and female genders as well as a cross section of ethnicity as much as is possible from the representative sample willing to participate. Participants will be further identified to represent a cross section of districts based on student enrollment and percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch as an indicator of poverty level. The unique experiences of the NBC teachers will be elucidated by what Creswell (2003) characterized as the interactive, humanistic quality of the case study.

#### *Case Study Protocol*

Regardless of the preferred methodology, every researcher is bound by ethical considerations at all times. According to the *The Belmont Report* (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1979) the atrocities of World War II led to the establishment of rules to serve as a code of ethics whenever human subjects were involved in research.

Therefore, procedures will be followed to protect the rights of the participants at all time during the course of this study. Approval of the study will be secured through the Institutional Review Board of the University (see Appendix B). Participants will be contacted by telephone, letter, or email to establish a date and time to conduct face-to-face, field interviews. A letter of introduction informing the participants as to the purpose of the study (see Appendix C), proposed field interview questions (see Appendix D), and a letter of informed consent (see Appendix E) will be mailed to each participant prior to the interview. Each participant will be asked to read and sign the letter of informed consent to participate in the study before any data collection will begin.

Approximately two hours of time will be allotted to conduct open-ended, semi-structured interviews with the participant, the building administrator, and colleagues of the NBCT at the participant's school district building. An additional two hours will be allotted for examination of documentary evidence and further field observation of the NBCT. At all times, participants will be assured of anonymity through the use of pseudonyms to encourage open, honest dialogue during the interview process. Compilation of field notes during the interview process using an Observation Form (see Appendix F) will serve to support the interview sessions which will be audio taped, with permission of participants. The audiotape of interviews will be transcribed verbatim, a copy of which will then sent to participants for member-checking, or review, for accuracy and to provide opportunity for clarification. Following member-checking, any changes, corrections, or additions will be made to transcripts at the request of participants. If the opportunity for a focus group interview arises within the population of participants, all

procedural safeguards established for one-on-one interviews will be observed for focus group interviews.

Additional triangulation of data will be achieved through examination of documentary evidence including, but not limited to the participant's professional development plan, district school improvement plan, personal calendar, plan book, committee minutes, and school newsletters. All data collected, including audiotapes, field notes, and transcripts will be kept secure in a locked cabinet directly supervised by the researcher. All documents will be destroyed three years following the completion of this study.

#### *Rationale for Qualitative Research*

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) postulated that inquiry can be a formal or informal way of obtaining knowledge and information. Along those same lines, research in education has been conducted by either quantitative or qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). A comparison of the two methods revealed quantitative research utilizes the scientific method of research focused on testing component parts of an experience in order to identify the one correct solution to a problem (Fraenkel & Wallen; Merriam). As the name implies, quantitative research represents results numerically emphasizing statistical significance resulting from an experiment, survey, or otherwise contrived setting (Fraenkel & Wallen; Merriam). In contrast, qualitative inquiry seeks to explain the meaning of an experience as a whole through the lens of the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen; Merriam). Specifically, "the decision to focus on qualitative case studies stems from the fact that this design is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather

than hypothesis testing” (Merriam, p. 28-29). Furthermore, qualitative data provides thick, rich descriptions which emerge during observations, field work, and interviews with participants and thus tends to be specific to that particular situation (Merriam). Moreover, Merriam (1998) judged that “research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p. 1).

As research into teaching and learning has become more prevalent, data collection in education increasingly focused on qualitative descriptions and interpretations of human subjects (Merriam, 1998; Owens, 2004). Additionally, Reeves (2004) suggested qualitative descriptions of school districts were necessary in order to provide a balanced picture of student achievement and district performance. Owens (2004) further stated qualitative research in education revealed “lively, rich narrative descriptions of life in present-day schools that illuminated the confusions, inconsistencies, ambiguities, and general messiness so characteristic of schools’ organizational life” (p. 158). Likewise, Merriam (1998) distinguished the descriptive nature of qualitative research as pivotal in providing the advantage of hindsight while still holding relevance in the present. Therefore, qualitative research was appropriate for this inquiry which seeks to add to the knowledge base regarding the long term influence of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers and thus on the teaching profession. Characteristics of qualitative research that were vital to this study included the holistic nature of qualitative inquiry, the natural setting in which the investigation occurred, and the smaller population of study versus the larger number of participants necessary for statistical significance in quantitative research (Merriam). Additionally, the common, descriptive language of

qualitative research may aid all stakeholders, including policymakers and the general public, gain insight into the influence of NBPTS certification on the teaching profession.

### *Study Design*

Merriam (1998) postulated that the case study design was an appropriate choice for the researcher “interested in insight, discovery and interpretation” (pp. 28-29) as the knowledge gained through a case study was more concrete and contextual. Therefore, the researcher determined that a qualitative, multi-case study offered the best opportunity for participants to share perceptions and personal reflections regarding the influence of NBPTS certification on their career paths. Thus through this inquiry, greater meaning and insight into the long term impact of NBC on the teaching profession could be constructed. In support, it was noted by Merriam (1998) that the case study method of qualitative research was frequently used in educational research and “has illuminated educational practice for nearly thirty years” (p. 26).

Merriam (1998) further stipulated the case as a bounded entity was the most defining characteristic of case study design. In other words, whether a person, place, or thing, the case must be limited by the number involved, the timeframe being studied, or by an obvious representative quality, i.e. specific individual, institution, or phenomenon. The phenomenon of the influence of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers was bounded by the context of the teaching profession, thus making the investigation well suited for the case study design. The population of this inquiry was bounded by the quality of having achieved NBPTS certification and further bounded by the length of time NBPTS certification had been held by the participants.

Data collection will be achieved through naturalistic observations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003) and interviews by the researcher at the participants' workplace setting. As suggested by Creswell (2003) the natural setting in which qualitative research occurred was a strength of qualitative inquiry yielding greater detail about the participants. Additionally, by including more than one participant, a multi-case design was utilized in order to provide a cross-case analysis and thus increase potential generalization of the data (Merriam, 1998). Buttressing this assumption, Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggested the results of a multi-case study were "more compelling, and they are more likely to lend themselves to valid generalization" (p. 440). Through a multi-case study the constant comparison of multiple types of data both within each case and subsequently between all cases studied allows categories or themes to emerge which develop into a more holistic accounting of the phenomenon being studied (Merriam).

Triangulation is the collection of multiple types of data and comparing the sources of information to establish validity of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation of data in this qualitative study will be accomplished through on site interviews of not only the NBPTS certified teachers, but also of the teachers' administrator and colleagues to buttress reliability of reported perceptions. Additional triangulation will be accomplished through naturalistic observations, field notes, member checking, examination of documents, peer debriefing, and critiques by an established educational researcher. Triangulation serves to strengthen the accuracy of findings in qualitative inquiry and thus increases the internal validity of the study (Creswell, 2003). Internal validity in qualitative research was defined by Merriam (1998) as how well the research findings match with reality. Merriam further noted, of equal importance was

reliability, or the extent to which replication of findings in a study are possible. Internal validity and reliability will be maintained throughout this study by means of a concise audit trail describing details of data collection, emergence of categories during analysis, and decisions made by the researcher during the inquiry (Merriam, 1998).

### *Data Analysis*

Merriam (1998) asserted that data analysis in qualitative research occurred simultaneously with data collection. The constant comparative method of analysis supports the interactive, recursive nature of qualitative data collection and analysis. Utilizing the constant comparative method during the data collection process the researcher makes notes regarding tentative themes, improvements for questions, emerging categories, and constantly compares data within the same data set or from previous data continually searching for conceptual links (Merriam). While this type of informal analysis takes place concurrent with data collection, more formal analysis occurs through systematic coding of data as the study progresses and multiple cases are examined. Coding enables the researcher to retrieve specific portions of data through the designation of numbers, letters, words, or colors representing each particular construct emergent from the data comparisons (Merriam). During this inquiry, themes and categories will be identified through the conceptual framework of teaching as a profession fueled by standards-based reform both within-case and cross-case to explore the influence of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers.

### *Credibility and Consistency*

The overarching intent of qualitative, case study research is descriptive in nature with the goal of providing an account of the phenomenon being studied or to leave an

accounting of a specific experience (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, a multi-case study method is well suited for complex, multi-faceted issues or phenomenon as it “offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences” (Merriam, p. 41). As a result of this expanded knowledge base, Merriam (1998) proposed qualitative inquiry had the potential to provide a foundation for future research in education. Regarding the nature of educational research, Merriam continued to assert “the applied nature of educational inquiry thus makes it imperative that researchers and others have confidence in the conduct of the investigation and in the results of any particular study” (p. 199). Therefore, qualitative research must demonstrate acceptable credibility and consistency through internal validity, reliability, and external validity, or generalization.

Generalization, or external validity, denotes the extent to which research findings and conclusions can be applied to other situations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). With regard to external validity in qualitative inquiry, Fraenkel and Wallen claimed “a limitation of qualitative research is that there is seldom methodological justification for generalizing the finding of a particular study” (p. 441). However, they went on to assert that generalizing of qualitative studies is possible and likely to occur by practitioners in a context similar to the research situation. Additionally, Fraenkel and Wallen ascertained that in contrast to quantitative research, in qualitative research “it is the practitioner, rather than the researcher, who judges the applicability of the researcher’s findings and conclusions, who determines whether the researcher’s findings fit his or her situation” (p. 441).

Internal validity and reliability refer to the appropriateness and accuracy with which the research findings are presented and the potential for those results to be

replicated (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Merriam contended the unique nature of qualitative research called for non-traditional reliability in that “the question...is not whether findings will be found again but *whether the results are consistent with the data collected* [author’s emphasis]” (p. 206). Further evidence of credibility was expressed by Creswell’s (2003) assertion that validity was a strength of qualitative inquiry. Internal qualitative procedures built into a study serve to enhance internal validity (Creswell; Merriam, 1998). Strategies utilized during this qualitative study that foster validity and accuracy of findings will include triangulation of data, member-checking, peer debriefing, and use of thick, rich descriptions. Furthermore, these strategies will support reliability along with a concise audit trail detailing how data were collected, how categories emerged during analysis, and how decisions were made by the researcher during the inquiry (Merriam). Additionally, a personal log documenting dates of all phone contacts, letters mailed, emails sent and received, and scheduled interviews will be maintained by the researcher. Also, criteria for selection of participants were established along with procedures for data collection and analysis. All field notes, transcriptions, and other documentation will be secured in a locked cabinet directly supervised by the researcher. Peer debriefing will provide an outsider perspective on the study as will oversight and review of all data by an experienced researcher to substantiate credibility and consistency.

#### *Researcher’s Biases and Assumptions*

The researcher in qualitative inquiry is considered the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and therefore, “must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). With this assumption in

mind, this researcher recognized a potential for bias in this study of the influence of NBPTS certification on teachers' career paths due to the researcher's own personal experiences as a NBPTS certified teacher. Furthermore, the researcher has a strong personal commitment and respect for teaching as a profession and believes teachers are leaders and should hold themselves accountable for the future of the profession. In order to control for personal biases and foster validity of the study, the researcher participated in an Internal Review Board (IRB) training course offered by the University and applied for approval of the current investigation from the IRB. Additional safeguards designed to lessen the influence of personal biases on this study were provided by triangulation of data, identified protocols for the study, and data management procedures.

#### *Summary*

The rationale was presented for the study's design and methodology in Chapter Three. A review of the problems and purposes of this qualitative inquiry was provided along with the research questions that emerged. Additionally, the population and sample were explained along with the rationale for the chosen study design and a description of procedures for data analysis. Strategies to ensure credibility and consistency and recognition of the researcher's biases and assumptions were discussed.

Included in Chapter Four are a detailed reporting of data collected and analyses of the data. Findings and conclusions based on the data analyses will be discussed in Chapter Five along with implications for practice and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

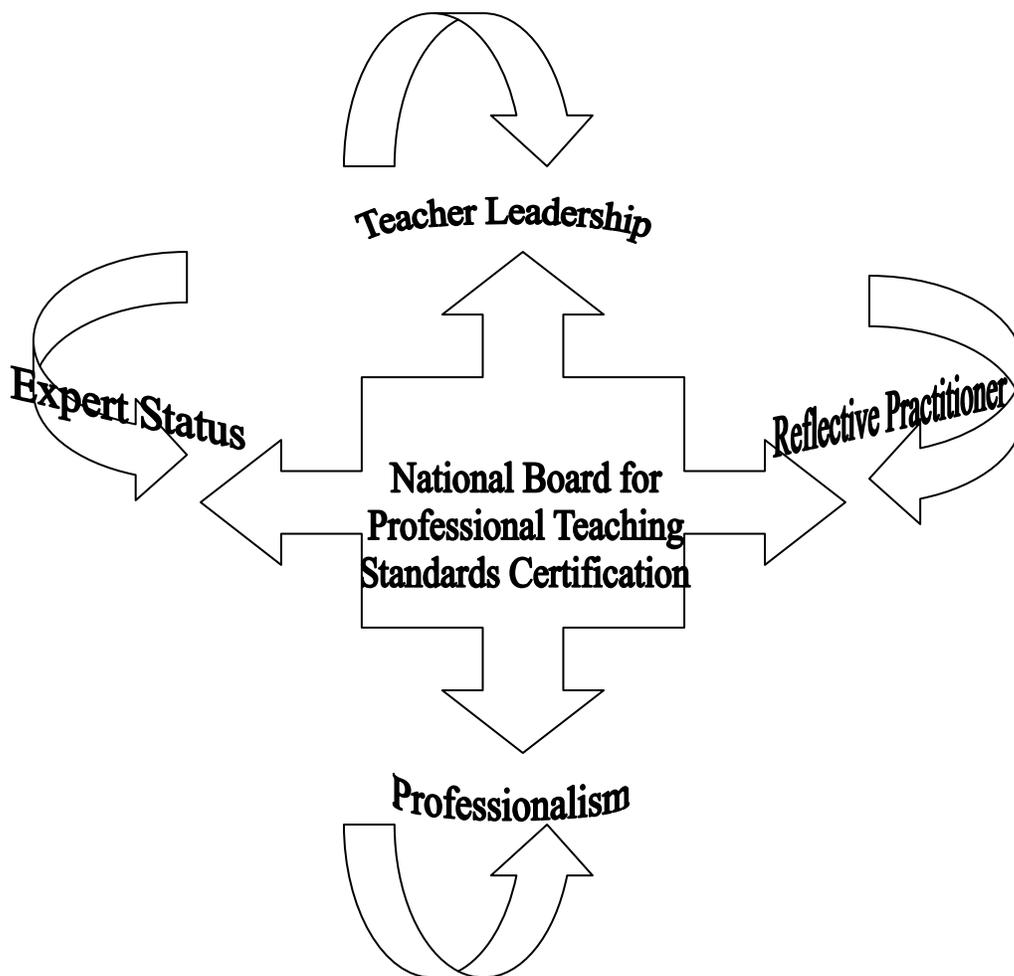
### Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification on the profession of teaching. The long term impact of NBPTS certification on the evolving career paths of teachers served as an indicator of the impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching. This multiple case study examined the career paths of four National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in one Midwest state in order to investigate the extent to which National Board status did or did not impact the roles and responsibilities of NBCTs over a period of time. Participants were chosen based on the factor of having held National Board Certification (NBC) for a period of time no less than five years. On-site interviews with the NBCTs, their administrators, and colleagues provided information and insight into the career paths of these educators, as well as the participants' perceptions of the extent to which NBC status influenced said career paths. Documents collected from the campus visits and additional independent sources, served to buttress the reliability of reported perceptions and increased the internal validity of this qualitative study.

During this inquiry, themes and categories were identified through the conceptual framework of teaching as a profession fueled by standards-based reform both within-case and cross-case to explore the influence of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers. All data were scrutinized and assigned codes for roles and responsibilities, career path, and relationships. Secondarily, coded data were studied for roles and

responsibilities in district versus out of district; career path prior to NBC and post NBC; and relationships with administrators and with colleagues. Subsequently, the following themes related to the career paths of NBPTS certified teachers emerged: reflective practitioner, teacher leadership, expert status, and professionalism. These four themes related to the evolving career paths of teachers as indicators of the impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching are depicted in Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* Indicators of the impact of National Board Certification.

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### *Organization of the Chapter*

Presented in Chapter Four is a review of the study protocol including, description of the sample population, data collection methods and the process utilized for data analyses. Also included in Chapter Four are descriptive data representing each of the four cases accompanied by a within-case summary of each in order to represent the participants' experiences as accurately as possible (Merriam, 1998). Cross-case comparison of data between all cases for greater probing of the issues as well as increased understanding of the cases (Merriam, 1998) concludes the chapter. Cross-case comparison was accomplished utilizing various graphic organizers depicting the themes that emerged from data analysis. Graphic organizers are a nonlinguistic representation of knowledge proven to stimulate brain activity and increase retention of new knowledge (Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering, & Gaddy, 2001).

### *Study Protocol*

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002, required school districts to employ only highly qualified teachers. In support of the teaching profession, the NBPTS purported its certification to be an indicator of high quality teaching based on the Five Core Propositions (NBPTS, 2002). The Core Propositions were established to represent professionalism in teaching—what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do (NBPTS). Specifically, the Five Core Propositions encompassed teachers' commitment to students and their learning, knowledge of pedagogy as well as content knowledge, management of student learning through reflective practice, and active involvement in the greater learning community (NBPTS). Since its inception in 1987, The NBPTS has worked closely with state

educational policymakers to incorporate provisions based on the Five Core Propositions of NBC into standards nationwide (NBPTS, n.d.b). As the 10 year life of the first certificates began to expire in 2004, educators throughout the nation and the profession of teaching in general faced the dilemma of deciding the worth of NBPTS certification at a time when the emphasis on highly qualified teachers was magnified by political policies such as NCLB, thus making it essential for educators to seek a greater understanding of the implications of the long term impact on teachers, their career paths, and on the teaching profession.

### *Sample*

A purposeful sampling was used for this examination of the influence on NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers. The population for the study consisted of four NBCTs in one Midwest state who had held NBPTS certification for at least five years, consequently making possible a deeper, more comprehensive examination of any evidence of the long term impact of NBPTS certification of teachers. The homogeneity of the sample was improved by group stratification using well-defined criteria. Specifically, participants achieving NBPTS certification between the years 1994 and 2000 were purposefully selected from an online directory of statewide NBCTs.

Furthermore, participants were selected to represent teachers' career stages differentiated as novice teachers with three to five years experience, middle stage teachers with five to ten years experience, and veteran teachers with greater than ten years experience at the time certification was achieved. An attempt was made to represent both male and female genders, as well as a cross section of ethnicity as much as is possible from the representative sample willing to participate. As a result, the single male

NBCT found in the potential population of NBCTs was included as a participant in the study. Due to an extremely limited cross section of ethnicity in the pool of potential candidates, all participants were ethnically Caucasian.

Participants were further identified to represent a cross section of districts based on geographical location within the state, student enrollment, and percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch as an indicator of poverty level. From within the number of available participants, one NBCT was chosen from the Western region of the state, one from the Eastern region, one from the Central region, and one from the Southern region of the state. Two participants were employed in large, suburban school districts with small populations of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. The remaining two participants were employed in more rural school districts with a higher percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

#### *Data Collection Methods*

Prior to on site interviews with the NBCTs, their administrators, and their colleagues, the superintendent of each school district was contacted to explain the purpose and extent of the study. Permission to gather data within the school district was secured via an informed consent form signed by the superintendent. Following the granting of permission to conduct research in the district, contact was made with the NBCT to determine his or her willingness to participate in this study. Upon confirmation of interest in participating, the administrator of the NBCT and two colleagues of the NBCT were contacted regarding participation in the study. Informed consent forms were signed by all participants prior to conducting interviews. Following the interview

sessions, participants received a verbatim transcript of their interview providing the opportunity for any clarification or modification of their recorded responses.

Triangulation of data in this qualitative study was accomplished through on site interviews of not only the NBPTS certified teachers, but also of each teacher's administrator and two of their colleagues to buttress reliability of reported perceptions. Additionally, triangulation was accomplished through naturalistic observations of the NBCT's workplace, field notes, member checking, examination of documents, peer debriefing, and critiques by an established educational researcher.

#### *Process of Data Analyses*

In this multi-case, qualitative study, the researcher utilized the constant comparative method during the data collection process, making notes regarding tentative themes, improvements for questions, emerging categories, and constantly compared data within the same data set or from previous data continually searching for conceptual links (Merriam, 1998). While this type of informal analysis took place concurrent with data collection, more formal analysis occurred through the systematic coding of data, as explained in Appendix G.

#### *Within-case Summaries*

Participants and data sources in this study were identified throughout this chapter based on a coding system as follows: administrator (A), colleague (C), document (D), interview (I), National Board Certified Teacher 1 (T1), National Board Certified Teacher 2 (T2), National Board Certified Teacher 3 (T3), National Board Certified Teacher 4 (T4). See Appendix G for further explanation of use of line and pages numbers.

### *National Board Certified Teacher 1*

National Board Certified Teacher 1, named Callie for purposes of this study, became certified in 1995 as a generalist/middle childhood educator; therefore, she was in her tenth year of being an NBCT at the time of this study. Overall, her career as an educator had spanned seventeen years, making her a veteran teacher. She was emphatic about the impact of NBPTS certification on her perspective of teaching as a profession.

I was the first National Board teacher in...[the state] and so I think it impacted my career greatly because I had a lot of attention, a lot of people wanting to know how the process worked and I was the only one with experience in it, so that tended to put a lot of attention on what I was doing. So the attention itself, I think, made me more confident, made me understand the broad nature of our field. (IT1-1-28)

Prior to achieving NBC, Callie worked six years in a large, public school district as a middle school teacher. She then moved to the state's capital city to teach fifth grade in a school district of similar size. There she pursued NBPTS certification as a middle career teacher even though it was her first year in the district.

Callie found out about NBPTS certification serendipitously by reading an ad in the *Teaching K-8* magazine. Upon receiving information regarding this new process for determining what good teachers knew and were able to do, Callie stated "the more I read the more excited I was about putting my teaching skills on the line to see where I would stack up against people across the United States" (IT1-2-53). The principal in her building was also new to the district that year, and Callie's involvement in the NBC process created a bond between the two of them. Callie felt she had the complete support

of her administrator, even though “neither one of us knew what we were getting into” (IT1-4-29).

During the interim, after submitting her portfolio to the NBPTS, Callie became a STARR teacher through the state department of education and worked with other teachers going through the process of National Boards. After receiving NBPTS certification, Callie served on numerous statewide committees, presented at a number of statewide conferences, and published articles in statewide education journals. The central focus of her involvement in education outside her district was teacher certification statewide, as well as NBPTS certification.

It was at this juncture in her career that Callie decided to pursue a Master’s Degree in Elementary Administration. After having accomplished so much as a classroom teacher, Callie was ambivalent about an area of concentration for her continued studies. She put it this way:

I had already been through National Board Certification, and I knew that at that point in time that there wasn’t a Master’s program, and I’m sorry to be this way, but there was not a Master’s program in my state that could do for me, improve my teaching, anything like National Board Certification could do. (IT1-18-29).

A few years after completing her master’s program, Callie became restless, feeling as though she had more to offer, and wondering what she could offer to a school in an administrative role. As a result, in 2002, Callie became the elementary principal for a small, rural district near her home in the capital city. In addition to serving as principal for grades PK-4, she also supervises the Parents as Teachers program. Her current district has a free/reduced lunch population of approximately one third of the total school

enrollment of about 900 students PK-12. The district is located in a rural area of the state. While it is well known throughout her district that Callie is a NBPTS certified teacher, at this time, there are no other NBCTs in her district.

*National Board Certified Teacher 2*

National Board Certified Teacher 2, named Sue for purposes of this study, became certified in 1998 as a generalist/early childhood educator, therefore, she was in her eighth year of being an NBCT at the time of this study. Overall, her career as an educator had spanned 34 years, making her a veteran teacher. Sue, who experienced NBPTS certification as an experienced, veteran teacher, characterized the process of NBC as “an incredibly great experience” (IT2-11-32).

Sue began teaching in the early 1970s as a special education teacher, receiving a Master’s Degree in Learning Disabilities. After nine years in special education, she began teaching upper elementary grades as a regular education teacher. Fifteen years later, well into her teaching career, she made another move to a lower elementary classroom. It was during this time as a first grade teacher that Sue received a degree as an Education Specialist in Elementary Administration, as well as achieving NBC. Sue taught first grade for eight years before becoming involved in a statewide Reading Initiative Program. She worked with the Reading Initiative Program for four years before returning to her home district as a reading consultant, a role which she continues at present. Sue routinely leads workshops and mentors teachers in her district. Additionally, she has presented at numerous state and regional conferences. Sue has worked in the same suburban PK-12 district her entire career. The district is located outside a large, metropolitan area and has

a free/reduced lunch population of approximately 14% of the total student enrollment of about 13,000.

For Sue, the impact of NBPTS certification was extremely personal. Her excitement showed as she recalled the experience of preparing her submission materials for certification, “You have to ask that about your curriculum, ‘so why am I doing this? So what is the bigger picture?’ and I think that that gave me a real passion for asking that about everything that we taught” (IT2-23-9). Furthermore, the process of preparing the portfolio for NBC changed the way Sue felt about teaching at a critical point in her career, “and it changed everything about the way that I taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade, from that point on the next two years and then it was directly related when I started doing the early literacy training” (IT2-22-27). Sue summed up her feelings about NBC as “probably the best thing is how it has impacted my desirability to influence teaching and learning” (IT2-32-9).

Sue was first approached by her administrator with information regarding NBPTS certification. She was in her fourth year as a first grade teacher, and had worked closely with her administrator in the past, characterizing her as a “visionary principal” (IT2-5-28) who

Felt that ...[the school district] had excellent teachers and that we needed to participate in it and... it was the years of grant money for it, so she sent out a note to six or seven people and of that group, there were four people initially interested and there were three people who sent away and got their boxes. And of that three, two of us passed that first year. (IT2-10-24)

At the time, there was only one other teacher in the state who had achieved NBPTS certification, so not much was known about the process and Sue stated “honestly, I didn’t have any idea what I was getting into when I started” (IT2-10-38). However, due to a bond of trust between Sue and her administrator, she decided, “I’m a mid career teacher, probably a little past mid, but I’d like to think of myself as a life-long learner, and, you know, someone that I trust has said this is something you should try. Yeah ...I don’t say no” (IT2-11-2).

Subsequent to Sue’s achievement of NBPTS certification, numerous teachers in her district have pursued and achieved NBC. The value placed upon NBPTS certification by Sue’s district is evident by yearly recognition of district NBCTs at the beginning of the school year teacher’s meeting and financial compensation paid to NBCTs throughout the 10 year life of the certification.

### *National Board Certified Teacher 3*

National Board Certified Teacher 3, named Janie for purposes of this study, became certified in 2000 as an exceptional needs specialist educator, therefore, she was in her sixth year of being an NBCT at the time of this study. Overall, her career as an educator had spanned twelve years, making her a veteran teacher. She indicated NBPTS certification has had a tremendous impact on her focus as an educator:

It filters everything else you receive and have to do and are tasked with and everything you set out to do. You do it with that framework of that question, ‘How is this going to impact student learning?’ And so I get very impatient with things that I feel are not directly impacting student learning. (IT3-9-34)

Janie began her career as a special education teacher in a small, rural district. It was in this capacity, after six years of teaching that she worked on her master's degree in special education while at the same time she pursued NBPTS certification as a mid-career teacher. She explained it this way:

I fell into National Boards by accident, I kind of feel. I had gotten a letter from the local university...inviting people to attend an informational meeting about National Boards. I went. I listened to it. I thought that is interesting but I don't have \$2000.00 for an application fee and, you know, just to say you get it in...[the state] is no big deal. So I kind of put it off and then about a year later I thought I might want to work in other states or other districts and I thought, ya know, having that would be really handy so I pursued it. (IT3-5-27)

Soon after achievement of certification, following a brief stint teaching outside the state, Janie returned to the district in which she had received NBPTS certification. Through the years, she became dissatisfied with the amount of paperwork she was required to do as a special education teacher. By this time, Janie was the head of the special services division in the district in which she had achieved NBPTS certification, and she felt many duties related to special education took away from her focus on student learning:

Having been through National Boards, the total focus is on improving student learning and I had that focus sharpened to such a degree that when I was done, and I was a special ed teacher, I suddenly had my eyes open to how much of my time during the day was not going to...you know, it was meeting legal requirements, which is important, but it wasn't going to improving student

learning and I felt very disenchanted with the special education role that I was playing and felt like I could spend more time improving student learning in the general classroom setting and that has proven to be the case. (IT3-4-10)

As a result of her strong feelings, Janie made the move to a regular education classroom, teaching fourth grade in the same district. Since that time, she has been a division co-leader for her grade level, served on numerous committees, including the district vertical team, has conducted district workshops, and mentored new teachers. Also, Janie represented her district as part of a statewide group of teachers developing the annual student achievement assessment instrument. This responsibility not only took Janie to the state capital, but also outside of the state working with other educators and developers of the state assessment program.

As previously noted, Janie works in a small, rural PK-12 school district. The free/reduced lunch population of her district is approximately 40% of the total student population of about 2,000. There are no other NBCTs in Janie's district, and her status as an NBCT is not a well-known fact throughout the district. Immediately after achieving NBC, she did try to persuade other teachers to pursue NBPTS certification, however, she found there to be a low level of awareness as to exactly what NBPTS certification was:

Most people that I know in this business, especially elementary, are young, married, young kids starting a family. They need to invest their time in something that will give them a financial reward in the end and pursuing a degree does that. Pursuing graduate hours does that. Pursuing National Boards, not so much. Especially not in...[this area]. Nobody, nobody had heard about it. You know, I had to educate my principal, the superintendent, everybody. The only people that

had heard about it and were excited were my former professors at the university that I had kept in touch with. They knew what it was and they knew what a big deal it was, but nobody else. (IT3-6-16)

One way in which Janie found a significant connection with her NBC peers was through an online Teacher Leaders Network. This window to the world brought Janie in contact with NBCTs from other parts of the state as well as across the United States. She found this experience to be “eye-opening to me because I work in a rural part of...[the state], a small town and most of these people worked in very large urban districts in states that being a National Board Certified teacher was a big deal, and not just money, but status” (IT3-15-17). As a result, she began to feel her state did not do enough to support and promote NBPTS certification, a fact she attributed to a lack of financial support on the part the state legislature and the governor. Additionally, she felt the state teacher organizations were not doing enough to encourage teachers to pursue NBC and stated she no longer belongs to either state organization because “I don’t see that they support teachers improving themselves to that degree” (IT3-15-39).

#### *National Board Certified Teacher 4*

National Board Certified Teacher 4, named Bill for purposes of this study, became NBPTS certified in 2000 as an English language arts/early adolescence educator, therefore, he was in his sixth year of being an NBCT at the time of this study. Overall, his career as an educator had spanned twelve years. Notably, Bill was the first male in his state to achieve NBPTS certification. He expressed a strong belief in the positive impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching as he stated emphatically “National

Boards is the single most effective professional growth opportunity out there for teachers. There's nothing else that touches it" (IT4-16-11).

Bill discovered NBPTS certification serendipitously by running across the website while searching for professional development opportunities. Upon notifying district personnel of his desire to pursue NBC, Bill was put in contact with the state regional professional development body and began the process. At that time, there were eight NBCTs in his local area. Still, Bill expressed surprise at the rigor of the process and its impact on his teaching:

I just was overwhelmed with how unprepared I felt to do it but more importantly I just felt so...it was a heightened awareness at such an intense level that I kept looking at my students and everyday I just felt like I was changing in ways I couldn't even, couldn't even measure yet but I knew it was happening. (IT4-16-43)

At the time Bill achieved NBPTS certification, he was a middle career teacher having worked six years teaching middle school language arts. Bill, too, pursued NBPTS certification while at the same time working on his master's degree in secondary education administration. In 2003, Bill had the opportunity to move to his current position, that of teaching high school theatre, speech and debate, and serving as director of the theatre department in a nearby district. The free/reduced lunch population of his current PK-12 district is less than 10% of the student enrollment of about 18,000. Bill teaches in a suburban area outside a large, metropolitan area of the state.

In his capacity as a middle school teacher, he helped build an extra curricular theatre program for the students in his district. In addition to his current duties as a

teacher and theatre director, Bill has worked on numerous committees, mentored NBC candidates, and also worked with the state legislature toward statewide funding for NBCTs (D1). Additionally, within his district, Bill works in an organization with other teachers to recognize citizenship and student excellence throughout the high school (IC1-1-10). While still teaching middle school language arts, just one year after receiving NBPTS certification and his master's degree, Bill was awarded the prestigious Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award (D2).

The district in which Bill currently teaches has the greatest number of NBCTs of any district in the state. Those NBCTs are well known throughout the district and receive regular recognition and financial compensation for the life of the certification. Bill enthusiastically reported that the district “does a great job with promoting National Board Certified teachers” (IT4-7-15). Likewise, Bill also promotes NBPTS certification whenever possible:

For example, in my e-mail, my signature, it says...[my name], NBCT, and I don't do that out of selfish pride. I do that to say, I'm National Board Certified, which means I've gone through a professional growth process that I personally value and believe in and I'm here to share that experience with anyone who asks. (IT4-7-22)

While there were many similarities in the experiences and career opportunities of these four NBCTs, each participant traveled a unique career path. However, there is little doubt as to the certainty of the impact of NBPTS certification on each individual.

Illustrated in Figure 3 are the NBCTs participating in this study.

<b>NBCT and Area of Certification</b>	<b>Year Certified</b>	<b>Number of Years Teaching at Time of NBC</b>	<b>Master's Degree</b>	<b>Total Number of Years Teaching</b>	<b>Present Position</b>
Callie Generalist/Middle Childhood	1995	6	Elementary Administration	17	Elementary Principal
Sue Generalist/Early Childhood	1998	25	Learning Disabilities; Ed Specialist Elementary Administration	34	Reading Consultant
Janie Exceptional Needs Specialist	2000	6	Special Education	12	Fourth Grade Teacher and Division Co-Leader
Bill English Language Arts/Early Adolescence	2000	6	Secondary Administration	12	High School Theatre Teacher and Department Head

*Figure 3. Participating NBCTs.*

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*Cross-case Comparison*

A deeper understanding of the extent to which NBPTS certification did or did not impact the career paths of veteran teachers was sought through cross-case comparison of data between all cases. Additionally, the broader impact of NBC on the teaching profession was probed in order to reveal the teachers' perceptions of NBPTS as a catalyst for lasting reform within the profession. Subsequent to analysis, the themes of reflective practitioner, expert status, teacher leadership, and professionalism emerged across all cases. Cross-case comparison was accomplished utilizing various graphic organizers depicting the themes that emerged from data analyses and data sources.

### *Reflective Practitioner*

Participating NBPTS certified teachers unanimously related the impact of NBC on the quality of their teaching. Specifically mentioned by all teachers was an increase in reflective practice during the act of teaching and beyond. During reflective practice, teachers think about what they are doing and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions making changes based on experience (Reeves, 2004; Schön, 1983). Additionally, reflective practice as an element of professionalism in teaching was defined as “careful review of and thoughtfulness about one’s own teaching process” (Stronge, 2002, p. 20). Each participant in the study expressed a strong conviction regarding reflective practice that was molded by the process of NBPTS certification. A cross-case comparison of the theme of reflective practitioner with accompanying data sources is depicted in Figure 4. Sub themes of reflection in teaching and reflection extended supported the theme of reflective practitioner.

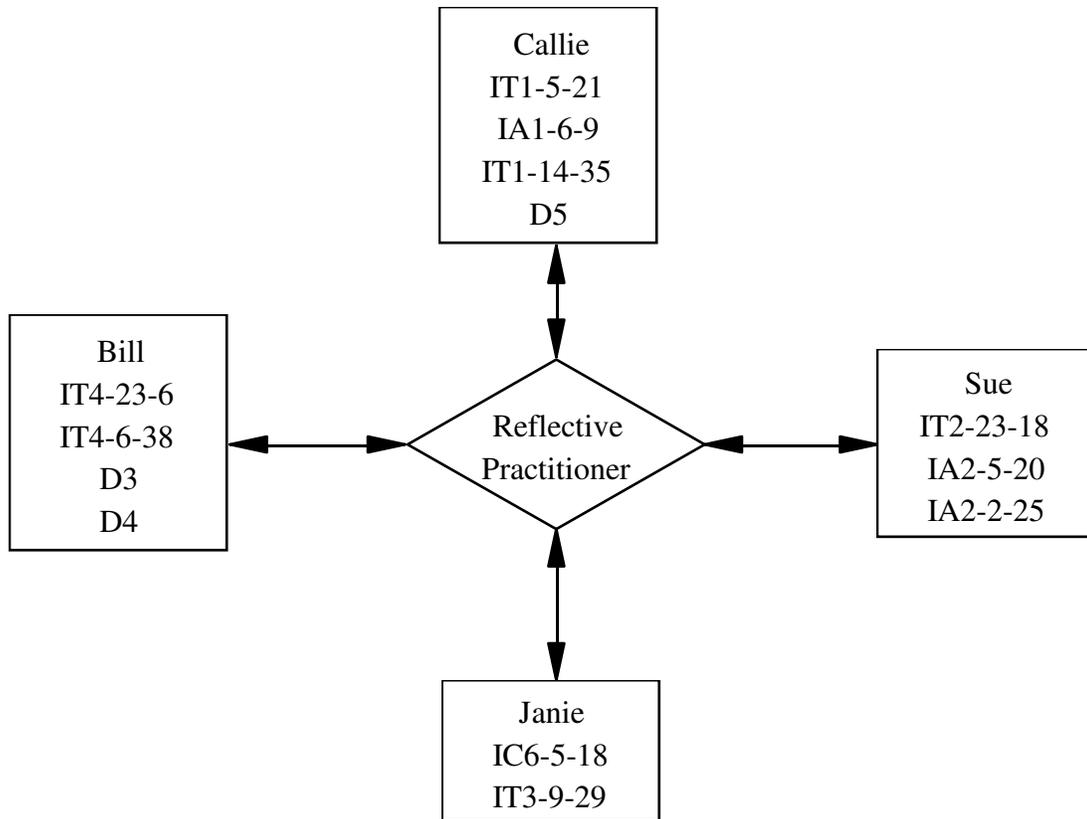


Figure 4. Theme reflective practitioner with data sources.

### *Reflection in Teaching*

The strong impact of the NBC process on the teaching practices of the participants was clearly communicated by an example Callie related from her teaching experience:

It was very powerful because I didn't realize how much it had become a part of me until someone asked me—I think it was even a student—asked me why I was frowning and I said I don't know what it was. You know, I tried to analyze what I was thinking about and I had, I was really processing a lesson I don't think that had gone as well as I anticipated, and I was really trying to figure out the pieces and I guess I was, you know, concentrating and had my face all screwed up, and I

realized that it had become an integral part of what I did as a teacher. You know, that I was constantly looking at my work and not making the assumption that I was doing the right thing—it was up to the kids to figure out what I doing. It was up to me to figure what they were doing. And what they were getting or not getting and that was, that’s what made the huge difference. (IT1-5-21)

Similarly, Sue expressed a strong conviction that the process of NBPTS certification permanently changed her as a teacher through the process of reflection, relating this example:

I think that it really influenced every single thing that I did. Every single thing, yeah, because I never lost that. I even continued that when I was doing teacher training and now back working with teachers and working with students. Just yesterday I was doing some name activities with my little, sweet 1<sup>st</sup> graders who, and kindergarteners, who don’t know letters and names and I’m thinking ‘okay now I have twenty minutes; what is the most important thing I could be doing?’ (IT2-23-18).

Furthermore, the perception of NBCTs as reflective practitioners was not limited to the NBCTs’ themselves. Others, too, viewed the NBCTs as reflective practitioners always looking for ways to improve themselves and their practice, such as this observation voiced by one of Janie’s colleagues:

[She] will always look for ways to better herself in what she is doing and I think she does still use some of these colleagues that she met through this process, so I think that’s probably another thing that really was beneficial for her that she made lots of contacts with people outside of ... [the school district] that she can still

rely on and contact and find out what they are doing. You know, she is always, she's always trying to find the latest, the newest, the best thing. (IC6-5-18)

Janie confirmed this observation, crediting the certification process, "National Boards doesn't care about anything except how you answer the question, 'How does this improve student learning?'" And you get so focused on that one question, like a laser beam" (IT3-9-29).

Furthermore, the superintendent of Callie's school district described her as "always thinking about things that we need to do differently or we need to do better" (IA1-6-9). Plus, Sue's administrator viewed her as "the type of individual who is always looking to better themselves" (IA2-5-20). Sue's reflective practice was further endorsed by her administrator's evaluation that Sue was:

The type of individual that is always progressive, trying to find out whatever there is available to help better her as an educator and especially now in the role that she is in, is taking that knowledge and that wisdom...and implementing that into other teachers. (IA2-2-25)

### *Reflection Extended*

In the same way, Bill was definitive about the difference NBPTS certification made in his evolution as a teacher. He credited the reflective element of the NBC process as a continuous influence on his teaching practice in "that self-reflective practice is just, it's nonstop. I sleep, I dream, you know, the idea of am I doing what should be done to be the most effective teacher I can" (IT4-23-6). However, his reflective actions extended beyond his daily practices in the classroom to include time involved in other district activities:

I collaborate and share with peers. You know, this is what I'm doing. But it is a priority that National Boards said to me through that process of reflection and analysis, 'what is the most important thing for me?' and for me it is the students that I'm assigned. (IT4-6-38)

Moreover, his robust commitment to his students lead Bill to incorporate reflective practices into his assessments of students, also requiring students to be self-reflective, as seen in the course syllabus for his theatre class and the peer analysis form for speech and debate (D3; D4). In the course syllabus (D3), reflection by students on their projects and performances is an integral part of the course assessment. In addition, peer analysis in speech and debate (D4) requires the students to reflect on the strengths of other students as well as how they would have conducted the debate differently than their peers. Thus the element of self-reflection emphasized in the process of NBPTS certification impacted teachers and students many years following the achievement of certification.

In addition to Bill's extension of reflective practices to his students, an example of the impact of the reflective nature of the NBPTS certification process was noted in Callie's extension of her reflection philosophy to the teachers she supervises as an administrator. In working to facilitate writing practices in the elementary school, Callie designed an innovative journal writing program based on the reflection process she experienced while going through the NBC:

I asked them to use reflective journals as a way to share with me what they're feeling and what they're thinking about what's going on. Using that same idea from National Boards that the journaling and the reflective process is what

changed my attitude as a teacher...that I needed to grow and learn every moment.  
(IT1-14-35)

In this way, Callie not only encouraged reflective practice in her district's teachers, but also in herself as she responded weekly to the submissions of her teachers (D5).

Specifically, Callie asked the teachers she supervises to reflect each week on a writing lesson by maintaining Reflective Writing Journals (D5). Callie's guidelines for reflective journals provided a framework for teachers to reflect not only on the outcomes of a writing lesson, but also on improving the lesson. She encouraged the teachers to deepen their understanding of writing through anticipation of students' needs for future lessons. Additionally, as a component of the reflective process, Callie required teachers to collaborate by sharing reflective journals with one another and responding to each other's writings. Thus, though the regular response to the reflections of her colleagues, and by encouraging their responses to each other, Callie collaborated with her staff in unique and powerful ways that directly impacted actions in the classroom.

#### *Expert Status*

Colleagues and administrators alike reportedly perceived the NBCTs in this study to be experts in education. This perception was due in part to the NBCTs' willingness to share expertise and ideas with colleagues, as well as an increased level of respect throughout the district. A cross-case comparison of the theme of expert status with accompanying data sources is depicted in Figure 5. The sub themes of collaboration and districtwide resource supported the theme of expert status.

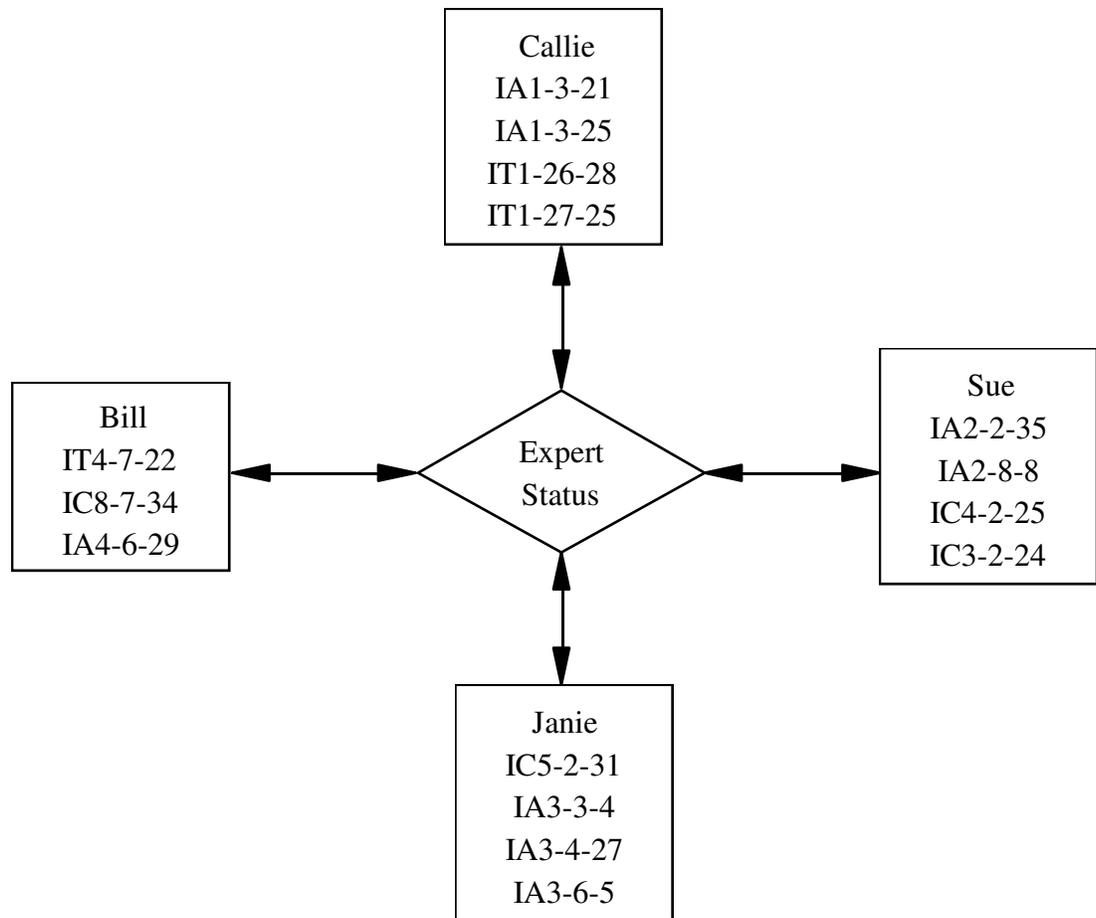


Figure 5. Theme expert status with data sources.

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*Collaboration*

Opportunities for collaboration often came to these teachers due to their expert status. Colleagues expressed the notion that NBCTs were viewed as experts and more knowledgeable about the big picture of education than other teachers. One of Janie's colleagues indicated:

With her ability to facilitate different programs or being certified in all these different areas that she brings a lot to the table. She understands, as a whole, how things work. Often times we tend to look towards her for her guidance or her

expertise, but then, too, she is aware of all of the different implementations of being successful. (IC5-2-31)

In the same way, Sue's colleagues valued her expertise and willingness to share ideas in a positive way, "With her having seven years being National Board Certified, it is a huge kind of like a weight off of our back, because she has such great ideas and such great things to share with us" (IC4-2-25). Additionally, Sue's colleagues expressed confidence in her knowledge of current issues in education, "She is very intellectual and she knows her stuff and she is very knowledgeable about everything out there" (IC3-2-24).

Likewise, Bill's administrator expressed the conviction that "activities...in a National Board classroom are different. They look different, they sound different." (IT4-7-22). Specifically, she went on to describe the higher order thinking skills she observed Bill's students applying as she witnessed:

In his debate class, it's more the kids bringing up the topics and him helping them, leading them in discussion to find their own answers rather than what answer he thinks it should be or what answer maybe the school thinks it should be. You know, he's really trying to help them find ways to help find the answers, and to think for themselves, and he does it a lot in his classes. (IA4-6-29)

Additionally, in working with peers, the expert status of NBCTs was recognized as they mentored other teachers, both NBC candidates and other teachers in their districts, presented at workshops, and worked closely with administrators. Indeed, administrators valued their NBCTs for their collaboration with staff and expressed confidence in the expertise of these teachers. After working many years with Janie, her

administrator described her as “always a leader, always a go-to-girl” (IA3-3-4).

Additionally, she viewed Janie as an expert who also served as a resource for administration, “she is very much in the know and has her finger on the pulse of what is happening in education, so, you know, sometimes she is a resource for me” (IA3-4-27).

Likewise, Sue’s administrator depended upon her as a role model for the many young, inexperienced teachers in the building and recognized “because of the experience that she has and the knowledge she has and with my younger staff they appreciate that very much. They appreciate what she has and what she can give to them” (IA2-2-35). He further elaborated on the impact of her expert status on his relationship with Sue:

She is in the place where she still has a great love for the kids and works really hard with the kids, but she has the respect with the rest of the staff members that ... she has a lot of influence on them, too. Which, as an administrator, you love having a support person like that. (IA2-8-8)

#### *Districtwide Resource*

Moreover, administrators regarded the expert status of NBCTs as a districtwide resource important for the community, especially parents. With regards to Janie’s history as a special education teacher, her administrator postulated:

After she finished her National Board Certification, if I had been the principal then and I had known that and, you know, she had that certification, I think it would have been important to some parents with special needs children. Those having an IEP that would fall under her services. I think that that would have been, given those parents who are sometimes challenging to work with because they often want the moon and the stars, I think telling them that we are going to

have ... [Janie] serving him or her in the LD area, did you know that she is Nationally Board Certified? I think that that would have been a real confidence booster for our parents who are sometimes difficult to please. And I probably would have used that. (IA3-6-5)

Similarly, one colleague of Bill's expressed certainty in the high regard district patrons held for the NBCTs in the district:

I know that the community also is very proud of the fact that we have a number of National Board Certified teachers and I think that that gives them great confidence in our teaching staff and the education that their students are receiving.... I believe that would be in any district...that the community would feel that way. (IC8-7-34)

Furthermore, even though Callie held the position of elementary administrator, her superintendent viewed her status as a NBCT as "a very positive thing" (IA1-3-21) and referred to her as very knowledgeable about current educational issues several times during the interview. In sum, he stated, "I think people give her just a little additional, probably, respect because of her being a National Board Certified teacher. They assume that she may know just a little bit more than the normal teacher/principal because of that certification" (IA1-3-25).

Callie related an experience that vividly illustrated the impact of NBC on expert status. After receiving NBPTS certification, she perceived a shift in the way in which the district leadership viewed her:

I felt like my superintendent in...[capital city] looked at me with renewed respect.

He asked me to serve on various committees at the superintendency level ...it was really empowering to me because I was new to the district, and I was just another teacher that they hired. But before, I was just another employee and now all of a sudden I was an employee with some kind of credential. I think having National Board Certification superseded them getting to know me. It was like it stepped me up to a place where—and you know teachers for a long time and you know what they’re doing in their classroom, the superintendent trusts what you’re doing and your principal trusts what you’re doing so you kind of get that reputation of being someone in the district that you can rely on. It sort of superseded all that because I was only in the district a year when I was asked to be on salary and welfare, you know, which was unheard of, especially in a big district. (IT1-26-28)

It was Callie’s perception that this accelerated expert status in her district was a direct result of her status as an NBCT. She was ardent in her interpretation that “what happens is National Board gives you, for the administration, gives them a level of confidence in you and your ability that they don’t necessarily know right away” (IT1-27-25).

### *Teacher Leadership*

The leadership role of teachers in schools has been recognized as valuable to school improvement (Barth, 2001; Lambert, 2003). Teacher leaders have been characterized by their roles and responsibilities as well as by their intrinsic motivation for working towards a culture of professionalism in education (Lambert, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Reeves, 2004). Along this same line, all participating NBCTs indicated that having NBPTS certification had influenced their job position, roles, and responsibilities at some point in their career. A cross-case comparison of the theme of teacher leadership

with accompanying data sources is depicted in Figure 6. The sub themes of roles and responsibilities, increased confidence, and motivation to lead supported the theme of teacher leadership.

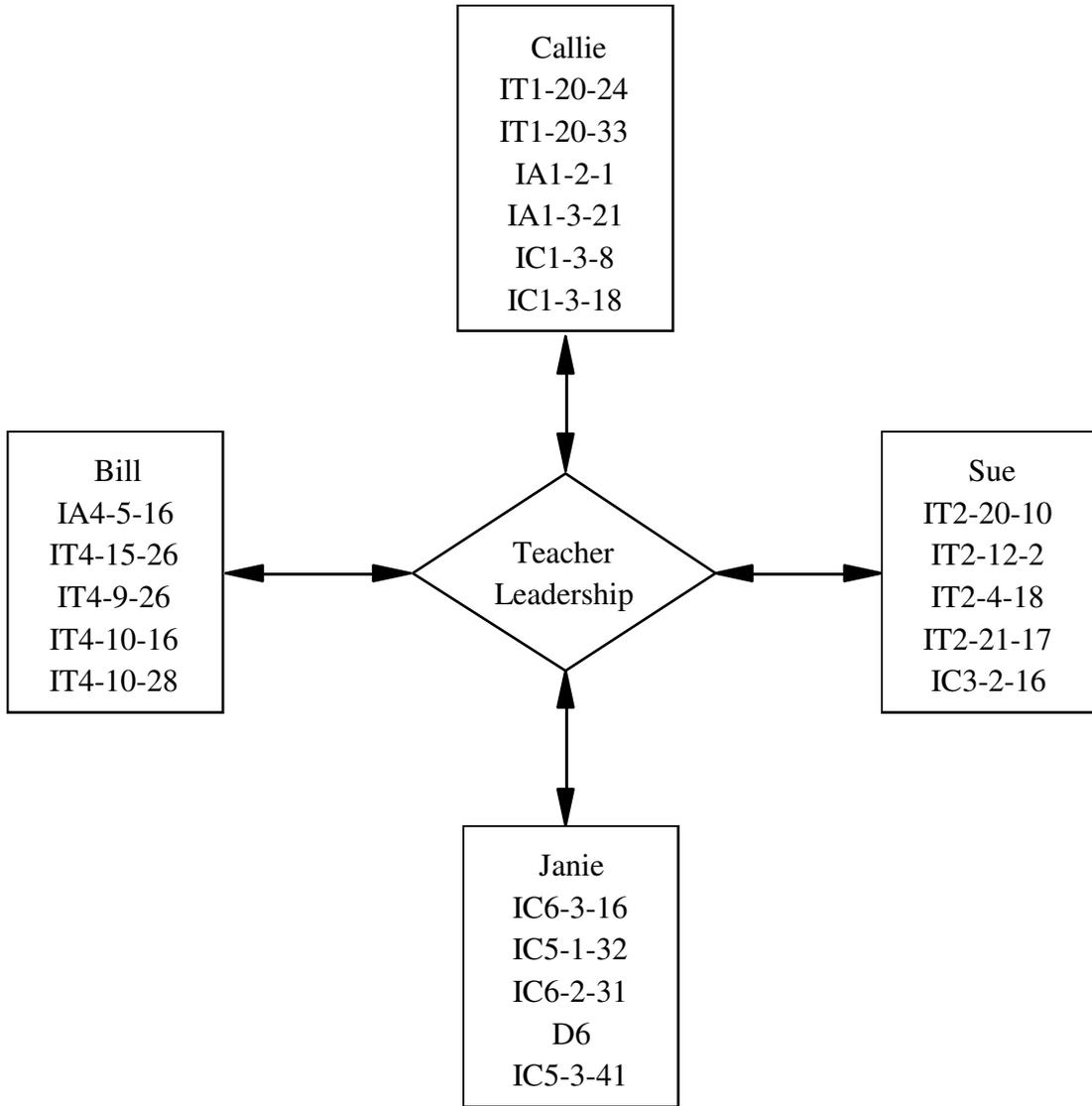


Figure 6. Theme teacher leadership with data sources.

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*Roles and Responsibilities*

The influence of NBPTS certification on participants' roles and responsibilities consisted of being hired for a position because they were an NBCT, as well as having had opportunities for other leadership roles due to having NBC status. For example, Bill's

administrator acknowledged the fact that her knowledge of Bill as a presenter on the topic of NBPTS certification prior to his application to the district had motivated the district to hire him:

So a year and a half or two years later when we had a drama teacher opening and we found out that he had applied for it...we have to interview him because he was so dynamic a speaker and he seemed like he really was on the ball and it ended up in his interview, of course, that he was [NBPTS certified]. So that's why...We knew of him and we had seen him at a couple conferences so we were real happy to get him. (IA4-5-16)

Likewise, Bill recalled the excitement he felt when making the move with the opportunity to head the theatre department in a district that strongly valued NBPTS certification:

I came over, I saw the facility, I met the principal, I saw the environment and I said, 'Wow. I feel like I could really make an impact here. I feel like this is a need that I could help address.' So I interviewed, I received the position they were very excited to offer, and I've been embraced, and it's just been a really, a really beautiful thing. I'm very excited. (IT4-15-26)

As department head, Bill recognized the leadership opportunity this role provided to him, "I'm the theatre department and it's nice when I speak to the district or I speak to principals, I'm speaking on behalf of my department" (IT4-10-28). Furthermore, Bill's role as a teacher leader in his district motivated him to petition the school board to make changes in the departmental structure of the district's high schools. Organizationally, the theatre department fell under the umbrella of communication arts, which Bill felt

hampered his ability to effectively meet the needs of his students; therefore, he took action for change:

I was the one who, and for the district, went to the district school board and said you have the theatre department in the wrong department. We are not communication skills. While I value communication arts and I believe it's important, for me to be effective as a theatre teacher I need to be in the right department. State alignment says theatre is a fine arts program. We are aligned with fine arts at the state level. So it was hard to promote fine art issues and run them through an English department that was dealing with...testing, dealing with writing issues, etc. (IT4-9-26)

While Bill's efforts resulted in a district-wide restructuring, successfully achieving his goal for positive change did not terminate Bill's leadership initiative. He continued to build toward best teaching practices as an advocate for expansion of the district's Professional Learning Communities to include the fine arts as he revealed "last year the board said, 'Gosh you're right. We should do this.' So we have now just moved over to fine arts. So now this year my goal is, let's get a fine arts PLC up and running" (IT4-10-6).

Likewise, Sue perceived possession of the credential of NBCT was the key to being hired for her position in the state Reading Initiative Program:

It was really not just that...[the district] got to pick somebody and it was an automatic in. I had to do, to show my credentials and then go for an interview with the director... I really think that the National Board Certification was a key during the interview process. The...[state department] people were very

impressed that I had that. My certification was early literacy, we were starting our training in early literacy and so then I was offered that position probably two years after I had completed by National Boards. (IT2-12-2)

Furthermore, certification continued to impact her ability to work with her peers in a leadership capacity, “I don’t know that without it that I would have taken the challenge of the fulltime staff development role which was pivotal” (IT2-20-10).

Similarly, Callie’s administrator supported the fact that NBPTS certification directly influenced the school district’s decision to hire her as an administrator:

Of course when we interviewed her that was one of the topics of conversation because that was very unique to us. [The board] Was curious what that was all about and we talked about that quite a bit. So, yeah, we’ve been aware of that since way before she was employed here (IA1-2-1)...I know we were very impressed with that fact, not being familiar with it ourselves and not knowing a lot about the process. (IA1-3-21)

The influence wielded by Callie’s possession of NBPTS certification was further substantiated by her colleague’s impression that “I can remember when she interviewed; the current superintendent said that she was a National Board Certified teacher” (IC1-3-8) and “I remember the superintendent saying, ‘You know, she has a lot of knowledge as far as academics, or to be your academic leader for the teachers’” (IC1-3-18).

### *Increased Confidence*

Additionally, Callie credited having attained NBC for the confidence she felt in deciding to make the move from classroom teacher to elementary principal:

I think that with going through National Board, that that was quite a challenge.

You know, that was huge for a teacher to take on, and so I wasn't scared by just a school. I've done National Board Certification, what can it possibly be, you know? (IT1-20-24)

What's more, Callie insisted being a NBCT continued to impact her ability to be an effective administrator:

And so taking on the administration didn't scare me because I had already done the biggest...National Board Certification...and I think it just prepared me to be able to do that piece of the job that requires you to say you've got to improve your instruction and it doesn't scare me to tell anybody that. (IT1-20-33)

In contrast, even though Sue had received her Specialist in Elementary Administration, she felt no desire to seek out an administrative position. Sue attributed her satisfaction with her position as a teacher to the visionary leadership she had been fortunate to work under and, in fact, reasoned, "my desire to go and run a school myself was diminished because they were so great and I had so many opportunities within the school to be a leader because of their leadership" (IT2-4-18). However, Sue left no doubt as to the impact of NBPTS certification on her confidence to pursue opportunities to demonstrate her strengths within the context of her career as a teacher:

I'm super [at] and I love being a cheerleader to encourage people to learn and to do better practices. And I have been able to find that in super interesting ways and a lot of that I think is because of the National Board. That is when I took some little extra career diversions that were fun. (IT2-21-17)

Furthermore, there was the sense among Sue's colleagues that her status as a NBCT had a positive impact on her job and her relationship with the building principal, "I think it helps her do her job.... I know that our principal uses her a lot as a valuable resource" (IC3-2-16).

### *Motivation to Lead*

As indicated, the long term impact of holding the credential NBCT was instrumental in not only opening doors for teachers, but in motivating teachers to pursue leadership roles. One colleague saw the influence of NBC on Janie as "[it] made her much more confident to do that and get through that and become a part of that group, and so that probably has a lot to do with how she accepted more leadership roles and things like that" (IC6-3-16). Additionally, another colleague of Janie's described her leadership force "as a teacher district wide, I think she gives above and beyond more than most teachers. Not that every teacher doesn't work hard but she really puts forth an extra effort. She often takes the lead role. She facilitates and organizes different things" (IC5-1-32). That sentiment was corroborated by Janie's colleague who, interestingly enough also referred to Janie as "always going above and beyond and, you know, a lot of people seek her out" (IC6-2-31).

A typical example of Janie's leadership throughout her district was demonstrated by the presentation of a cooperative learning structure to her colleagues (D6). Within this presentation, Janie not only fully explained the steps and rationale for utilization of the strategy, but also provided management ideas, variations on the strategy, and explicit adaptations for each core subject and grade level. As one colleague plainly stated, "She always makes it available to everyone and she even goes as far as making copies and

organizing it in outline form and then helps with the training of the newer teachers and working with the older teachers as well, but really gets the information out there” (IC5-3-41).

### *Professionalism*

Professionals in education are understood to possess knowledge and expertise in their field as well as in their involvement with students (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). As previously noted, the NBCTs participating in this inquiry were considered experts in their fields by colleagues as well as administrators, thus establishing their position as professionals in education. A cross-case comparison of the theme of professionalism with accompanying data sources is depicted in Figure 7. Sub themes of commitment to the profession, vision of the profession, and future plans supported the theme of professionalism

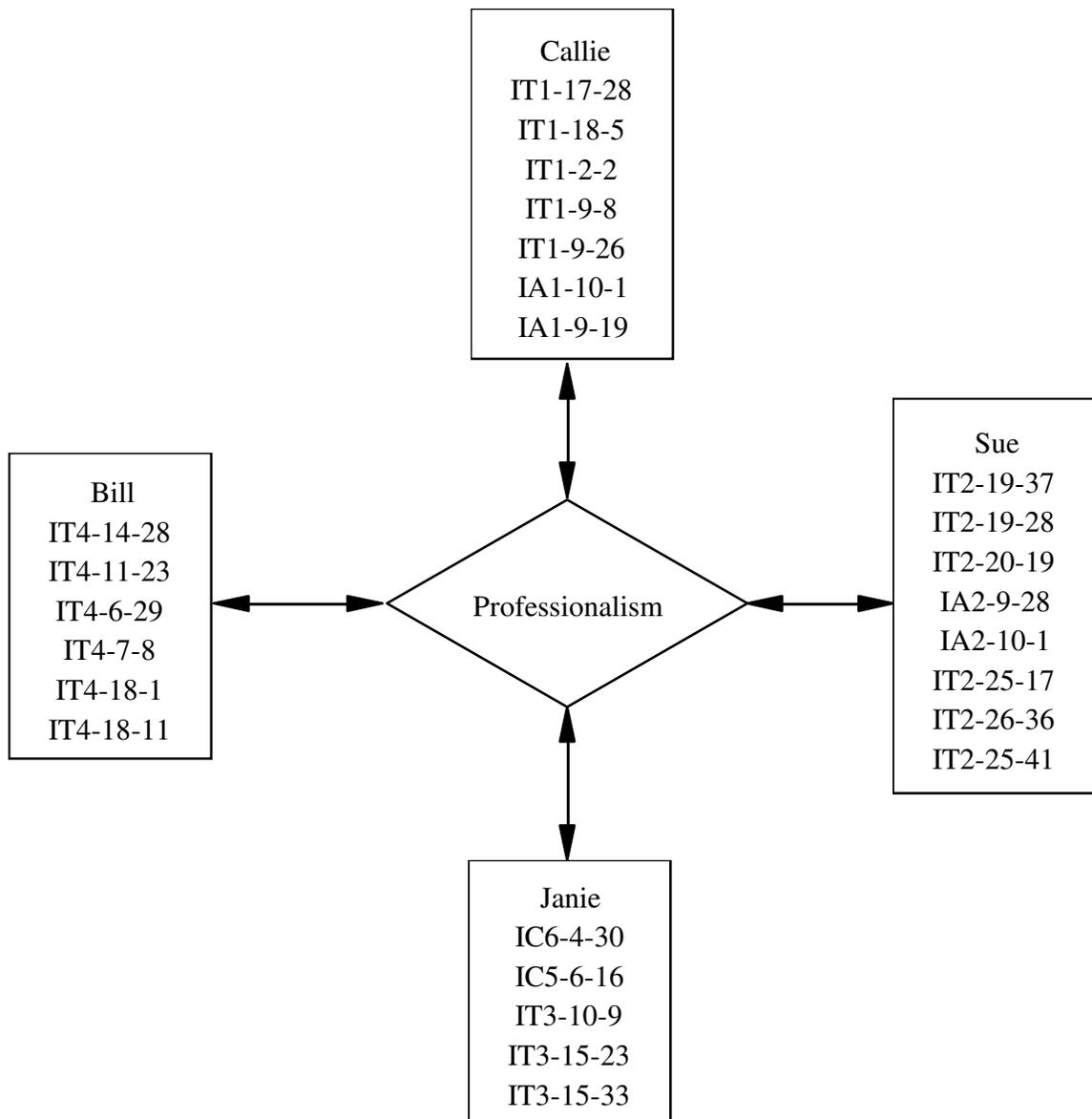


Figure 7. Theme professionalism with data sources.

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*Commitment to the Profession*

Participating NBCTs were characterized as professionals due to their intense level of commitment to the profession. For example, Sue’s administrator perceived the achievement of NBPTS certification “just shows a little more commitment” (IA2-9-28), and furthermore “it just shows an extra drive that that person has” (IA2-10-1). Similarly,

one of Janie's colleagues described her as "extremely on a professional level at all times. And it really is her life. This is her life" (IC6-4-30). Another of Janie's colleagues was equally adamant in describing her professionalism as "unlike any other teacher I have ever met, I can say that...her work ethic is unmatched by anyone I've ever met...But then, too, she is on that level of professionalism, but then too she is on the every day level that we enjoy as well" (IC5-6-16).

One aspect of a heightened level of commitment to the profession included high expectations for the profession, and thus, for all educators in the field. Callie expounded on her high expectations for teaching:

I have very high expectations for teaching and I have a difficult time with the folks in the field who are there to earn their paycheck and not there to inspire their craft...but it really frustrates me, frustrates me when I work with people who I don't think have any desire to improve and, I just feel like they're in the wrong field because this is a place where we have to improve day by day, moment by moment. (IT1-9-8)

She further extrapolated on the basis for her high expectations:

National Board maybe has to take some blame for that. I don't remember being quite so tough on my colleagues prior to National Board Certification and as you might guess, as an administrator I have a lot of expectations for my teaching staff and, I think that they struggle, sometimes, with my expectations for them. (IT1-9-26)

Callie's administrator valued her high expectations for professionalism calling her "a visionary" (IA1-10-1) and further explained, "she has very high standards and is not

afraid to express those standards or desires or wishes to her teachers and I think sometimes she gets probably a little flack because she's very, very determined to impress upon her teachers her expectations" (IA1-9-19).

Another aspect of a heightened level of commitment to the profession was defined by commitment of time. Bill described his own commitment to teaching in terms of time, "I no longer look at my year as an isolated unit" (IT4-14-28). Specifically, he described, "I look at my job as starting at seven a.m. but it does not end until six, seven, eight, nine, ten o'clock at night and so there's often times a bleed over" (IT4-11-23). While willing to commit above and beyond his contracted time, Bill acknowledged the fact that having NBPTS certification had allowed him to become more selective in the allotment of his time. Bill explained it this way:

What National Boards did was have me recognize that I am fortunate to make an impact on 120 individuals a semester. And that's 240 students. That's a lot of students to make an impact on. So I want to address those because those are the ones that the district has asked me to serve first. (IT4-6-29) ...but I don't feel a pressure to join a district committee for the sake of personal gain or professional clout or. There's no, there's no desire to do that. While I would serve on any district committee without hesitation, I don't want it to be, 'I feel this impressive need to do that.' Because I can be more selective now and say, 'this is what's best for my kids.' (IT4-7-8)

Likewise, after becoming NBPTS certified, Janie became more particular in her focus as a result of her NBC experiences:

Before I take on a new task or a new job or responsibility I ask myself, ‘Well, if I do this, how’s this going to improve student learning?’ And if I don’t have a satisfactory answer, I say no and, I don’t feel any guilt about that or remorse. If I feel like it will improve student learning, then I jump at the chance. (IT3-10-9)

### *Vision of the Profession*

Personally, the NBCTs regarded their place within the profession of teaching as irrevocably altered by their experiences as NBCTs and that their understanding of the profession had become broader as a result of being NBCTs. For instance, Sue became friends with a high school teacher in her district that was participating in the process of NBPTS certification at the same time as she was. Looking back, Sue related the radical shift in her vision of her place as a first grade teacher compared with her friend, a high school teacher, within the greater profession of teachers:

Even though we were doing dramatically different things with curriculum, that there were more ways that we were alike than we were different, and...the gem we would take away from it was that we never, ever would be able to look at our students or what we did with them with old vision. It was...like we had had cataracts and they’d been peeled off because you had to ask that question always, ‘So what? So this is fun but so what? So what it is doing for their learning?’ (IT2-19-37)

Callie articulated a similar experience in comparing her vision of her role as a teacher before and after NBPTS certification asserting, “It certainly broadened my thinking about what it is that we do” (IT1-2-2). She described her vision of the profession before certification in a narrow way:

When I became a teacher, I was so ready to be in a classroom and teach those little guys, you know, how to read and write, but I never thought of it...I didn't think of it in the more global sense about being a productive citizen yet. That hadn't really sunk into me that I was taking children and moving them into the world. (IT1-17-28)

Callie went on to explain how her point of view widened:

My teaching broadened into working with teachers across the state, across the nation, working with governors, and we met the president at one point and he explained to us how impactful he saw National Board being to the United States. We were, you're empowered to go back and look at what's going on in your classroom and it's at that point and time I realized I wasn't just preparing fourth graders for fifth grade, I was preparing, I was a step in the process for them to go out into the real world and that's what probably was the most empowering and probably the most impactful thing that National Board did for me was open my eyes to what my goal was as a teacher and that I was preparing them for the bigger scope of life. (IT1-18-5)

### *Future Plans*

Heavily influenced by their views of the teaching profession were the future plans of the participating NBCTs, especially in regards to their anticipation of the impending renewal process of their NBPTS certification. Two of the NBCTs were definite about their intentions to maintain their status as NBCTs, while two participants did not intend to pursue renewal. In the case of Sue, when asked about the worth of her certification as her expiration year approached, Sue zealously stated, "I absolutely value that

certification” (IT2-19-28) and even though she could retire at anytime, “at this point [I] am all about wanting to renew” (IT2-20-19).

Likewise, Bill was unwavering in his intention to seek renewal of his NBPTS certification even though he now teaches high school performing arts, making it difficult for him to renew his certification in early adolescent English language arts. In spite of this, Bill set a new professional goal of working toward the establishment of NBPTS certification for performing arts:

The thing that bothers me the most is I am National Board Certified right now but obviously it’s a ten year term and they are not offering National Board Certification in my subject area, so I’ve decided I’m going to do what I can to get my subject area approved. (IT4-18-1)

Knowing that the process for establishing NBPTS certification in performing arts would be lengthy, Bill already had a plan for his own renewal process:

I’m not afraid to not call myself NBCT because to me the impact it made is lifelong....I probably will apply in a totally different area....For me, going through that practice for a year of reflection is going to strengthen my teaching.... So I’m not done yet. It’s a lifelong thing. (IT4-18-11)

Callie also had experienced a change in her professional circumstances by becoming an administrator; therefore, she opted not to pursue renewal at this juncture in her career. On the other hand, Janie was unsure as to the value of pursuing renewal of her certification for vastly different reasons. Her involvement in the Teacher Leaders Network had influenced her perspective:

They talked about unintentionally, intimidating non-National Board teachers with their aggressive go get 'em attitude and I just, you know, that was very eye-opening to me. I did not realize. I knew there were states that supported the whole process way more than...[my state] did but I did not realize that it is taking on its own kind of culture, especially in larger districts and I don't think I would want to be a part of that. (IT3-15-23)

Additionally, Janie's disappointment over the lack of statewide support for NBCTs was evident in her suggestion that her state "needs to do more. They give a lot of talk and I don't see much action" (IT3-15-33). Janie's uneasiness about the perception of an aggressive culture, her disappointment over the lack of statewide support, and her intense focus on student learning in her local district have worked to discouraged her from pursuing renewal.

Nevertheless, Sue was optimistic on the subject of state recognition of NBPTS certification. She related her experience regarding a recent change in the state certification requirements for veteran teachers due to the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. The state was required to classify and document the highly qualified teachers practicing in the state. In completing the state documentation, Sue, who was automatically classified as a highly qualified teacher due to her status as a NBCT, expressed satisfaction by stating, "I was happy to see that National Board Certification had enough recognition at the state level that it would be an instant ticket to being a highly qualified teacher as defined by the... [state] standards for *No Child Left Behind*" (IT2-26-36).

Sue summed up her point of view regarding the function of NBPTS certification in strengthening the profession of teaching on a personal note:

Anytime you meet somebody that has gone through the process, there is a common language in terms of the tenants of accomplished teaching that absolutely gives you common ground to talk about and I've never met anybody that has been through the process, that it wouldn't be easy to have like a five or six hours conversation with. (IT2-25-17)

As a more public impact on the profession, Sue regarded the power of NBPTS certification to be even broader, "what the Board Certification does is that it gives a label to a body of good work that a teacher has done and it's a label that's recognizable and that people honor" (IT2-25-41).

### *Conclusion*

The themes of reflective practitioner, expert status, teacher leadership, and professionalism emerged through a cross-case comparison of data between all cases in this qualitative inquiry into the impact of NBPTS certification on the career paths of teachers. Graphic organizers depicted the data sources for each case by theme as data were analyzed and served to document triangulation of data for a deeper understanding of the extent to which NBPTS certification impacted the career paths of veteran teachers.

A review of the study protocol including the sample population, data collection methods, and process utilized for data analyses began Chapter Four. Also included in Chapter Four were descriptive data representative of each of the four cases followed by a within-case summary of each. Concluding the chapter was a cross-case comparison of data between all cases. Graphic organizers depicted the four themes that emerged from

data analyses and data sources that supported each theme. Findings and conclusions based on the data analyses are discussed in Chapter Five along with implications for practice and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Introduction*

This multiple case study examined the career paths of four National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in one Midwest state in order to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification on the profession of teaching. The long term impact of NBPTS certification on the evolving career paths of teachers served as an indicator of the impact of NBPTS certification on the profession of teaching. A summary of the findings of the inquiry and conclusions based on the data analyses are discussed in Chapter Five along with implications for practice and recommendations for future study.

Characteristics of qualitative research that were vital to this study included the holistic nature of qualitative inquiry, the natural setting in which the investigation occurred, and the smaller population of study available versus the larger number of participants necessary for statistical significance in quantitative research (Merriam, 1998). This researcher determined that a qualitative, multi-case study offered the best opportunity for participants to share perceptions and personal reflections regarding the influence of NBPTS certification on their career paths. Thus through this inquiry, greater meaning and insight into the long term impact of NBC on the teaching profession could be constructed.

#### *Summary of Findings*

The process of qualitative inquiry provided a framework to address the overarching inquisitiveness guiding this investigation: How has attainment of NBPTS

certification influenced the career paths of teachers? The following four themes related to the career paths of NBPTS certified teachers emerged as data were scrutinized: reflective practitioner, teacher leadership, expert status, and professionalism. Thus, within the context of these four themes, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?
2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?
3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers' roles and responsibilities over time?
4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?
5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

In Chapter Five, the researcher summarized data presented in Chapter Four that addressed each research question. Furthermore, interpretations of data were guided by the literature review synthesis of research on teaching as a profession, career paths of teachers, the policies of standards-based reform, and the NBPTS.

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?

All NBCTs participating in this study began their careers in education as classroom teachers. Sue obtained NBPTS certification as a veteran teacher of 25 years, thus would be considered one of the generation of teachers who entered the profession prior to *A Nation at Risk*. The other three participating NBCTs obtained certification after only six years of teaching thus characterizing them as members of the new generation of

teachers influenced by the accountability reform movement initiated by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Research (Johnson & Kardos, 2005) revealed teachers' expectations for their career paths have undergone a shift due to the influence of standards-based reform.

The generation of teachers who entered the profession prior to *A Nation at Risk* consisted of teachers currently eligible for retirement while another generation of teachers came to the profession in the mist of the reform movement initiated by *A Nation at Risk*. The probability of multiple careers during their work life separated the new generation of teachers from the retiring generation (Johnson & Kardos, 2005) who characteristically entered teaching immediately post college expecting a single, long term career. Typically, many in the new generation of teachers brought with them expectations of higher pay, a well-resourced work environment, and the opportunity for advancement on the job. As a matter of course, the new generation of teachers prefers working with colleagues in teams, desires varied roles and responsibilities, and expects to gain professional influence over time. This new generation's vision of the profession closely aligned with the vision for reform framed in *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986) which initially suggested the creation of the NBPTS.

However, regardless of which generation the participating NBCTs in this inquiry reflected, over time each NBCT interviewed willingly took on additional roles and responsibilities, some of which were formal district roles, while others were informal responsibilities. For example, after highly influential committee work within her district, Callie became an elementary principal, offering her multiple opportunities to impact

numerous students and teachers. Similarly, Sue worked as a statewide reading consultant, a role that provided an opportunity to mentor and instruct teachers across the state. After four years traveling the state, Sue continued her role as a reading consultant within her home district, mentoring and instructing teachers. Similarly, Janie leads her division and is well known in her district for sharing ideas, mentoring, and leading district in-service training in addition to her teaching duties. Likewise, in addition to his teaching duties, Bill heads the theatre department, serves on a student recognition committee, works long hours beyond the regular school day, and seeks a forum for national recognition for his field of fine arts. Whatever the distinction of the role, these teachers sought out greater influence over students, teachers, and thus over the profession of teaching, above and beyond their classroom duties after achieving NBPTS certification.

2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?

Notably, participating teachers attributed the achievement of NBPTS certification for their increased level of confidence and motivation to pursue additional roles and responsibilities. Moreover, Bill, Callie, and Sue each related a personal experience in which having NBPTS certification open doors for employment opportunities. For Sue, possession of NBC was instrumental in being chosen for the Reading Initiative position as “National Board Certification was a key during the interview process. The...[state department] people were very impressed that I had that” (IT2-12-13). But even without changing employment positions, NBCTs reported an increase in the respect they received from administrators and colleagues as a result of being NBPTS certified.

Perhaps most telling was the perception of the participants of an increased level of confidence in their own abilities to fulfill extended roles and responsibilities as a result of achieving NBC. Due to this keen level of confidence, Bill and Janie became more selective in the responsibilities they accepted, requiring every activity to directly impact student learning in a positive way. Each attributed this heightened awareness to the certification process, therefore signifying that NBPTS certification enhanced their ability to answer the call of *A Nation Prepared* for Lead Teachers to “take mutual responsibility for the curriculum and instruction on the basis of thinking together and individually about the substance of their work—children’s learning—and how to make themselves better at it” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 58).

3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers’ roles and responsibilities over time?

Just as NBCTs expressed increased confidence in their abilities to take on extended roles and responsibilities, so did their colleagues indicate an increased level of confidence in the NBCTs as expert educators. NBCTs were sought out by colleagues due to their expertise and willingness to share as evidenced by numerous examples of collaboration between the NBCTs and their colleagues. Likewise, every administrator perceived the NBCT as an expert resource not only for them, but for all district stakeholders. In each instance, colleagues and administrators viewed the NBCT as an authority in education possessing a depth of knowledge regarding issues in education that surpassed the ordinary professional and thus served as a districtwide resource. Therefore the vision framed by *A Nation Prepared* came to fruition in these NBPTS certified

teachers as Lead Teachers who “derive their authority primarily from the respect of their professional colleagues” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 58).

Colleagues and administrators unanimously perceived the NBCTs as reflective, professional, progressive, expert, confident, and knowledgeable. For instance, it was noted by colleagues and administrators of Bill, Sue, and Janie that collaboration with these NBCTs was highly valued due to the level of expertise each willingly shared with others. Furthermore, Callie’s administrator and colleagues extrapolated high expectations for her capacity as an administrator due to her status as a NBCT. While these perceptions were based on personal experience with a particular NBCT, the expectation was expressed that any NBCT would be an asset and resource for the district, thus establishing a foundation of high standards and expectations for the participating NBCTs due to their certification status.

4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?

Universally, the participating NBCTs associated an increase in reflective practice due to the process of NBPTS certification that directly impacted their teaching as well as extending beyond the classroom. All four NBCTs related a deliberate, continuous evaluation of their teaching practices and professional interactions with colleagues that grew out of the certification process. For example, Bill extended his reflective philosophy to his formal assessment of students, and further incorporated reflective actions into the students’ course objectives. Additionally, Callie continued to foster reflective practice as an administrator by initiating reflective journals with her staff. Moreover, reflection-in-

action (Schön, 1983) dominated the teaching practices of Sue and Janie as they focused every moment on how to improve student learning.

Reflection in practice was depicted in the Core Propositions as a standard of teaching related to teachers' effectiveness in monitoring student learning, thinking systematically about practice, and learning from experience (NBPTS, 2002). Research further identified reflective practice as a characteristic of high quality teaching that was "crucial to lifelong learning and a professional necessity" (Stronge, 2002, p. 21) for effective teachers. Each participating NBCT made time for reflection on their actions a priority and conveyed their convictions to others through mentoring, modeling, and presentations. Thus, they professionalized teaching in fulfillment of one central element necessary to improve teaching stipulated in *A Nation Prepared* "fundamental to our conception of a workable professional environment that fosters learning is more time for all professional teachers to reflect, plan, and discuss teaching innovations and problems with their colleagues" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 60).

5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

Throughout the interviews, colleagues and administrators described the NBCTs as leaders while the NBCTs themselves related increased participation in roles that imparted them greater influence over the profession of teaching. Qualities of leadership ascribed to each NBCT were evidenced by mentoring, collaboration, leading presentations, sharing ideas, and communicating high expectations for self and for colleagues. Each NBCT was noted to have demonstrated an increased level of commitment to the profession and

shared ideas with other teachers, administrators, school boards, and policymakers on a regular basis. The participating NBCTs associated the increased confidence and motivation to pursue leadership activities with having achieved NBPTS certification. Additionally, the concept of a broader vision of the profession molded the process of NBPTS certification was communicated in each interview with a NBCT during this inquiry.

In support, researchers (Danielson, 2006; Johnson & TPNGT, 2004) described NBCTs as master teachers with expertise that benefited the school as a whole. Moreover, teacher leaders “work with colleagues for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, whether in a formal or an informal capacity” (Patterson & Patterson, 2004, p. 74). In this leadership capacity, Bernauer (2002) and Lambert (2003) agreed that teachers as professionals learn from one another, thus leading to a high-performing organization. Teacher expertise embedded within and supported by a culture of professional inquiry was observed to contribute to professionalism in teaching and benefit the school district as a whole in studies by Barth (2001), Danielson (2006), and Lieberman and Miller (2004). Further extrapolated to the broader context of the profession of teaching, Sue’s insight regarding the common ground existing among NBPTS certified teachers personified the far reaching impact of NBPTS certification experienced by these teachers. By seizing opportunities for greater influence, these NBCTs realized the vision of *A Nation Prepared* that “what is central is that, by vesting responsibility for instruction in Lead Teachers, schools will capitalize on the knowledge and skills of its most capable staff and create a career path worth pursuing” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 60).

The paramount nature of the impact of NBPTS certification on Callie, Sue, Janie, and Bill was plainly demonstrated in their future career plans. All four had previously contemplated renewal as the 10 year life of their certification comes to an end. Plans for renewal figured prominently in Sue's future even as Bill desired renewal to such an extent that he determined to pursue certification in another field in order to maintain his status as an NBCT. Although Callie valued her certification, she felt the direction of her career as an administrator negated involvement in the renewal process. Yet, despite the fact that Janie valued her achievement of NBPTS certification, she was unsure about the worth of renewal due to lack of equitable statewide support she experienced in her area. Janie's experience points to a weakness in state policy directed at professional focus warned against in *A Nation Prepared* that "in anticipation of Board-certified teachers being available for hire, state authorities should begin drafting plans to offer districts incentives to engage such teachers in appropriate roles and at higher rates of pay than teachers without Board certification" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 69).

### *Conclusions*

How would meaning be ascribed to the findings of this qualitative inquiry? Distinctively, qualitative inquiry seeks to explain the meaning of an experience as a whole through the lens of the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998) and tends to be specific to that particular situation (Creswell, 2003; Merriam). What matters "is not whether findings will be found again but *whether the results are consistent with the data collected* [author's emphasis]" (Merriam, p. 206). With that in mind, the following conclusions based on the study findings of the long term impact of NBPTS

certification on the career paths of NBCTs in one Midwest state pointed to strengths and shortcomings within the context of teaching as a profession.

Teaching was defined as a profession by virtue of being an organized group of practitioners sharing an ideology of ethics and possessing expert knowledge and expertise in their field (Argyris & Schön, 1974). A strength revealed by the study findings determined the profession of teaching was impacted by the career paths of these teachers in that these NBCTs were considered by colleagues, administrators, and community stakeholders to be experts, more knowledgeable about the big picture of education than other teachers not NBPTS certified. While the roles and responsibilities willingly assumed by the NBCTs distinguished them as confident, professional, and high quality teachers, their professional persona established the designation of NBPTS certified teachers in general as experts.

A further strength discovered through this inquiry found NBCTs to be a bridge between teachers and administrators as well as between the school district and the community stakeholders. NBCTs bridged the gap between administrators and teachers by serving as role models, thereby eliciting an increased level of respect and confidence from both administrators and colleagues through leadership activities throughout the district and beyond. Also serving to build bridges between the school district and the community, the professionalism of the NBCTs transferred to the district as a whole resulting in a reported perception of an increased level of respect and confidence by the community toward the district due to having NBCTs on staff. It is therefore concluded by these findings that the long term impact of NBPTS certification on teachers' career paths,

and thus on the profession of teaching, was a positive one, smoothing the progress of the plan recommended in *A Nation Prepared*:

Once the Board is in place, the profession will find itself, for the first time, in control of the definition of what it means to be a professional teacher. As the high standard set by the Board becomes widely known, public confidence in teachers will rise. (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 69)

On the other hand, the study findings also exposed a shortcoming of the profession in the apparent lack of support and compensation for teachers desiring extended roles. A most telling indicator of this shortcoming was the difference in future plans of the participating NBCTs with regard to renewal of NBPTS certification. Sue and Bill, who receive regular recognition and financial compensation as a result of their NBC status, were strongly committed to renewal. Conversely, Callie and Janie, who work in districts where NBPTS certification is not a priority and there is no policy in place to compensate teachers for achieving NBC, do not plan to pursue renewal. While Goldhaber and Anthony (2004) concluded that any return on the investment in NBCTs to the education system depended upon the career path of the teacher following certification, the findings of this inquiry suggested a potential loss of expertise that might otherwise be shared due to the increased level of confidence experienced by NBCTs if the education system failed to support NBPTS certification. The conclusions based on the study findings are represented by a graphic organizer in Figure 8.

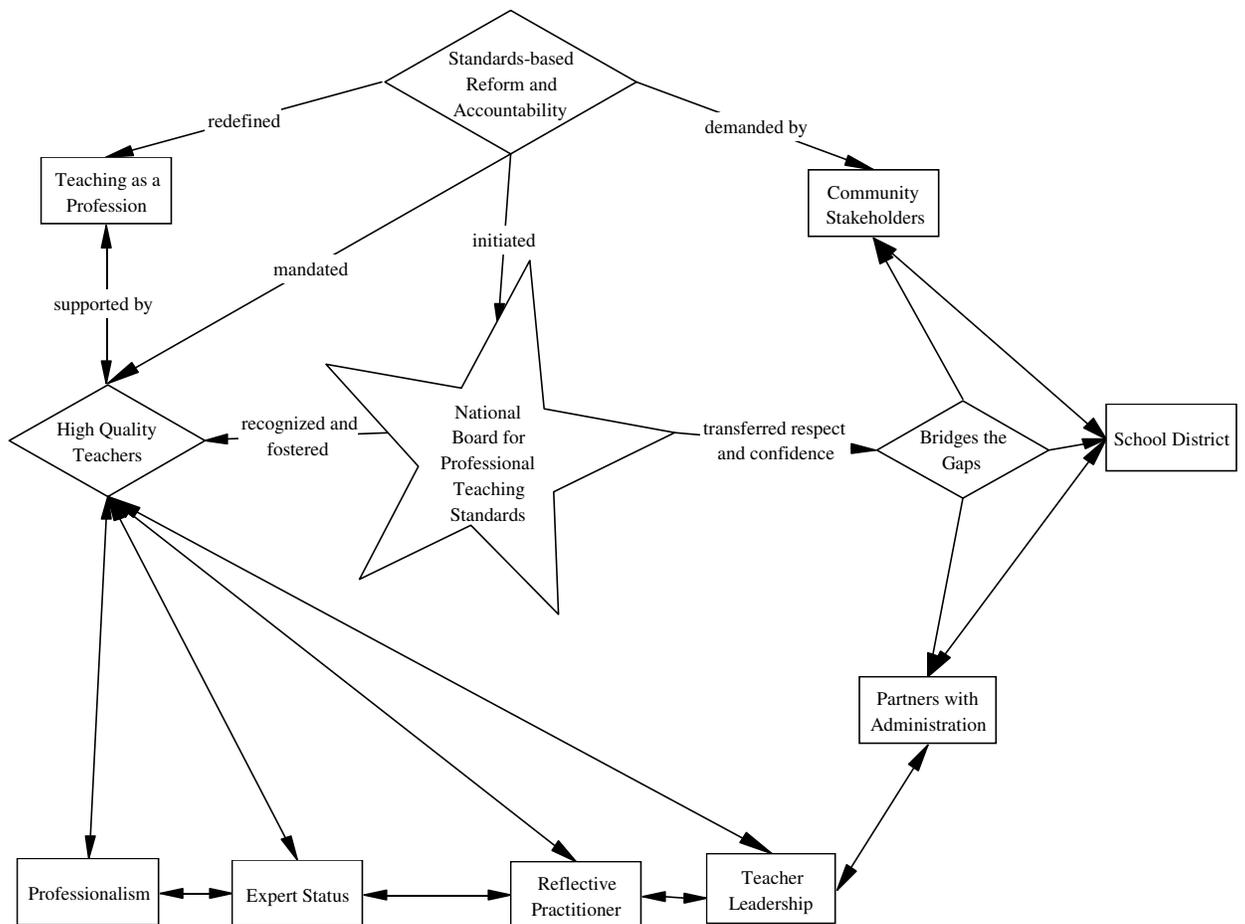


Figure 8. Conclusions based on study findings.

### Limitations

The researcher in qualitative inquiry is considered the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and therefore, “must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). Typically, a multiple case study adds validity to the inquiry and enhances prospects for generalizability of subsequent findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998); however, the following limitations were inherent to this case study:

1. It was assumed that all participants communicated honest and open responses based on their personal experiences.

2. Data collected through on site interviews represented the perceptions and experiences of a limited number of participants at each unique location.
3. The study population was geographically limited to NBCTs in one Midwest state achieving certification between the years 1994 and 2000.
4. Due to an extremely limited cross section of ethnicity in the pool of potential candidates, all participants were ethnically Caucasian.
5. The researcher was a NBCT and therefore had a personal experience similar to the participants and brought personal biases to the study.

Researcher bias was reduced through review of all data by an experienced researcher to substantiate credibility and consistency. Additional safeguards designed to lessen the influence of personal biases on this study included systematic coding of data within and across cases, identified protocols for the study, and triangulation of data.

#### *Implications for Practice*

The implications of this inquiry for practice in education are far reaching encompassing leadership, finances, and touching the core of the work day—time. The study findings pointed out the importance of reflective practice for high quality teaching. However, the typical school work day must evolve to allow more time for reflection by teachers and administrators alike. Furthermore, many educators must be shown effective and productive methods for reflection that make this action relevant to their practice. Only with more time and training will teachers make better use of reflection-in-action and model this evaluative thinking in the classroom, thus fostering higher level thinking in students.

It was further noted by the findings that NBCTs were assumed to possess expert knowledge as high quality teachers and willingly shared that expertise with others. Typically, one teacher impacts the students under his or her charge each year; however, as NBCTs passed on knowledge and expertise to colleagues, their influence extended beyond one classroom to the myriad of students being served by teachers within the district. Furthermore, as shown by the participants in this study, as NBCTs take on leadership roles outside their district via presentations at conferences, mentoring, and teaching teachers, their influence expanded beyond their own district.

However, the disconcerting implication of this finding of promising leadership was that NBCTs were underutilized as experts by state and federal departments of education and by local school districts. State and federal officials must do a better job of tapping into this valuable resource of high quality teachers in order to utilize an identified pool of expertise to mold and shape education policies. Indeed, locally as well, NBCTs are potential partners for administrators and school boards in formulating a vision for grassroots implementation of school improvement and the building of bridges between all stakeholders that ultimately benefit students.

Finally, the financial implications cannot be ignored. Ultimately, teachers must take the lead in determination of the value of investing in renewal of NBPTS certification as well as initial certification. *A Nation Prepared* envisioned that “teachers, having set that standard, will have a considerable investment in maintaining and enforcing it” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 69); however, that prediction has yet to come to pass. Before that vision can be realized, NBCTs must utilize their expert status to inform teachers,

administrators, policymakers, and all stakeholders in education regarding the benefits of NBPTS certification. Hence, once a unified commitment to the standards represented by NBPTS certification is established by educators, the task of enforcing it, including influencing policymakers to financially support it, rests on the shoulders of educators.

Additionally, the policymakers driving the standards-based reform movement must look for new ways to mobilize the existing resources of the NBPTS as a catalyst for fostering highly qualified teachers in conjunction with current mandates established by NCLB. Whether or not the cost of NBPTS certification can realistically be borne by all school districts, the adoption of standards of practice based on the Five Core Propositions has the potential to build a platform that supports a common language for educators. Professionalism in teaching can only be strengthened through this common ground, thus accomplishing the goal of *A Nation Prepared* for:

a system in which school districts can offer the pay, autonomy, and career opportunities necessary to attract to teaching highly qualified people who would otherwise take up other professional careers. In return, teachers would agree to higher standards for themselves and real accountability for student performance. This framework implies a transformation of the environment for teaching.

(Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986, p. 55)

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

While findings indicated a positive long term impact on the career paths of NBCTs and thus on the profession of teaching, other questions were raised during this inquiry that suggested the need for future study.

First of all, would the personality type of these individuals have directed them down a similar career path regardless of whether or not they had achieved NBPTS certification? Studies to identify the personality types of teacher leaders in multiple districts could be compared to data identifying personality types of NBCTs. Likewise, personality types of teachers in general could serve as a control for a study to provide insight into the role of basic personality traits on teacher leadership and NBPTS certification.

Additionally, questions concerning the role of higher education in facilitating professionalism in teaching were raised by the fact that all NBCTs participating in this study had achieved a master's degree. How much did this achievement add to the expertise, the level of confidence, and respect experienced by the NBCTs? Furthermore, what is the role of higher education in supporting NBPTS certification and high standards for teaching? While these issues were beyond the scope of this inquiry, they certainly warrant further scrutiny.

### *Concluding Overview*

This multiple case study examined the career paths of four National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in one Midwest state in order to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification on the profession of teaching. The findings of this inquiry suggested the long term impact of NBPTS certification on the evolving career paths of teachers resulted in teachers seeking out greater influence over students, teachers, and thus over the profession of teaching, above and beyond their classroom duties after achieving NBPTS certification. Additionally, NBCTs experienced an

increased level of confidence in their own abilities to fulfill extended roles and responsibilities as a result of achieving NBC while their colleagues and administrators indicated an increased level of confidence in the NBCTs as expert educators. Moreover, the participating NBCTs experienced an increase in reflective practice attributed to the process of NBPTS certification and exhibited qualities of leadership evidenced by mentoring, collaboration, leading presentations, sharing ideas, and communicating high expectations for self and for colleagues. Thus the profession of teaching was impacted by the career paths of these teachers as their professional persona established the expectation of professionalism for NBPTS certified teachers overall.

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## Appendix A

### *Permission to Use*

1. Dr. Richard Ingersoll
2. Dr. Susan Moore Johnson

Permission to Use from Dr. Richard Ingersoll

From: Richard Ingersoll [rmi@gse.upenn.edu] Sent: Thu 4/6/2006 1:30 PM  
To: ree@pilambda.org; Thompson, Cynthia J (UMC-Student)  
Cc:  
Subject: Re: Richard Ingersoll: "fair use" request  
Attachments:

Cindy:

Rob Ehrgott forwarded to me you request to use a graphic that appeared in my article in the spring 2003 issue of EH. That is fine by me.  
Can you tell me which graphic you plan to use and what point you plan to make with it?

Richard Ingersoll  
Professor of Education  
3700 Walnut St.  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Phone/Fax: 215-573-5674  
Email: [rmi@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:rmi@gse.upenn.edu)  
Webpage: [www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty/ingersoll.html](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/faculty/ingersoll.html)

-----Original Message-----

From: Thompson, Cynthia J (UMC-Student) [<mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu>]  
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2006 10:51 AM  
To: [office@pilambda.org](mailto:office@pilambda.org)  
Cc: [ree@pilambda.org](mailto:ree@pilambda.org)  
Subject: request for permission

I am writing to request permission to adapt research by Dr. Richard Ingersoll from your publication for use in a dissertation and any subsequent publications.

I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. My dissertation is an examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the profession of teaching viewed through the perceptions of NBC teachers and their career paths. I am especially interested in the long term impact of NBC on the career paths of teachers and their leadership roles.

Your publications and Dr. Ingersoll's research have been valuable in building a conceptual framework for the evolving career stages found within the teaching profession. In the course of my research, I have developed a graphic figure representing a

timeline of teacher's career stages based on a synthesis of research presented by Dr. Richard Ingersoll published in *Educational Horizons* (2003) and Dr. Susan Moore Johnson's work with *The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools* (2004). With your permission, I would like to include this graphic in my dissertation and any subsequent publications stemming from my dissertation with appropriate APA citation crediting the adaptation of research by Dr. Ingersoll published in your journal.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,  
Cindy Thompson  
P.O. Box 896  
West Plains, MO 65775  
417-257-2857  
[cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu)

Permission to Use from Dr. Susan Moore Johnson

From: Susan M. Johnson Sent: Sun 4/2/2006  
[susan\_moore\_johnson@gse.harvard.edu] 12:09 PM  
To: Thompson, Cynthia J (UMC-Student)  
Cc:  
Subject: Re: request for permission  
Attachments:

Hi Cynthia,

I'm glad that you've found our work helpful. You can certainly cite it in your dissertation. I appreciate your asking.

Best wishes with your dissertation.

Susan

Susan Moore Johnson  
Pforzheimer Professor  
Harvard Graduate School of Education  
431 Gutman Library  
Cambridge, MA 02138

On Apr 2, 2006, at 11:30 AM, Thompson, Cynthia J ((UMC-Student)) wrote:

Dear Dr. Johnson,

I am writing to request permission to adapt information from your work for use in a dissertation and any subsequent publications stemming from my dissertation.

I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. My dissertation is an examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the profession of teaching viewed through the perceptions of NBC teachers and their career paths. I am especially interested in the long term impact of NBC on the career paths of teachers and their leadership roles.

Your publications have been valuable in building a conceptual framework for the evolving career stages found within the teaching profession. In the course of my research, I have developed a graphic figure representing a timeline of teacher's career stages

based on a synthesis of your work with *The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools* (2004) and research presented by Dr. Richard Ingersoll published in *Educational Horizons* (2003). With your permission, I would like to include this graphic in my dissertation and any subsequent publications stemming from my dissertation with appropriate APA citation crediting the adaptation of your work.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,  
Cindy Thompson  
P.O. Box 896  
West Plains, MO 65775  
417-257-2857  
cjtvw5@mizzou.edu

Appendix B

*IRB Approval Form*



## Campus Institutional Review Board

University of Missouri-Columbia

483 McReynolds Hall  
Columbia, MO 65211-1150

PHONE: (573) 882-9585  
FAX: (573) 884-0663

Project Number: **1065937**

Project Title: A Multi-Case Examination of the Impact of National Board Certification on the Profession of Teaching

Approval Date: 07-17-2006

Expiration Date: 07-17-2007

Investigator(s): Martin, Barbara Nell  
Thompson, Cynthia Jo

Level Granted: Expedited

### CAMPUS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

This is to certify that your research proposal involving human subject participants has been reviewed by the Campus IRB. This approval is based upon the assurance that you will protect the rights and welfare of the research participants, employ approved methods of securing informed consent from these individuals, and not involve undue risk to the human subjects in light of potential benefits that can be derived from participation.

Approval of this research is contingent upon your agreement to:

- (1) Adhere to all UMC Policies and Procedures Relating to Human Subjects, as written in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46).
- (2) Maintain copies of all pertinent information related to the study, included but not limited to, video and audio tapes, instruments, copies of written informed consent agreements, and any other supportive documents for a period of **three (3) years** from the date of completion of your research.
- (3) Report potentially serious events to the Campus IRB (573-882-9585) by the most expeditious means and complete the eIRB "Campus Adverse Event Report". This may be accessed through the following website: <http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/>.
- (4) IRB approval is contingent upon the investigator implementing the research activities as proposed. Campus IRB policies require an investigator to report any deviations from

an approved project directly to the Campus IRB by the most expeditious means. All human subject research deviations must have prior IRB approval, except to protect the welfare and safety of human subject participants. If an investigator must deviate from the previously approved research activities, the principal investigator or team members must:

- a. Immediately contact the Campus IRB at 882-9585.
- b. Assure that the research project has provisions in place for the adequate protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and are in compliance with federal laws, University of Missouri-Columbia's FWA, and Campus IRB policies/procedures.
- c. Complete the "Campus IRB Deviation Report". This may be accessed through the following website: <http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/>.

(5) Submit an Amendment form to the Campus IRB for any proposed changes from the previously approved project. Changes may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval except where necessary to eliminate apparent and immediate dangers to the subjects. The investigator must complete the Amendment form for any changes at <http://irb.missouri.edu/eirb/>.

(6) Federal regulations and Campus IRB policies require continuing review of research projects involving human subjects. Campus IRB approval will expire one (1) year from the date of approval unless otherwise indicated. Before the one (1) year expiration date, you must submit Campus IRB Continuing Review Report to the Campus IRB. Any unexpected events are to be reported at that time. The Campus IRB reserves the right to inspect your records to ensure compliance with federal regulations at any point during your project period and three (3) years from the date of completion of your research.

## Appendix C

### *Correspondence*

1. Letter of Introduction

## Letter of Introduction

Date

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>

<Position>

<School District>

<Address>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>

Thank you for taking your time to participate in my research study. I am looking forward to our meeting on <date> <time> at <location> to talk about the impact of National Board Certification on your career path. By voluntarily seeking this advanced certification you have demonstrated your commitment to professionalism in teaching. As the future of education is so strongly influenced by political mandates, such as No Child Left Behind, teachers have an opportunity to take the lead in positive reform.

I have allotted two hours to conduct interviews and observations, and an additional hour to collect documents that allow for a more complete picture of your career path. Documents that may be helpful include your school improvement plan, your professional development plan, calendar, plan book, committee minutes, or school newsletters.

Please find attached a list of interview questions you may wish to reflect on before our time together. Also find enclosed the Informed Consent Form for your review and signature. Be assured that at all times the confidentiality and anonymity of your personal identity and that of your school district will be protected. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me. You will find my phone numbers and email address below.

Once again, I appreciate your participation in my study.

Sincerely,

Cindy Thompson, NBCT  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri  
Home 417-257-2857  
Cell 417-257-9673  
[cjtw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtw5@mizzou.edu)

## Appendix D

### *Interview Questions*

1. National Board Certified Teacher Interview Questions
2. Administrator Interview Questions
3. Colleague Interview Questions

## Interview Questions for National Board Certified Teachers

*Research Question 1:* How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?

1. Please share with me your professional career path as a teacher.
2. How would you describe the various roles and responsibilities you have experienced as a teacher?
3. How would you describe your career stage at the time in which you pursued NBC?

*Research Question 2:* What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?

4. How do you perceive the link between attainment of NBC and the progression of your career path?
5. How would you describe your current career stage?

*Research Question 4:* What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?

6. Please share with me specific examples of how the process of NBC has influenced your teaching practices.
7. Please share with me specific examples of how NBC has influenced your professional activities and relationships.

*Research Question 5:* How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

8. How would you describe your professional relationship, or role, with your colleagues?
9. How would you describe your professional relationship, or role, with your administrator?
10. In what ways have your interactions with your colleagues and administrator been influenced by your status as an NBC teacher?
11. In your view, how has attainment of NBC impacted your desire or ability to influence teaching and learning?

## Interview Questions for Administrator

*Research Question 1:* How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?

1. How long have you supervised or worked with this NBC teacher?
2. How would you describe the roles and responsibilities of your NBC teacher?
3. Please describe how those roles and responsibilities have changed over the years.

*Research Question 3:* What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers' roles and responsibilities over time?

4. How has NBC status of the teacher impacted these roles and responsibilities through the years?

*Research Question 4:* What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?

5. Please describe specific effective teaching practices you have observed in your NBC teacher?

*Research Question 5:* How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

6. How would you describe your professional relationship, or role, with your NBC teacher?
7. Please describe any leadership activities of your NBC teacher that enhance teaching and learning throughout the education community.

## Interview Questions for Colleagues of NBCT

*Research Question 1:* How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?

1. In what capacity and how long have you worked with this NBC teacher?
2. How would you describe the roles and responsibilities of your NBC colleague?
3. Please describe how those roles and responsibilities have changed over the years.

*Research Question 3:* What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers' roles and responsibilities over time?

4. How has NBC status of your colleague impacted these roles and responsibilities through the years?

*Research Question 4:* What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?

5. Please describe specific effective teaching practices you have observed in your NBC colleague?

*Research Question 5:* How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

6. How would you describe your professional relationship, or role, with your NBC colleague?
7. Please describe any leadership activities of your NBC colleague that enhance teaching and learning throughout the education community.

## Appendix E

### *Informed Consent*

1. Letter of Informed Consent Superintendent
2. Superintendent Informed Consent Form
3. Letter of Informed Consent Administrators
4. Administrators Informed Consent Form
5. Letter of Informed Consent Teachers
6. Informed Consent Teachers

## Letter of Informed Consent Superintendent

[Superintendent Name and Address]

Dear [Supt. Name]:

Select teachers and their administrators in your school district are invited to participate in a research study intended to complete my dissertation entitled “A Multi-Case examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching.” The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of National Board Certification on the profession of teaching by exploring the long term impact of certification on the career paths of teachers. The involvement of your district’s teachers and administrators in this study should have beneficial implications for education professionals and for the quality of education they provide to your students and school.

I request your permission to conduct qualitative interview sessions with selected teachers and principals in your district within the next twelve months, provided the principals and teachers consent to participate. If you are agreeable for your teachers and principals to be a part of this study, would you please indicate it in your permission reply so that I may seek their involvement? Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how participants’ rights will be protected:

### - INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR SUPERINTENDENT -

- Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish your district data to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your district’s participation, please contact me at home (417) 257-2857, or on cell (417) 257-9673, or by email at [cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu). You may also contact my dissertation supervisor Dr. Barbara Martin, at (417) 836-5212 or by email at [drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net).

- Interview participants and their answers will remain anonymous. Only my dissertation supervisor and I would have access to identifiable data. Participants’ identity and district or school affiliation will not be published. Materials identifying specific teachers, schools, or school systems will be destroyed upon completion of this project. Data will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results may be published in *Dissertation Abstracts* and in professional journals at any time, protecting participants’ anonymity and confidentiality.

- Participants’ control as to which interview questions are answered, insures that there will be no identifiable risk greater than that encountered in everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Related ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set

forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

- Data collection will not be initiated without preauthorization by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia, to be obtained after your permission is issued. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://www.research.missouri.edu/cirb/index.htm> or <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>

If you elect to allow your district’s teachers and administrators to participate in this study, please sign the enclosed “Informed Consent and Permission Form,” and return it to me at your earliest convenience. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been provided, unless this letter was faxed. A second copy of the “Informed Consent and Permission Form” has been provided for you to retain. Your support is very valuable. Thank you.

Educationally yours,

Cynthia Thompson, NBCT  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri-Columbia  
FAX 417-256-3738

**INFORMED CONSENT AND PERMISSION FROM SUPERINTENDENT**

I, [full name]\_\_\_\_\_, [title]\_\_\_\_\_, on [date]  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_,

approve (or,  do not approve at this time) this School District participation in the dissertation research entitled “A Multi-Case Examination of the Impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching” conducted by Cynthia J. Thompson to fulfill requirements for a doctoral degree. I understand that:

- ◆ A qualitative interview protocol will be used.
- ◆ The participation of this district’s teachers and administrators is voluntary.
- ◆ Participants’ identifying information will be kept confidential and separate from their answers
- ◆ Participants may withdraw at any point without penalty before culmination of the study.
- ◆ Participants need not answer all of the questions.
- ◆ Approximately two hours of time has been allowed for interviews and observations with teachers and administrators

As a result of my approval, please conduct the interviews in this school district through the person(s) indicated below. The researcher has my permission to contact the school district’s teachers directly if no contact person is listed below, or if the listed persons do not reply to the initial contact, or as a follow up to selected participants.

[National Board Certified Teacher’s name]

Other contact person

I have read and understood the Informed Consent Disclosure, which answered my questions to my satisfaction. I sign below in verification of my agreement for this District’s teachers and administrators to participate in the above research activity.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the box if you would like to receive a summary of the study results.

---

**Please return to Cynthia Thompson, P.O. BOX 896, West Plains, MO 65775.  
Home Phone: (417) 257-2857; Cell Phone 417-257-9673.  
FAX: (417) 256-3738. Email: [cjtw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtw5@mizzou.edu)**

## Letter of Informed Consent Administrator

[Date]

Dear Administrator:

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “A Multi-Case examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching.” I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral requirements in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. The study aims to explore the views of a purposeful sample of Missouri National Board Certified Teachers regarding their perceptions of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification on their career paths. Your involvement in this study should have beneficial implications for education professionals and for the quality of education they provide to your students and school.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification on the profession of teaching through an exploration of the long term impact of National Board Certification on the career paths of teachers. The following questions guide this qualitative study:

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?
2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?
3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers’ roles and responsibilities over time?
4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?
5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how your rights will be protected:

**- INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS-**

● Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish the data you provided to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Your refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your participation in this research, please contact me at home (417) 257-2857 or cell (417) 257-9673, or by email at [cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu). You may also contact my dissertation supervisor Dr. Barbara Martin, at (417) 836-5212 or by email at [drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net).

● As interview participant your name and answers will remain anonymous; only my dissertation supervisor and I would have access to identifiable data. Your identity and district or school affiliation will not be published. Any materials identifying specific teachers, schools, or school systems will be destroyed upon completion of this project. Data collected from teachers will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results may be published in *Dissertation Abstracts* and in professional journals at any time, protecting your anonymity and confidentiality.

• Your control as to which interview items you choose to answer insures that there will be no identifiable risk for you greater than that encountered in your everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

• This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

If you elect to participate and make your professional opinion count as part of this study, please review the “Informed Consent Form” at your earliest convenience and return it to me, signed and dated. The interview will take approximately one half hour to complete. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been provided, unless this letter was faxed. A second copy of the “informed Consent and Permission Form” has been provided for you to retain. Please mail or fax your signed Consent Form to me at 417-256-3738. Your participation is very valuable. Thank you very much.

Educationally yours,

Cynthia Thompson, NBCT  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri-Columbia

## INFORMED CONSENT FROM INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the study “A Multi-Case examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching,” conducted by Cynthia Thompson, doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-Columbia. I understand the following:

- My participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point before culmination of the study.
- My responses will be used for dissertation research and for potential future journal publications.
- My identity and affiliation will be kept anonymous and confidential in all phases of the research.
- The interview will take approximately one half hour to complete

I have read the statement above, which answered my questions to my satisfaction.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Please return to Cynthia Thompson, P.O. BOX 896, West Plains, MO 65775.  
Home Phone: (417) 257-2857; Cell Phone 417-257-9673.  
FAX: (417) 256-3738. Email: [cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu)**

Letter of Informed Consent Teacher

[Date]

Dear Teacher:

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “A Multi-Case examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching.” I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral requirements in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri. The study aims to explore the views of a purposeful sample of Missouri National Board Certified Teachers regarding their perceptions of the long term impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification on their career paths. Your involvement in this study should have beneficial implications for education professionals and for the quality of education they provide to your students and school.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification on the profession of teaching through an exploration of the long term impact of National Board Certification on the career paths of teachers. The following questions guide this qualitative study:

1. How have the roles and responsibilities of NBC teachers changed over time?
2. What is the perception of NBC teachers regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of these roles and responsibilities?
3. What is the perception of other stakeholders regarding how NBC status affected the evolution of teachers’ roles and responsibilities over time?
4. What specific processes does the NBC teacher implement as a result of the certification process that leads to enhanced teaching and learning?
5. How does the NBC teacher establish enhanced teaching and learning capacity among other educators?

Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how your rights will be protected:

**- INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS-**

- Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish the data you provided to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Your refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your participation in this research, please contact me at home (417) 257-2857 or cell (417) 257-9673, or by email at [cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu). You may also contact my dissertation supervisor Dr. Barbara Martin, at (417) 836-5212 or by email at [drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drbabs1952@sbcglobal.net).

- As interview participant your name and answers will remain anonymous; only my dissertation supervisor and I would have access to identifiable data. Your identity and district or school affiliation will not be published. Any materials identifying specific teachers, schools, or school systems will be destroyed upon completion of this project. Data collected from teachers will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results may be published in *Dissertation Abstracts* and in professional journals at any time, protecting your anonymity and confidentiality.

- Your control as to which interview items you choose to answer insures that there will be no identifiable risk for you greater than that encountered in your everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results

from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

- This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>.

If you elect to participate and make your professional opinion count as part of this study, please review the “Informed Consent Form” at your earliest convenience and return it to me, signed and dated. Keep this letter for future reference, if you wish. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been provided or you may fax your signed Consent Form to me at 417-256-3738. Your participation is very valuable. Thank you very much.

Educationally yours,

Cynthia Thompson, NBCT  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Missouri-Columbia

## INFORMED CONSENT FROM INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the study “A Multi-Case examination of the impact of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification on the Profession of Teaching,” conducted by Cynthia Thompson, doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-Columbia. I understand the following:

- My participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point before culmination of the study.
  - My responses will be used for dissertation research and for potential future journal publications.
  - My identity and affiliation will be kept anonymous and confidential in all phases of the research.
  - The interview will take approximately one half hour to complete
- I have read the statement above, which answered my questions to my satisfaction.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please return to Cynthia Thompson, P.O. BOX 896, West Plains, MO 65775.  
Home Phone: (417) 257-2857; Cell Phone 417-257-9673.  
FAX: (417) 256-3738. Email: [cjtvw5@mizzou.edu](mailto:cjtvw5@mizzou.edu)**

## Appendix F

### *Forms*

1. Interview Protocol Form
2. On-Site Observation Form
3. Document Review Form

Interview Protocol Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning Time \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Time \_\_\_\_\_

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Field Notes:

On-Site Observation Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning Time \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Time \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Observations:

Document Review Form

Name of Document \_\_\_\_\_

Document # \_\_\_\_\_

Date Procured \_\_\_\_\_

Document Received From \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

*Data Codes*

Appendix G

## Data Codes

A	Administrator
C	Colleague
D	Document
I	Interview
T1	National Board Certified Teacher 1
T2	National Board Certified Teacher 2
T3	National Board Certified Teacher 3
T4	National Board Certified Teacher 4
AI- <u>5</u> -42	Underlined section indicates the page number of data
AI-5- <u>42</u>	Underlined section indicates the line number of data

## VITA

Cynthia Jo Thompson was born on April 26, 1956 in Little Rock, Arkansas to Charles John Runnells and Peggy Jo Browning Runnells. In 1987, she moved to Missouri with her husband, James Edward Thompson, M.D. and son, Jefferson Andrew Gray. She attended Missouri State University in Springfield where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in 1995. In 2002, Cynthia completed her Master of Education with an emphasis in Middle School Education at Drury University, also in Springfield. As part of the University of Missouri-Columbia statewide cohort program, she earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in 2007.

Cynthia Thompson taught middle school students at Fairview R-XI School District in West Plains, Missouri from 1996 to 2005, and achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification in Early Adolescence/Science in 2003. She currently teaches middle school in the West Plains R-7 School District. Cynthia is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and has taught classes as an adjunct professor for Missouri State University-West Plains and Drury University-Thayer.