# Teacher Autonomy in a Standards and Testing Focused Education Climate:

# A Mixed Methods Study of Teacher Autonomy in the Pikes Peak Region

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**Abstract**

The study examined autonomy of teachers in the Pikes Peak region. Participants were selected through random and purposeful sampling methods. Of the 2,056 participant population size, 363 participants completed the questionnaire. Total autonomy was the key variable examined in the current study by investigating various factors that contributed to teachers feeling autonomous, as well as comparing student achievement through English Language Arts (ELA) and math scores in suburban, urban, and rural schools. Results indicated that many of the factors studied were related to total autonomy while also being interrelated. Strong correlations resulted between total autonomy and collaboration among teachers, job satisfaction, administration listening to the needs of teachers, autonomy granted to teachers from their principals, and empowerment to be in the profession. When ELA and math scores were examined by a school's geographic location, suburban school students outperformed their peers at rural schools in both ELA and math.

*Keywords: teacher autonomy, empowerment, self-efficacy, student achievement.*

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Teacher autonomy was recognized as an important concept in the education profession, but was not discussed in detail and rarely ever implemented until recently. Teacher autonomy was essentially a teacher's freedom in his or her classroom to make decision that best met the needs of his or her students without feeling pressure from his or her principal, as well as a teacher's ability to incorporate personal instructional strategies into the delivery of content material (Strong & Yoshida, 2014). Understanding what autonomy meant and how it represented itself within a classroom setting was crucial for schools to grasp in order to grant the privilege to its teachers (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). In recent years, autonomy emerged as an important phenomenon in many schools and provided many advantages to teachers.

Teacher autonomy was a notable area of focus in the education world because it allowed teachers to feel more empowered, satisfied at their jobs, and less stressed and exhausted. This resulted in better teacher retention rates year after year, as well as more teachers staying in the profession (Strong and Yoshida, 2014). When teachers were given the freedom to implement their own knowledge and practices, while still following standards and meeting accountability measures, they often showed higher student academic growth rates and were able to form better relationships with their students, colleagues, and principals (Strong and Yoshida, 2014). Autonomous teachers felt they were given the power to make change and have a sense of control over their work life. They were finally allowed to have a voice in their schools' decision-making processes and felt free from being micromanaged by their principals.

Teacher autonomy was intended to improve student achievement. Principals and administrations believed this could be achieved if teachers felt as if they had more freedom and were not under constant pressure to reach achievement goals (Strong and Yoshida, 2014). By trusting their teachers, principals thought teachers could meet those expectations without being put under the microscope. As teachers began to feel more autonomous, they were able to redirect their delivery of the material to incorporate students' personal interests. Students were able to connect better to their learning, which then encouraged them to be more motivated and engaged at school. As a result, student achievement scores increased (Anderson, 1987).

In regards to this study, teacher autonomy was examined at the local level in a region where there were many different types of schools represented (i.e. urban, suburban, and rural). Teachers in these three geographic locations often had different goals and objectives in regards to what their student population needed. Therefore, teacher autonomy in one setting was beneficial to a teacher's success, whereas in another school setting, having autonomy was detrimental to the teacher's career and student growth.

The critical importance of providing teachers with autonomy was investigated due to the proven beneficial outcomes; however, the concept was being threatened due to the stricter accountability goals, state standards, and standardized testing. Teachers struggled to find their own teaching pedagogy and found their own values and beliefs about teaching not being implemented into their practices and instruction. This study helped to gain perspective on what aspects of autonomy allowed teachers to thrive and be successful in their profession.

The research objectives of this study were to determine:

- The perceived level of teacher autonomy among teachers in the Pikes Peak area;

- The important items that correlated strongly with total autonomy;
- The relationship between perceived levels of teacher autonomy and student achievement;
- The difference in perceived teacher autonomy among urban, suburban, and rural schools; and
- The difference in mean ELA and mean math scores among urban, suburban, and rural schools.

## Literature Review

Teacher autonomy was a concept in the field of education that had sparked interest and controversy in recent years due to schools' increased accountability measures and the need for improved student achievement (Crawford, 2001). The term autonomy had varied in meaning depending on the educational climate. In recent years, Strong and Yoshida (2014) defined teacher autonomy as having a sense of control and independence in one's work environment, having freedom from the demands and pressures one often feels from his or her principal or administration, and having the ability to make decisions in one's classroom or school. Essentially autonomy gave teachers the ability to deliver the curriculum (the content, materials, goals, skills, procedures, etc.) in a manner that allowed them to feel empowered by showing their competence. Through this sense of empowerment, teachers acted and were treated as professionals because they were given the freedom to implement their skills, specialized knowledge, and understandings about teaching (Crawford, 2001). By embedding autonomy in this dimension of teacher empowerment, teachers began to believe that they had control over their work life (Lu, Jiang, Yu, & Li, 2015).

Teacher autonomy allowed teachers to have freedom in how they presented academic material without constant and direct administration supervision, as well as having the ability to

deliver instruction in a way that was conducive to learning for all their students; however, teachers were not always allowed to do what they wanted (Anderson, 1987). There seemed to be this common misconception that when teachers were given autonomy then that meant they did as they pleased by not following any rules or guideline in terms of what they taught and how they taught it. There were guidelines, such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and individual state standards that advised teachers on what material and content must be covered and suggestions on ways to instruct. In light of this idea, teachers needed appropriate instruction about what autonomy actually meant and know how to successfully implement autonomy into their practices (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). The standards and the knowledge and understandings about autonomy were employed to help teachers foster learning and promote academic growth in their students (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010).

Anderson (1987) believed that autonomy occurred on a continuum, therefore allowing teachers to present their understanding of autonomy and implement various characteristics of autonomy in different ways. He also believed that teachers needed to earn autonomy through expertise, experience, and excellence in the classroom rather than having it immediately bestowed onto them when they began their teaching careers. Through this idea of learning and earning autonomy, teachers in the profession strived for more independence and academic freedom; autonomy became a privilege when it was presented in this way (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005).

In conjunction with autonomy was the concept of self-efficacy. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) defined self-efficacy as a teacher's understandings and confidence about his or her own skills to prepare, organize, and execute academic activities in order to achieve educational goals

and meet students' needs. Hoffman, Huff, Patterson, and Nietfield (2009) contributed to this definition by defining teacher efficacy, which was a teacher's belief in his or her competence to positively alter student learning outcomes and classroom management objectives. Both definitions involved the teacher and discussed how the teacher's views about his or her teaching style and abilities in the classroom affected how his or her students academically grew and learned. Self-efficacy was often gained through teacher training and preparation programs when individuals began to understand who they were and wanted to be as teachers and formed their teacher goals, values, and beliefs. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) conducted a study that examined and compared various teacher preparation programs. As a result of their research, they found that when teachers felt more prepared and confident in their teaching abilities after having finished their program, they were more likely to have a stronger sense of teacher efficacy.

Autonomy and efficacy went hand-in-hand due to the positive relationship between the two concepts. When a teacher had more autonomy, he or she was more likely to have a higher sense of self-efficacy since he or she was given more opportunity and freedom to implement his or her skills and academic knowledge. Through autonomy and self-efficacy, a teacher's principal was bestowing confidence on him or her to put into practice what the teacher knew in order to achieve student goals and improve student outcomes (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Principal and administration support was critical for teacher autonomy to exist and for teachers to have self-efficacy. Collie and Martin (2017) described perceived autonomy support (PAS) as a teacher's impression that his or her principal embraced his or her interests, respected his or her thoughts and opinions, and encouraged his or her autonomy. When teachers received

support and help from their principals, they often built a relationship based on trust, which then allowed them to feel more empowered, engaged, motivated, and committed to their work. Also when a principal allowed his or her teachers to exercise more autonomy, research proved that student achievement increased (Collie & Martin, 2017). When there was a strong relationship between a teacher and his or her principal, the teacher often performed better and had more of a positive attitude towards his or her job (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017). When a close, trustworthy relationship was made between teachers and principals, principals were more willing to listen to the needs and requests of the teachers; therefore allowing more change due to a principal's power in decision making processes that affected schools, teachers, and student achievement (Gawlik, 2008). Principals needed to be aware of their school cultures, especially in recognizing challenges facing teachers in terms of autonomy, as well as ensuring their school was maintaining its accountability through improvements in student achievement (Strong & Yoshida, 2014; Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017). Teachers needed to feel successful and competent at their jobs, and in order for that to be achieved, principals needed to create collaborative spaces to allow teacher voices in decision making processes that involved the school or the teachers (Lu, Jiang, Yu, & Li, 2015). By encouraging teacher participation, principals provided teacher autonomy.

Collaboration was essential among teachers who had autonomy in order to grow as professionals and have more self-efficacy. In order to improve teacher professionalism and efficacy, there was a need to create professional learning communities (PLCs) to continue the dialogue among teachers and to ensure that autonomous teachers did not become isolated. PLCs helped to restructure working conditions in schools to support teacher autonomy and continue

professional activity through collaborative mentoring, dialogue, and engagement. PLCs contributed to a positive school learning culture, which was the manner in which teachers adjusted to change, identified and fixed errors, and continuously improved and revised their teaching strategies and abilities. By encouraging teachers to be lifelong learners, teacher continued research about new teaching methods and adapted them in ways that met the needs of their students (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010). Participative management, which was collective decision-making, sharing, and collaboration among school employees who were at various hierarchical levels, was also incorporated into a healthy school learning culture. By creating a trustful, respectful space, teachers felt more comfortable openly discussing issues or concerns that needed to be addresses with the reassurance their co-workers would support them. This type of collaboration directly affected autonomy and self-efficacy in a positive manner since it allowed teachers to express their thoughts and opinions about decisions that would impact their teaching and school climate (Lu, Jiang, Yu, & Li, 2015).

The need for teacher autonomy was extremely important due to its many beneficial outcomes. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) conducted research on the relationship between teacher autonomy, empowerment, stress, and job satisfaction. The researchers believed that teachers needed to have autonomy in order to stay in the teaching profession. When teachers had more autonomy, they felt more like professionals since they had more control over their work environment in terms of the decisions being made, as well as having more motivation to teach. This then stemmed into the idea of teachers feeling more empowered once they were given more freedom to control and execute decisions about their classrooms. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) also concluded that when teachers felt more motivated and autonomous, they became more

satisfied in their jobs and less stressed. Therefore, as empowerment, professionalism, and job satisfaction increased, stressed decreased. When teachers felt less stressed and overwhelmed by their jobs, they had a new outlook on teaching and became more excited, motivated, and less exhausted by their work. Job satisfaction was another important result of teacher autonomy and self-efficacy. When teachers had more autonomy and self-efficacy, they felt happier in their jobs and were more willing to contribute to building a strong school climate and culture through participation in collaboration and decision-making efforts (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017). Researchers also discovered that a teacher's well-being and overall job satisfaction was positively associated with a student's numeracy achievement. Therefore, when teachers felt better and more competent at their jobs, then there was a good chance that their student achievement rates would improve (Collie & Martin, 2017).

Although autonomy provided freedom for teachers, the instruction that autonomous teachers implemented directly affected the students and their academic achievement and success. Several studies had investigated the impact of school location, meaning urban, suburban, or rural, on student achievement. Young (1998) examined the effects of school location on science and math achievement while controlling for student and school background variables. Results concluded that the school location had a weak effect on science achievement, but a strong effect on math achievement. The more rural and remote the schools were, the lower the math scores. Fan and Chen (1998) had different results than Young (1998). They looked at reading, math, science, and social studies scores for rural, urban, and suburban schools, and reported that rural students performed just as well as their peers in urban and suburban school settings. Therefore, research was inconclusive on the effects of school location with student achievement.

When considering student achievement and autonomy, it was critical for students to feel connected to their teachers and their schools by being proud members of the community (Hung, Badejo, & Bennett, 2014). Hung, Badejo, and Bennett (2014) discovered that having a flexible school structure, support systems, positive reinforcements, and good student-teacher relationships were all predictors of increased student achievement. When students believed that their teachers truly cared about them, they often did better in school and had stronger connections with their teachers (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017). Teachers needed to keep focused and interested in their students' academic well-beings. Wong, Wiest, and Cusick (2002) found in their research that if teachers no longer seemed interested in their students, put more emphasis on students' grades and less focus on the learning process, and did not have autonomy, then students felt less connected to their teachers and often showed a decline in their academic achievement. Students needed to feel motivated and engaged in school, as well as to have good relationships with their teachers in order for them to grow academically and to improve their overall achievement.

In order to motivate students, teachers needed to support a student's autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Teachers needed to allow their students to have some freedom in their academic work, feel a sense of connectedness to their schoolwork, and feel competent in what they were doing and learning. By applying those three areas in the classroom, teachers excited students about school and helped them to be engaged in their learning; however, a teacher needed to have his or her own sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence in what he or she was teaching in order for those skills to benefit a student's learning outcome. It was

important for teachers to develop strategies for instruction and structure in their classrooms in order to achieve these goals (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017).

A teacher's behavior was a strong predictor of student motivation in learning and attitude towards school. When teachers had more autonomy, their demeanor often shifted to encourage more student engagement and allowed them to feel happier and more productive in their work environment. Assor, Kaplan, and Roth (2002) did research on autonomy enhancing and suppressing behaviors, meaning that when a teacher had more autonomy, they often did a better job at fostering relevance in academic work that related to their students' personal goals and needs, providing choice for their students, and allowing criticism and opinions about how they could improve as educators. The autonomy suppressing behaviors included not encouraging criticism, intruding on students' personal lives, and forcing students to perform meaningless and tedious academic activities. Fostering relevance was the biggest predictor of engagement in schoolwork and academic success, while suppressing criticism was the strongest predictor of negative engagement in school. This implied that teachers needed to be empathetic towards their students by knowing their goals, needs, and interests in order to link those areas back to school tasks and learning.

In order to achieve that connectedness and understanding of their students, schools created a constructively aligned curriculum to be executed by teachers. Kuhn and Rundle-Thiele (2009) described this type of curriculum as teachers implementing learning assessments and activities that supported students in achieving their goals and needs. By connecting school to the outside world, teachers helped their students to become more social, cultural, and worldly. They provided them with skills and knowledge beyond the academic setting (Katyal & Evers, 2004).

Therefore, teachers became guides to facilitate instruction since students became more responsible for their own learning. Schools utilized this curriculum by incorporating rigorous professional development programs for teachers to understand the goals and outcomes of a constructively aligned curriculum. They then employed the proper academic strategies and materials to perform in order to sustain their teacher autonomy and increase student performance (Hung, Badejo, & Bennett, 2014).

Although autonomy provided better outcomes for teachers in regards to decreased stress levels and exhaustion, overall better job satisfaction, more decision-making abilities, and improved student achievement, schools struggled to find the balance between too much or too little teacher autonomy. Schools needed to remain accountable by continuing to show good student achievement scores in order for them to stay open and be funded (Collie & Martin, 2017). By giving new teachers too much autonomy, there was the risk of burnout due to the lack of structured guidelines; teachers often felt as if they were floundering because of the little support and structure they received from their principals and other administration staff (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Problems existed for teachers when they were given ample amounts of autonomy. Those included: isolation due to the little interaction and collaboration that took place, limited feedback about performance due to the lack of baseline standards and measures, and high levels of stress in association with having no guidance and structure (Anderson, 1987). A balance of autonomy needed to be achieved in order for teachers to not lose their focus, to become flustered or overwhelmed, and to guide their students on the correct learning path.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher autonomy among public school teachers in the Pikes Peak region. The study evaluated teachers' perceptions of their own autonomy and how those perceptions related to student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and math scores. The research questions were:

- Did student achievement (i.e. ELA and math scores) improve when teachers felt they had more autonomy?
- Did ELA and math scores differ due to the location (i.e. urban, suburban, or rural) of the school?
- Did teacher autonomy vary depending on the location (i.e. urban, suburban, or rural) of the school?
- What were factors that strongly related to teacher autonomy?

## Method

**Design**

This study used a non-experimental, mixed method, cross-sectional research design. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through the use of a single questionnaire distributed during the spring semester of 2018. The quantitative portion of the questionnaire included twenty-three items using a combination of categorical (eight questions), ordinal (thirteen questions), and scaled (two questions) questions. The qualitative portion included six items that consisted of open-ended questions. Both the quantitative and qualitative questions focused on factors relating to teacher autonomy, as well as general background information on the schools the participants currently taught at, their teaching level, grade, subject, number of

years teaching at their current school and total teaching years, their teaching background, their teaching license track (traditional or alternative), and their highest degree earned.

**Participants**

Participants were selected using a combination of random and purposeful sampling. A database of teachers from 2015 (3,177 possible) was contacted via email to participate in the questionnaire. Of the total possible participants, 62.9% (1,998) resulted in delivered emails. In addition, 58 rural educators were purposefully sampled after attending a workshop that addressed the unique needs of rural educators. A total of 363 participants responded to the questionnaire (17.7% response rate). Of the 363 participants, 313 (86.2%) completed all the questions. Participants were given the opportunity to be randomly drawn to receive a gift card as a reward for taking the questionnaire.

**Instruments**

The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire (Appendix A). The 29 item questionnaire was created in Qualtrics© and sent electronically by email to the participants. The questionnaire began by asking questions that pertained to the participants' backgrounds in terms of what school they taught at, how many years they had been teaching at that school and in general throughout their careers, their teaching level, grade, and subject, and their teaching degree and background. The remaining questions became more specific in terms of asking participants about their perceptions of their teacher autonomy in regards to factors that determined autonomy, as well as their level of self-efficacy.

**Procedure**

Selecting participants for the study was the first step in collecting data. The process included a non-random, purposive sampling method from a sample population of teachers in the Pikes Peak region. After the survey was created, it was sent electronically via email to 58 rural teachers in the Pikes Peak region and to the group of 1,998 public school teachers in the Pikes Peak region. After receiving 363 responses, the survey was closed for no future participation.

**Data Analysis**

Data was checked for errors by creating a codebook using SPSS. The descriptive statistics were examined to ensure there was no missing information or inconsistencies. The researcher decided to focus solely on the elementary school teachers who participated in the survey; therefore, middle and high school teachers were removed from the data sample when examining total autonomy and other item factors. Next, the scaled questions were checked for inner-scale reliability using a Cronbach's alpha (0.773). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic on total autonomy violated the assumption of normality. Therefore, a non-parametric Spearman rho correlation was used to determine relationships between total autonomy and multiple survey items that were predicted to be related to autonomy, as well as the survey items' correlations with one another. Later, multiple independent-samples t-tests were conducted to investigate differences in total autonomy, English Language Arts (ELA) scores, and math scores when comparing rural to suburban to urban geographic school locations. Finally, partial correlations between ELA and math scores and multiple factors of total autonomy were run to verify that ELA and math scores were not correlated to total autonomy.

As for the qualitative data, three themes were created. Then several categories emerged under each theme as a result of similar and repeated responses to the open-ended questions. Finally, individual responses were coded to fall into one of the categories.

## Results

Categorical data from the survey was examined and transformed into graphs to represent participant statistics. Geographic locations of the schools were evaluated, and 29 of the schools were in urban areas, 111 in suburban, and 31 in rural (Figure 1). For teaching level, 182 were elementary teachers, 86 were middle school teachers, and the remaining 67 were high school teachers (Figure 2). Among the three teaching levels, participants were asked to specify what grade(s) they taught as well as subject(s) (Figures 3 and 4). Participants also were asked to share how many years they had been teaching at their current schools, which ranged from zero to 37 years with an average of 10.35 years. They were also asked to give the total number of years they had been teaching, and those statistics ranged from two to 41 years with an average of 19.33 years. Of all the teacher participants, 246 reported receiving their teaching licenses in a traditional manner, whereas 50 teachers said they went through alternative teacher licensing programs (Figure 5). In conclusion with regards to the categorical data representations, participants were asked to provide their highest degree earned. The choices were bachelors, masters, and doctorate. From those three options, 103 indicated bachelors, 218 indicated masters, and 9 indicated doctorate (Figure 6).

The ordinal survey questions were examined next. To ensure inter-item reliability among the items that were correlated to total autonomy, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was checked. According to the Total Autonomy Factors Scale, there was good internal consistency with a

Cronbach's alpha coefficient expressed as 0.773. When examining the Item-Total Statistics chart, the only item, if removed, that would keep the Cronbach's alpha coefficient the same was physical space design control due to the items weak correlation with total autonomy. If any of the other items were removed, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient would decrease meaning that those items were reliable in determining total autonomy and were moderately or strongly correlated to total autonomy.

When assessing the data for normality on several of the quantitative survey items related to total autonomy, all the Sig values, as a result of the Kolmogorvo-Smirnov statistic, were less than 0.05. This meant that the data violated normality, so when running correlations, a Spearman rho correlation was used. When determining a relationship between the survey items and total autonomy, the Sig. value was assessed. Mean ELA scores, mean math scores, following Colorado State Standards, assessment, exhaustion, and stress all had Sig. values more than 0.05; therefore, they were not significant and not correlated to total autonomy.

The remaining items all had Sig. values that were either 0.000 or 0.001 (Table 1). There was a weak, positive correlation between total autonomy and physical space design control with $r = 0.26$. There was a moderate, positive correlation between total autonomy and curriculum control ($r = 0.49$), connection of learning objectives to students' goals and interests ($r = 0.47$), teaching to the test ($r = 0.48$), schedule control ($r = 0.38$), student behavior control ($r = 0.34$), and positive teacher-student relationship ($r = 0.34$). There was a strong, positive correlation between total autonomy and collaboration, participative management, and strong learning culture among teachers ($r = 0.57$), job satisfaction ($r = 0.60$), administrations listening to their teachers ($r = 0.68$), autonomy from a teacher's principal ($r = 0.62$), and empowerment ($r = 0.61$).

Teacher empowerment correlations were investigated further. Empowerment was strongly, positively correlated to total autonomy with r = 0.631; however, when focusing on empowerment's correlation to other items that related to total autonomy, empowerment was moderately, positively correlated with collaboration, participative management, and strong learning culture among teachers (r = 0.45) and strongly, positively correlated with job satisfaction (r = 0.59), administrations listening to their teachers (r = 0.59), and autonomy from a teacher's principal (r = 0.57) (Table 2).

Total autonomy was then examined by comparing geographic locations of schools: urban, suburban, and rural. Independent-samples t-tests were run to compare total autonomy for suburban versus rural schools, suburban versus urban schools, and rural versus urban schools (Table 3). There was not a significant difference in total autonomy between suburban schools (M = 58.07, SD = 6.535) and rural schools (M = 58.50, SD = 8.072; t (134) = -0.303, p = 0.763, two-tailed). There was no significant difference in total autonomy between suburban schools (M = 58.07, SD = 6.535) and urban schools (M = 59.18, SD = 7.215; t (126) = -0.714, p = 0.477, two-tailed). Finally, there was no significant difference in in total autonomy between rural schools (M = 58.50, SD = 8.072) and urban schools (M = 59.18, SD = 7.215; t (52) = -0.314, p = 0.754, two-tailed).

Despite the fact that there was no correlation between mean ELA and math scores and total autonomy, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean ELA and math scores for suburban versus rural schools, suburban versus urban schools, and urban versus rural schools (Table 4). There was a significant difference in ELA scores between suburban (M = 744.29, SD = 12.235) and rural schools (M = 740.85, SD = 6.221; t (134) = 2.030, p = 0.046,

two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 3.441, 95% CI: -0.065 to 6.816) was small (eta squared = 0.0303). For math scores, there was a significant difference between suburban and rural schools with t (134) = 2.025 and p = 0.046, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 3.269, 95% CI: 0.061 to 6.476) was small (eta squared = 0.0301).

For suburban (M = 744.29, SD = 12.235) versus urban schools (M = 743.00, SD = 10.092), there was not a significant difference in ELA scores (t (136) = 0.513, p = 0.609, two-tailed). As for the math scores at suburban versus urban schools, there was no significant difference with t (136) = -0.297 and p = 0.767, two tailed.

Finally, there was not a significant difference in ELA scores for urban (M = 743.00, SD = 10.092) versus rural schools (M = 740.85, SD = 6.221; t (54) = -0.951, p = 0.346, two-tailed). In terms of math scores for urban versus rural schools, there was also not a significant difference with t (54) = -1.606 and p = 0.116, two-tailed.

To confirm that there were no correlations between ELA and math scores with the items strongly correlated to total autonomy, partial correlations were analyzed to control for those items. There were no major differences in mean ELA or math scores when controlling for those items; therefore, it verified the results that total autonomy and ELA and math scores were not correlated.

Finally, qualitative data collected through the survey was analyzed using NVivo. Three themes or nodes emerged: freedoms and hindrances of teachers implementing personal instructional strategies and tools, self-efficacy, and empowerment. Under each theme, several categories were formed. Then individual responses were coded to fit into each category.

For the first theme of freedoms and hindrances of teachers implementing personal instructional strategies and tools, two categories were formed based on common responses. Those categories were delivery (how) and timing (when) and standards and curriculums. Within the category of delivery (how) and timing (when), a few responses said:

- "I am able to choose how and when I teach them. I am able to choose resources and instructional strategies that fit my students' needs."
- "I feel I have autonomy over how to present the information to students, how to assess their understanding, and how to create a classroom environment that motivates and encourages students to learn."
- "…I still have the freedom to teach the selected curriculum in a manner best suited for my students and my teaching style."
- "I need to teach the standards but am free to do it how I want."

As for the standards and curriculums category, responses said:

- "I have the freedom to do my own curriculum with the integration of the state standards."
- "As a staff, we choose the curriculums to use in our classrooms."
- "We need to keep with the standards…"

In regards to the second theme of self-efficacy, three categories were developed based on whether the participants felt they had high or low self-efficacy in their classrooms. The first category was positive relationships with students, and several participants stated:

- "I have the opportunity to build strong relationships with my students."
- "My students know that I care about them and their learning."
- "…because of my relationships with the students and because I work with them to set goals that are meaningful for their learning."

The second category was student growth/achievement, in which responses said:

- "I have a high rate of student growth."
- "I consistently have shown high student growth within multiple academic areas."
- "The growth I see daily."
- "Students consistently show growth and high achievement."

The third category under self-efficacy was lifelong learning. Reponses revealed:

- "I am a life long learner who takes the time to plan, assess, and set goals with my students."
- "I believe in the idea that, as the teacher, I am the single most influential factor in our classroom. My attitude greatly affects the attitudes of my students."
- "Continued hard work...experience builds, but only if you're working hard to change things for the better."
- "I have many years experience behind me."

Finally, the third theme was empowerment. Similar to the other two themes, empowerment had three categories. Those were trust, feedback/input, and not empowered. For trust, participants said:

- "I feel trusted. My principal is not checking my lesson plans everyday."
- "I am trusted and not micromanaged."
- "Our principal trusts that we are doing what is right for our students academically."
- "I'm trusted to do what's in the best interest of the students."

With regards to feedback/input, responses stated:

- "Requests for feedback from staff occur throughout our year."

- "My administration is very good about treating our staff as professionals. They frequently ask for our input and allow different teachers to share their knowledge during different professional developments opportunities."

- "She also continually gives me feedback about my teaching, giving positives and suggestions for change."

In conclusion for the participants who did not feel empowered, they said:

- "The issues the administration chooses to tackle are micromanagement and show no gratitude toward staff."

- "Our administration tends to push their own beliefs on to our classrooms and it is not taken well if we stray from their ideas."

- "We are micromanaged at a very deep level in my district and we are not trusted as professionals. Our decisions are often questioned…"

## Discussion

In regards to the categorical data collected, years of teaching and teacher licensure track were of significance to this study. The participants' average number of years in the teaching profession was 19.33 years. That was a substantial amount of time in which they could have earned autonomy. According to the research, some felt that autonomy should be granted to teachers who had gained experience in the classroom and who had shown student growth (Anderson, 1987). Along with actual teaching experience came the teachers' preparation in terms of whether they went through traditional or alternative licensing programs. More teachers in this study went through traditional teacher preparation programs; however, as long as the teacher felt prepared in their teaching skills and knowledgeable in the content material, they often had a stronger sense of self-efficacy and more autonomy (Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow, 2002). Regardless of the preparation track, it was essential that teachers obtained quality

information and instruction about what autonomy meant and what it looked like when employed in a classroom (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011).

According to research, there were many factors that affected teacher autonomy. These factors were investigated throughout this study, and many have proven to be correlated to teacher autonomy, as well as to each other. Having control over one's curriculum showed to be positively correlated to autonomy, which confirmed the existing research (Kuhn & Rundle-Thiele, 2009). Although teachers needed to follow state standards and curriculums, they still had the freedom to decide when and how they taught the academic material. Delivery and timing were combined to create a category under the theme of freedoms and hindrances of teachers implementing personal instructional strategies and tools for the qualitative survey data. Teachers were beginning to move away from the idea of solely teaching to the test. Even though these teachers had some curriculum autonomy, it did not allow them to do whatever they pleased and teach what they wanted; there were still school guidelines and state standards that they needed to follow and achieve (Anderson, 1987). However, due to having more flexibility and freedom in the delivery of the curriculum and state standards, teachers were able to connect learning objectives to students' goals and needs more easily. This idea of fostering relevance between the students' academic work and their goals and interests emerged (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002). By relating a student's school life to his or her personal one, teachers were essentially implementing a constructively aligned curriculum. This type of curriculum allowed educators to develop learning activities and assessments to ensure students achieved their academic goals (Kuhn & Rundle-Thiele, 2009). Teachers linked school to the outside world; therefore, their students became more culturally aware (Katyal & Evers, 2004). Making academic, social, and

cultural connections allowed teachers to exercise their autonomy and gave them the opportunity to use appropriate academic strategies and tools to achieve student growth (Hung, Badejo, & Bennett, 2014).

In order to have rigorous curriculums and knowledgeable teachers, it was important for schools to allow teachers to collaborate and participate in professional development programs to feel autonomous. Collaboration and participative management were strong predictors of teacher autonomy. By developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers were provided with spaces in which they openly discussed their jobs. PLCs allowed teachers to have more autonomy by giving them a voice and choice in matters that affected their classrooms and overall working environments. Since their administrations and principals were listening to them, teachers often felt more empowered, were being treated as professionals, and were taking more control over their workspaces (Crawford, 2001; Lu, Jiang, Yu, & Li, 2015). This also allowed them to continue to be lifelong learners through their involvement in ways to improve their schools, which in-turn contributed to creating a strong, respectful, and safe school learning culture (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2010).

Two other strong predictors of teacher autonomy were teachers being listened to by their administrations and teachers being granted more autonomy from their principals, which then resulted in them feeling empowered. Both of these factors were strongly correlated with total autonomy. As teachers received more support from their principals and administrations, they developed a trustful relationship and often began to feel more engaged and motivated to do their jobs (Collie & Martin, 2017). Once these relationships were formed, teachers had more positive outlooks, performed better at work, and were able to have their needs met (Dou, Devos, &

Valcke, 2017). Teachers were finally being listened to and heard by their principals to make change in their schools and improve student achievement, which gave them more control and input in their work (Gawlik, 2008; Lu, Jiang, Yu, & Li, 2015). Principals and administrations were becoming more aware of what their schools really needed from their teachers in order to maintain accountability (Strong & Yoshida, 2014). However, principals needed to be cautious when deciding how much autonomy to give their teachers, especially new teachers. When too much autonomy was given, teachers lacked structure and did not feel supported; therefore, a healthy balance of autonomy was essential (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

With teachers feeling more empowered, being listened to by their administration, and being given more autonomy from their principals, they often felt more satisfied with their jobs. The participants reported feeling happier at work when they had more autonomy and were more inclined to contribute to creating a positive learning culture (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017). These results aligned with previous research conducted by Pearson and Moomaw (2005). They discovered that as teachers had more autonomy and were treated like professionals, they were more satisfied and felt less stress and exhausted. Stress and exhaustion were not significant or correlated to total autonomy in this study, which negated results from the literature (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). However, job satisfaction proved to be strongly correlated with autonomy. In addition, as teachers felt more fulfilled at school, student achievement tended to improve (Collie & Martin, 2017).

Many factors of autonomy have been attributed to an increase in student achievement; therefore, it was predicted in this study that total autonomy would be strongly correlated with an increase in ELA and math scores. As a result, there was no correlation between total autonomy

and ELA and math scores. Nevertheless, when examining ELA and math scores based on the geographic locations of schools, there were significant results: Suburban schools outperformed rural schools in both ELA and math. These results aligned with previous research conducted by Young (1998), but contradicted research done by Fan and Chen (1998). Young (1998) discovered that rural schools often had lower math achievement when compared to other school locations, whereas Fan and Chen (1998) found that rural school students did just as well in math and ELA as their peers in urban and suburban schools. Thus, the results of this study, when examined through the literature, were inconclusive.

Strongly linked to autonomy was the idea of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy also related to student achievement in the sense that teachers positively impacted student learning outcomes when they felt competent and believed in their teaching skills (Hoffman, Huff, Patterson, & Nietfield, 2009). Hung, Badejo, and Bennett's (2014) research concluded that as students felt more connected to their teachers, school, and community, they often performed better and had higher student achievement. From the coded qualitative data on self-efficacy, teachers felt that their sense of self-efficacy stemmed from having positive relationships with their students. This idea was supported by the literature (Hung, Badejo, & Bennett, 2014). Teachers needed to be interested and focused on their students' well-beings in order for their self-efficacy to be higher and for better student academic growth (Wong, Wiest, & Cusick, 2002). Essentially, students needed to know that their teachers cared about them (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017).

**Limitations**

Several limitations should be noted for future research. The number of possible participants in the study was 2,056 teachers, and only 363 of those teachers responded to the

survey. Therefore, a fairly low response rate of 17.7% was produced. The study needed to have a larger response rate in order to reduce generalizability and produce more accurate results. In terms of the collection of data, the survey was not sufficient in gathering all relevant autonomy information, which made for some inconclusive results. There were several design problems in the sense that the survey had an under-sampling at the school level, and mostly collected data on the teacher level; however, it became difficult to compare specific responses to data relating to the district level, such as ELA and math scores, due to the comparisons and correlations not being on the same scale.

**Recommendations**

While still using the survey, a supplemental data collection method could have been participant interviews. Interviews would have provided more useful qualitative data by allowing the teachers to elaborate more, while being prompted by the researcher to answer additional open-ended questions. Personal anecdotes would have resulted as well.

Several of the scaled questions could have been improved and refined. Asking the participants to rate their total autonomy was a question that was left out and could have provided valuable information. For some of the ordinal questions, fewer selections might have given more accurate results, as well as including open-ended questions as an extension of each ordinal question for participants to describe why they selected a particular answer.

Finally, more even groups were necessary to evaluate each school and district on their autonomy and to determine whether the teachers from those schools and districts, who participated in the survey, agreed or disagreed in their perception of autonomy. Each school and district needed to have the same sample size and number of responses in order to achieve those

outcomes. It would also be fascinating to break down the geography groups more to determine differences in autonomy or ELA and math scores.

## Conclusion

This study proved that several of the factors discussed in the literature review contributed to a teacher's overall perceived autonomy. Among those factors, autonomy from one's principal had the strongest impact due the factor's strong correlation with many of the other items that influenced teacher autonomy. When principals gave their teachers more freedom in their classrooms, teachers had more control over and understanding of their curriculums, were able to collaborate more with their colleagues, felt more satisfied at their jobs, and felt more empowered to be in the profession. All of these factors benefited a teacher's success by allowing him or her to expand his or her teaching abilities and knowledge to meet the needs and goals of his or her students.

Many teachers often misunderstood autonomy. Autonomy did not allow teachers to do whatever they wanted in their classrooms; there were guidelines that still needed to be followed and goals that needed to be achieved. Therefore, it was important that teachers truly understood the concept of autonomy in order to see academic growth in their students. More education around the idea of autonomy was essential to ensure teachers were on track with academic standards, while also providing the freedom to implement personal strategies and tools to teach the material. Professional development opportunities were one way to inform teachers. By creating professional learning communities, teachers openly discussed issues surrounding autonomy with the goal of sharing ideas in which to shape autonomy. The ultimate purpose was

for teachers to express how they felt autonomous with the hope that they felt empowered and remained in the teaching profession.

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## List of Tables and Figures

Table 1

*Total Autonomy and Item Correlations*

**Spearman's rho Correlations**

| | | Curr Control Num | Conn Learn Person Num | Teach Test Num | Sched Control Num | Behave Cont Num | Pos Rel Stud Num |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Autonomy | Correlation Coefficient | **.487** | **.468** | **.484** | **.381** | **.344** | **.344** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** |
| | N | **161** | **161** | **156** | **161** | **161** | **161** |

| | | Space Control Num | Promote Collab Num | Satisfied Num | Admin Listen Num | Auton From Prin Num | Empower Num |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Autonomy | Correlation Coefficient | **.261** | **.565** | **.598** | **.681** | **.617** | **.613** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | **.001** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** |
| | N | **161** | **157** | **157** | **155** | **157** | **157** |

Table 2

*Empowerment and Item Correlations*

**Spearman's rho Correlations**

| | | Total Autonomy | Promote Collab Num | Satisfied Num | Admin Listen Num | Auton From Prin Num |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Autonomy | Correlation Coefficient | **.613** | **.449** | **.589** | **.592** | **.574** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** | **.000** |
| | N | **157** | **157** | **157** | **155** | **157** |

Table 3

*Total Autonomy by Geographic Location*

**Group Statistics**

| | What gender do you identify with? | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Autonomy | 2 Suburban | **104** | **58.07** | **6.535** | **.641** |
| | 3 Rural | **30** | **58.50** | **8.072** | **1.474** |

**Independent Samples Test**

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Total Autonomy | Equal variances assumed | **1.949** | **.165** | **-.303** | **132** | **.763** | **-.433** | **1.430** | **-3.262** | **2.397** |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | **-.269** | **40.6** | **.789** | **-.433** | **1.607** | **-3.679** | **2.814** |

Table 4

*English Language Arts and Math Scores by Geographic Location*

**Group Statistics**

| | Geography Number | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean ELA Score | 2 Suburban | **108** | **744.29** | **12.235** | **1.177** |
| | 3 Rural | **26** | **740.85** | **6.221** | **1.220** |
| Mean Math Score | 2 Suburban | **108** | **739.77** | **12.245** | **1.178** |
| | 3 Rural | **26** | **736.50** | **5.623** | **1.103** |

**Independent Samples Test**

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Mean ELA Score | Equal variances assumed | **7.912** | **.006** | **1.389** | **132** | **.167** | **3.441** | **2.478** | **-1.461** | **8.343** |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | **2.030** | **77.539** | **.046** | **3.441** | **1.695** | **.065** | **6.816** |
| Mean Math Score | Equal variances assumed | **13.08** | **.000** | **1.325** | **132** | **.187** | **3.269** | **2.467** | **-1.611** | **8.148** |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | **2.025** | **87.895** | **.046** | **3.269** | **1.614** | **.061** | **6.476** |

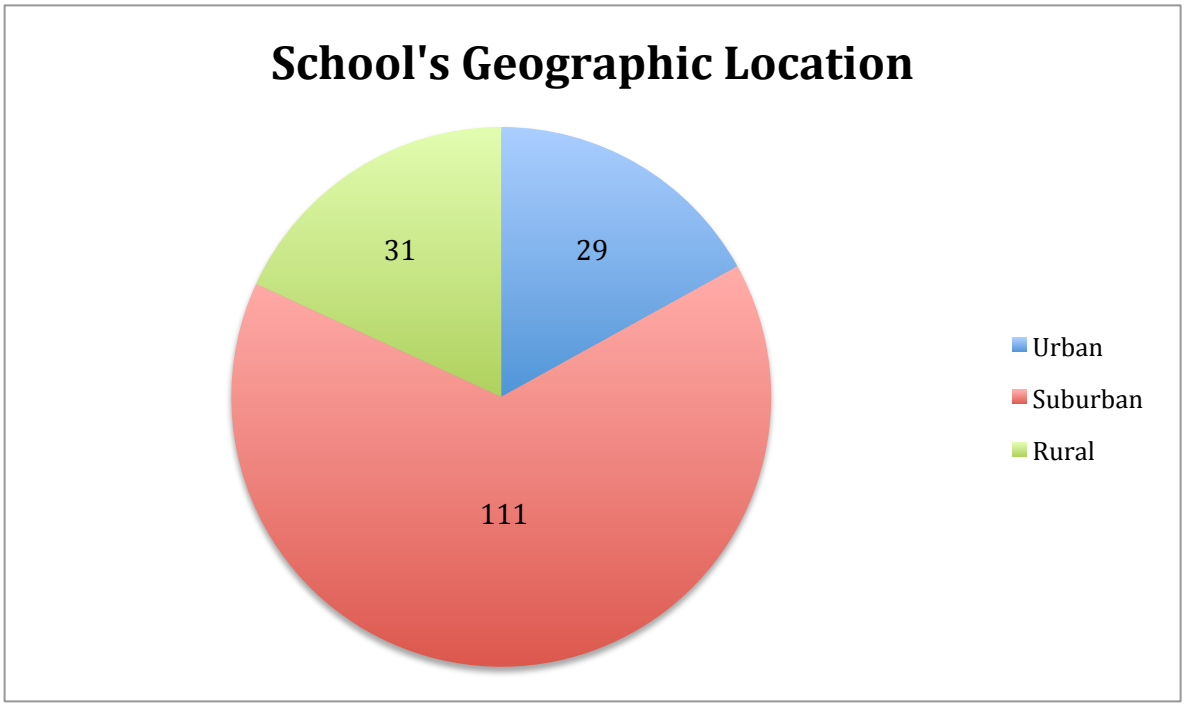


*Figure 1.* Pie chart representing the count of schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

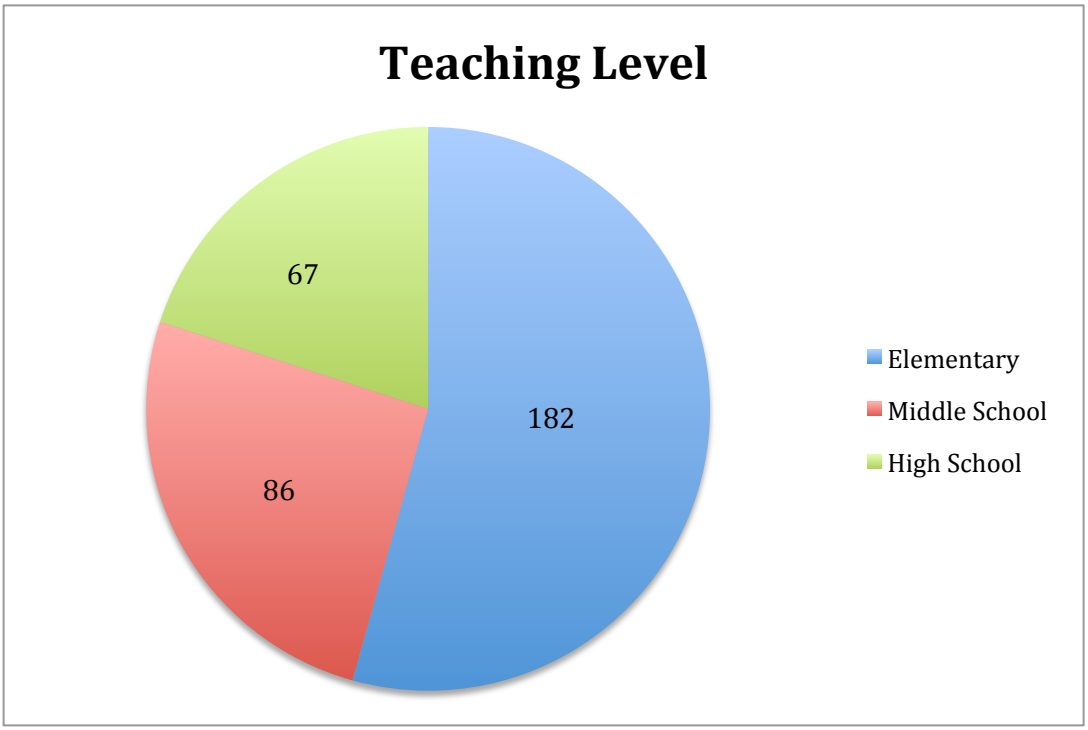


*Figure 2.* Pie chart representing the count of teaching levels among participants.

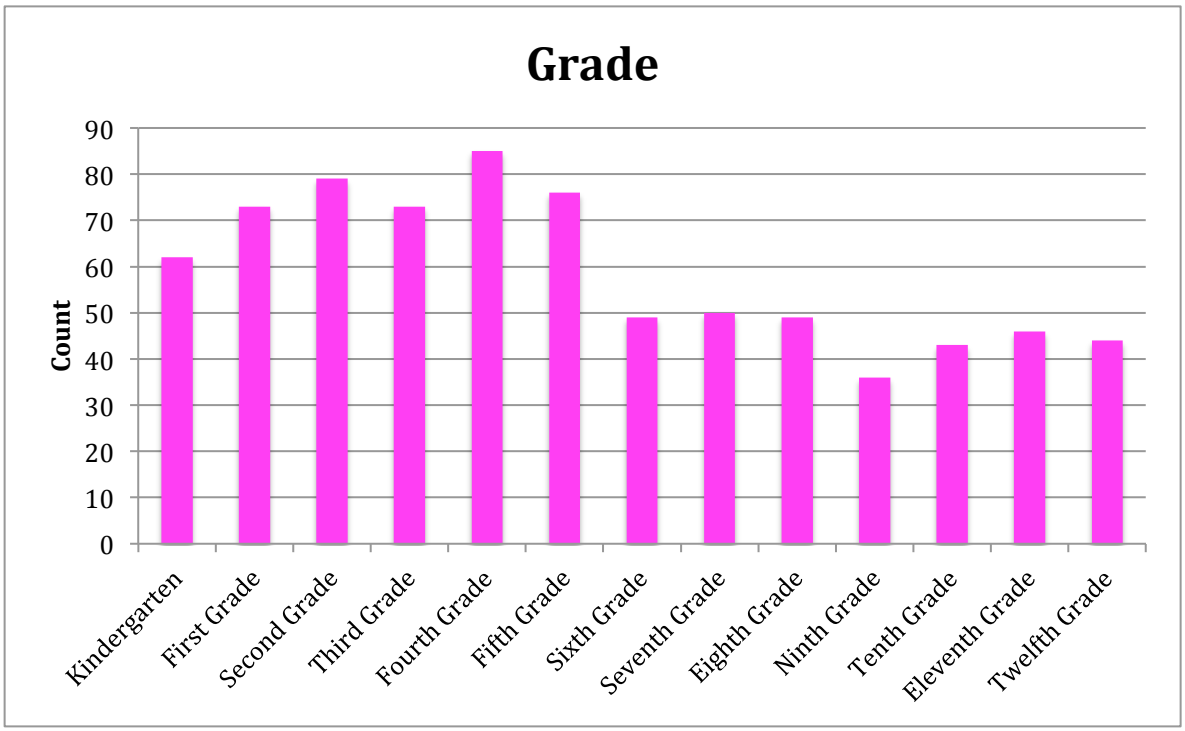


*Figure 3.* Bar graph showing the count of participants that taught one grade or multiple grades.

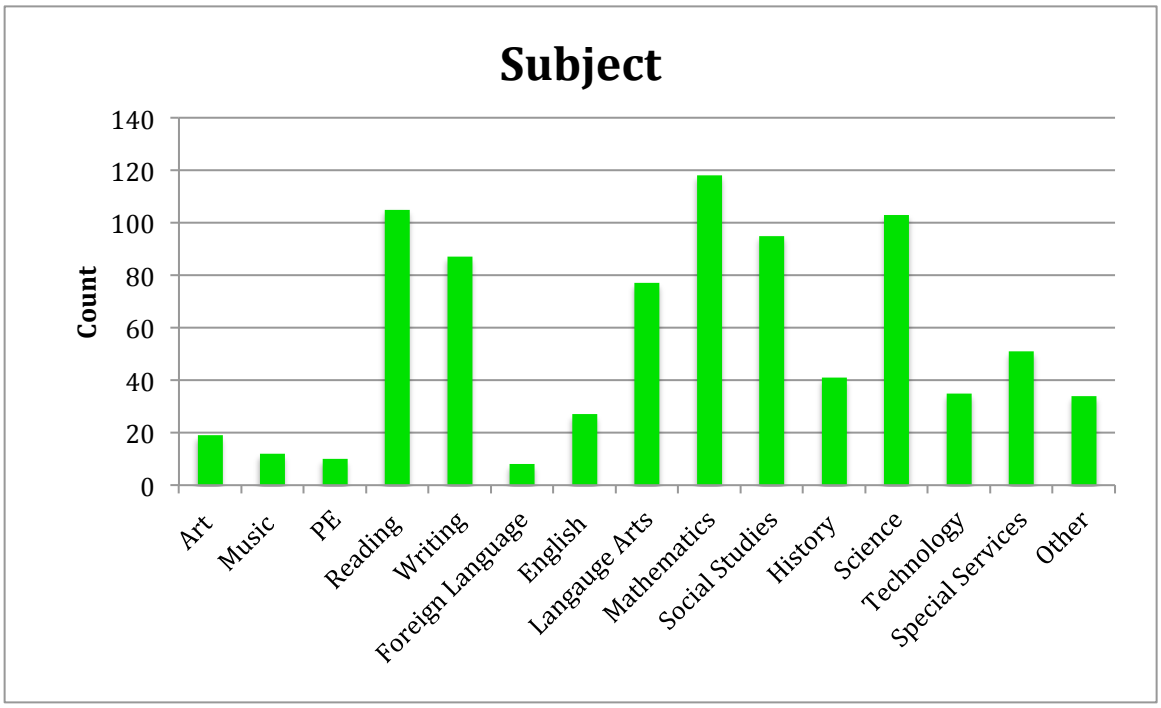


*Figure 4.* Bar graph showing the count of subjects taught by participants.

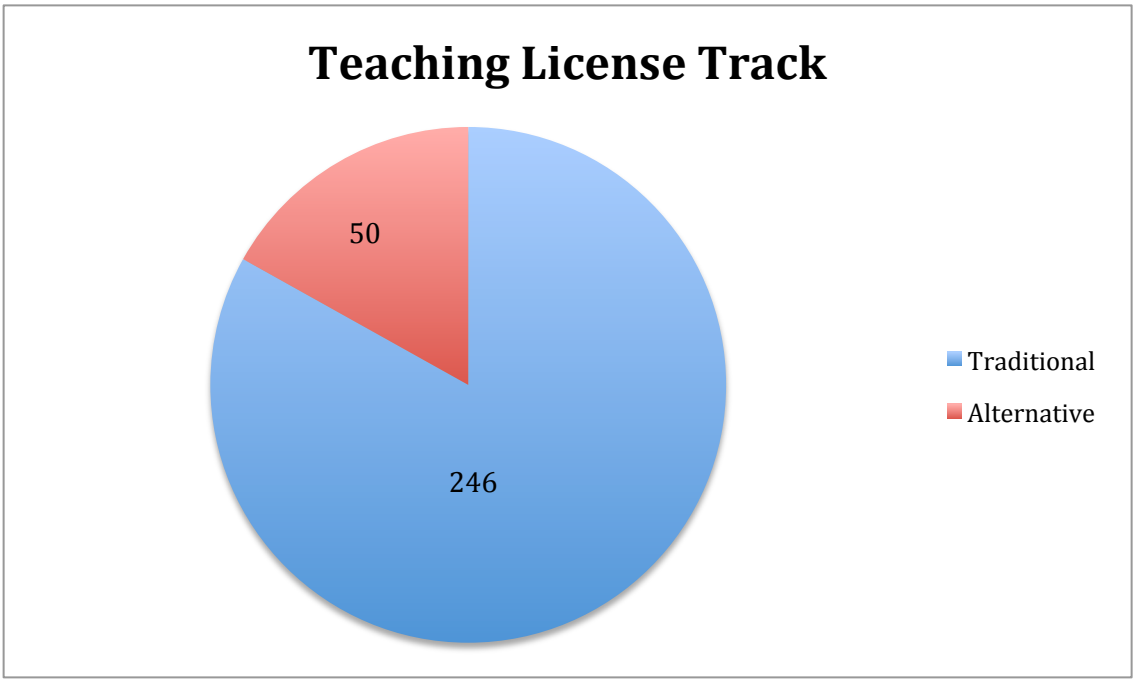


*Figure 5.* Pie chart representing the count of teachers who received a traditional or alternative teaching license.

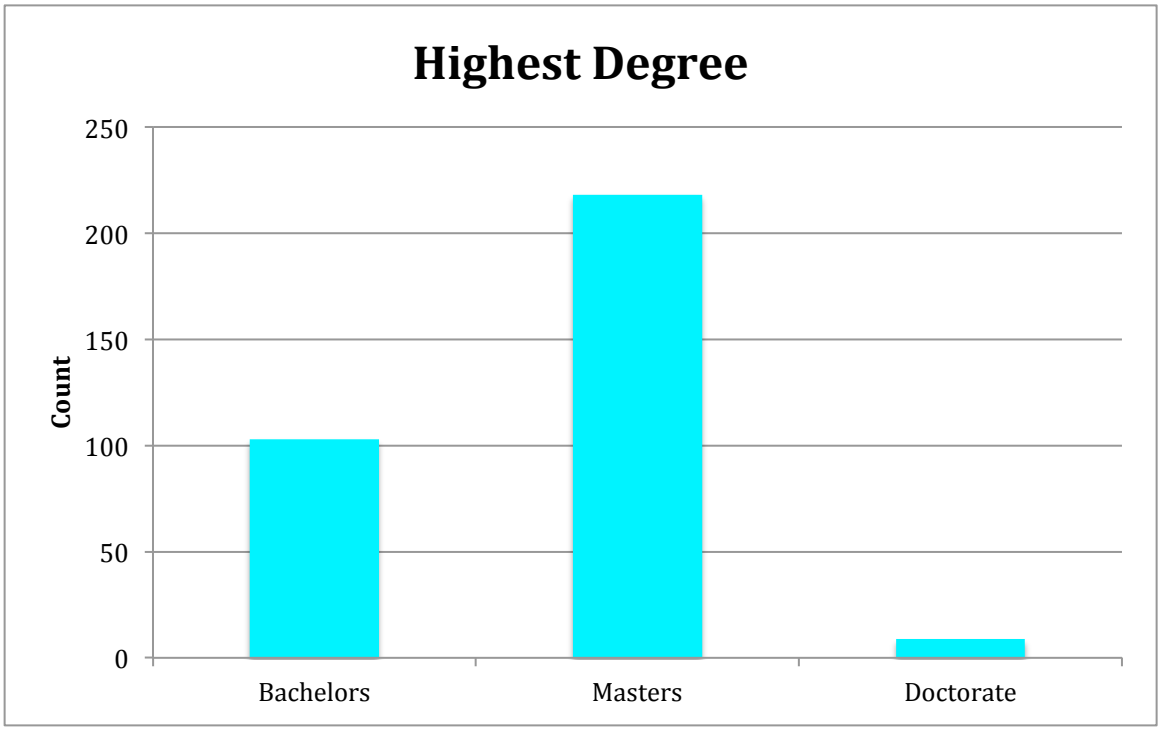


*Figure 6.* Bar graph showing the count of the highest degree earned by teachers.

## Appendix A

### Teacher Autonomy Survey

---

Start of Block: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a study on teacher autonomy for the purpose of improving teacher preparation and professional development.

**What the study is about:** This survey is examining teacher autonomy. Data collected will be combined with data on teacher disposition and overall school performance to better inform the Department of Education Department at Colorado College in the preparation of teachers and professional development of educators.

**What you will be asked to do:** As a participant, you will be asking a series survey questions about your personal perception of teacher autonomy in your classroom and at your school. The survey takes a total of 15 minutes.

**Risks and benefits:** There are no anticipated risks to you if you participate in this survey, beyond those encountered in everyday life. A $25 Barnes and Noble gift card will be given to a participant who completed the survey and would like to be entered into the random drawing.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this survey is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may choose to skip any question that you do not wish to answer. Participating in this survey does not mean that you are giving up any of your legal rights.

**Your answers will be confidential:** The records of this survey will be kept private. They will be kept on the Qualtrics website, which is password protected. Data will be shared with the Education Department Chair, Mike Taber. Any report of this research that is made available will not include your name or any other individual information by which you could be identified.

**If you have questions or want a copy or summary of the study results:** Contact Noni at the email address or phone number above. Please print this page to keep for your records. If you have any questions about whether you have been treated in an illegal or unethical way, contact the Colorado College Institutional Research Board chair, Amanda Udis-Kessler at 719-227-8177 or audiskessler@coloradocollege.edu. Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I consent to take part in study of teacher autonomy.

- ○ Yes, I am willing to participate in this survey. (1)
- ○ No, I am not willing to participate in this survey. (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Teacher Autonomy Consent Form Noni Wurzweiler Mike Taber Colorado College Department of Education... = No, I am not willing to participate in this survey.*

Q29 Using the mouse or pen of your computer, please sign your name below since you have agreed to participate in this survey.

Page Break

Q2 What school do you currently teach at?

_____

Q33 What is your teaching level?

- ☐ Elementary school (1)
- ☐ Middle school (2)
- ☐ High school (3)

*Skip To: Q3 If What is your teaching level? = Elementary school*
*Skip To: Q34 If What is your teaching level? = Middle school*
*Skip To: Q35 If What is your teaching level? = High school*

Q3 What grade do you primarily teach? (select all that apply)

- ☐ kindergarten (1)
- ☐ first grade (2)
- ☐ second grade (3)
- ☐ third grade (4)
- ☐ fourth grade (5)
- ☐ fifth grade (6)

Q34 What grade do you primarily teach? (select all that apply)

- ☐ sixth grade (1)
- ☐ seventh grade (2)
- ☐ eighth grade (3)

Q35 What grade do you primarily teach? (select all that apply)

- ☐ ninth grade (1)
- ☐ tenth grade (2)
- ☐ eleventh grade (3)
- ☐ twelfth grade (4)

Q30 What subject(s) do you primarily teach?

- ☐ Art (1)
- ☐ Music (2)
- ☐ PE (3)
- ☐ Reading (4)
- ☐ Writing (5)
- ☐ Foreign language (6)
- ☐ English (7)
- ☐ Language Arts (8)
- ☐ Mathematics (9)
- ☐ Social Studies (10)
- ☐ History (11)
- ☐ Science (12)
- ☐ Technology (13)
- ☐ Special Services (special ed., ESL, ELL, ELD, Speech, Gifted and Talented etc.) (14)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (15) _____

Q4 How many years have you taught at your current school?

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

number of years (1)

Q10 How many years have you taught in general throughout your teaching career?

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

number of years (1)

Q9 What is your teaching background? (i.e. what other grades have you taught before? what other schools have you taught at?)

_____

Q6 Did you earn your teaching license through a traditional or alternative teaching program?

- ○ Traditional (1)
- ○ Alternative (2)

Q5 What is your highest degree attained? (in what discipline?)

- ☐ Bachelors (1) _____
- ☐ Masters (2) _____
- ☐ Doctorate (3) _____

Q11 How much do you agree with this statement: I have control on what curriculum I teach my students (content, skills, materials, procedures, goals, etc.).

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Somewhat disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How much do you agree with this statement: I have control on what curriculum I teach my students (content, skills, materials, procedures, goals, etc.). (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q20 Please explain in what ways you believe that you have *freedom* to implement your personal instructional strategies and tools in your classroom.

_____

Q21 Please explain in what ways your teaching abilities feel *hindered* in terms of implementing your personal instructional strategies and tools in your classroom.

_____

Q12 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Extremely likely (1) | Somewhat likely (2) | Neither likely nor unlikely (3) | Somewhat unlikely (4) | Extremely unlikely (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When you plan and teach, how likely do you follow the CO State Standards? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q31 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Always (1) | Most of the time (2) | About half the time (3) | Sometimes (4) | Never (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often do you connect learning objectives and goals in school with students' personal goals and interests? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q14 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Every day (1) | A couple times a week (2-3 days) (2) | Once a month (3) | A couple times a school year (4) | Never (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often do you asses your students? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q15 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Somewhat disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How much do you agree with this statement: state standardized tests do not limit my autonomy in the sense that I feel I am "teaching to the test"? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q16 Please respond to the following statements using the scale provided.

| | Strongly agree (1) | Agree (2) | Neutral (3) | Disagree (4) | Strongly disagree (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have control of my daily schedule (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have control of my students' behaviors (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have positive relationships and interactions with my students (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have control of how I arrange the physical space of my classroom. (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q17 How would you rank your teacher efficacy, which is your belief in your ability to affect change in students' learning outcomes and classroom management?

- ○ High self-efficacy (1)
- ○ Medium self-efficacy (2)
- ○ Low self-efficacy (3)

*Skip To: Q18 If How would you rank your teacher efficacy, which is your belief in your ability to affect change i... = High self-efficacy*

*Skip To: Q18 If How would you rank your teacher efficacy, which is your belief in your ability to affect change i... = Low self-efficacy*

*Skip To: Q19 If How would you rank your teacher efficacy, which is your belief in your ability to affect change i... = Medium self-efficacy*

Q18 Please explain as to why you feel you have high or low self-efficacy:

_____

Q19 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Definitely yes (1) | Probably yes (2) | Neutral (3) | Probably not (4) | Definitely not (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do you believe that your school promotes collaboration, participative management (joint decision-making or influence sharing among school members who are at different hierarchical levels), and a strong learning culture (how teachers adapt to change and continue to improve) among teachers, administrators, and other staff? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q22 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Extremely satisfied (1) | Somewhat satisfied (2) | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3) | Somewhat dissatisfied (4) | Extremely dissatisfied (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How satisfied are you with your current employment? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q23 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Every day (1) | A couple times a week (2-3 days) (2) | Once a month (3) | A couple times a school year (4) | Never (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often do you feel emotionally exhausted from your job? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q24 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Very high (1) | Fairly high (2) | Neutral (3) | Fairly low (4) | Very low (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How would you describe your stress level at work? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q25 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Always (1) | Most of the time (2) | About half the time (3) | Sometimes (4) | Never (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How often does your school's administration consider the opinions of the teachers about matters that affect them directly? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q26 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | A lot (1) | Some (2) | None (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| How much autonomy and support do you feel your principal gives you? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q27 Please respond to the following question using the scale provided.

| | Yes (1) | Sometimes (2) | No (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you feel empowered to be a teacher in terms of being treated like a professional? (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q28 Please explain how you feel empowered:

_____

Q36 If you would like to be entered into the Barnes and Noble $25 gift card drawing, please give your name and email address in the space below:

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**End of Block: Consent Form**