Apr 14th, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

What Keeps Us In the Classroom? Motivations of Effective Teachers

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Ample research has looked into the causes, factors, and implications of burnout among teachers due to the important finding that burned out teachers are also less effective teachers (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006). Conversely, our research aims to look into the factors that motivate the most effective teachers to remain in the field of education. We surveyed forty teachers from two elementary schools in Central Illinois to gain their insights on the characteristics that define effective teachers. We used this data to select a small group of five teachers with varied teaching experience and backgrounds. These teachers were interviewed to better understand the factors that drew them to education and continue to keep them inspired in the classroom. Our research will discuss specific strategies that have been used by effective practicing teachers to help new and experienced teachers alike maintain their motivation and effectiveness.