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A multi -case study of teacher retention with veteran teachers in hard to staff schools

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A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF TEACHER RETENTION WITH VETERAN
TEACHERS IN HARD TO STAFF SCHOOLS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Education Degree in Curriculum & Instruction
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ABSTRACT

A Multi-Case Study of Teacher Retention with Veteran Teachers in Hard to Staff schools

by

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Over 40 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Berry, 2004), and turnover is higher in schools characterized as hard to staff (Ingersoll, 2001). Hard to staff schools often have higher attrition rates, and also have a higher percentage of under qualified teachers (Berry, 2004). The need to retain highly qualified teachers in teaching positions in hard to staff schools is critical because teachers are less likely to continue to teach in schools characterized as such. A multi-case study design was employed to investigate four teachers who have taught in hard to staff schools beyond five years, meaning they were in their sixth year of teaching or later in a hard to staff school. A survey was used to obtain baseline data such as number of years teaching, the type of teacher education completed, the professional development completed, and the type of induction or mentoring components completed.

Four teachers were provided with cameras to take pictures of what it meant to them to continue to teach in hard to staff schools. Teachers ranked the photographs in order of importance prior to the interview and the photos were then used to facilitate the interview

process, which is a technique called photographic interviewing (Merriam, 1998). The interview transcripts were recorded using iPod technology, transcribed, and analyzed using content analysis and categorical analysis.

The findings supported recent research, which has found working conditions impact teacher retention. Three out of the four teachers identified collegial support as a factor that stimulated their retention. Two teachers named the concern for students and their academic success as a reason they stayed. Additional factors that stimulated retention for these teachers were confidence in teaching skills, school climate, and access to technology. This study aimed to provide researchers, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and community members with insights regarding the factors that affect highly qualified teachers' decisions to remain teaching in hard to staff schools.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher shortages were once thought to be the primary reason for the lack of teachers (Ingersoll, 1997), however, other research indicates that there actually are enough teachers certified annually, but they are unequally distributed (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). In addition, as many as 30 percent of new teachers quit within the first two years (Odell & Ferraro, 1992), and over 40 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Berry, 2004). Nearly 50 percent of teachers leave the teaching profession after five years (Hill & Barth, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Additional research suggests that some teachers who obtain degrees never enter teaching (Chapman, 1984). Overall, the issue may not be so much a lack of certified teachers, but the failure to retain teachers who enter the profession and a failure to retain teachers in particular schools.

Factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching profession need to be examined. However, the focus of this study was on what factors contribute to teachers' decisions to continue to teach, specifically, in hard to staff schools. Hard to staff schools is a phrase found in the literature that refers to schools with high poverty, a high percentage of minorities, and low achieving students (Berry, 2004). The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that influence teachers' decisions to teach beyond five years in hard to staff schools. Research has reported that the more difficult working

conditions, which are often found in hard to staff schools, decrease their relative attractiveness to teachers (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). Many politicians and policy makers think teachers will continue to teach in a school or district just because they love children or because they get satisfaction from the act of teaching itself. While these two factors may be reasons why some teachers do indeed continue to teach, current research needs to focus on identifying factors that influence teachers' decisions to teach in schools characterized as hard to staff beyond five years.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years. The use of a five-year minimum as a demarcation point is because research has consistently reported teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Norton (1999) reported, "Some studies have found that as many as 25 percent of teachers leave the profession after only one year, and that only 50 percent remain after five years of service" (p. 52). A study designed to explore the factors that affect teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools beyond five years is much needed so that educators, administrators, policymakers, and school district personnel can gain insight into retaining highly qualified teachers in the nations' schools, especially those differentiated by high minority population, high poverty levels, and low achievement levels.

Reasons for attrition have been widely reported in the research literature. Hill & Barth (2004) declared, "Age, experience, certification, [and] substandard preparation routes are the most consistent predictors of when [a] teacher leaves the classroom" (p. 174).

McElroy (2004) reported “budget cuts, constant pressure to do more with less, not being backed on discipline, excessive bureaucracy and class size” (p.54) are also reasons why teachers exit the profession. Consequently, if these are the reasons why teachers leave, than what factors are contributing to teachers’ decisions to continue to teach despite all of the challenges? The reasons are less clear as to why teachers choose to stay in hard to staff schools beyond the five-year point, which makes this issue ripe for further empirical investigation.

Rationale

The need to retain highly qualified teachers in teaching positions at hard to staff schools, is critical because teachers are less likely to continue to teach in schools characterized as hard to staff. Ingersoll (2001) reported that turnover is higher in schools characterized by high poverty and high minority population and approximately 50 percent of teacher turnover is due to teacher migration from one school to another. Hard to staff schools usually have a high percentage of under qualified teachers and higher teacher attrition rates (Berry, 2004). Another dynamic in hard to staff schools is that these schools are portrayed as having low achieving students. In today’s standards driven educational climate, working in hard to staff schools is more stressful because teachers are under pressure to help students achieve and maintain adequate yearly progress in core academic subjects. Maintaining high achievement levels is difficult in hard to staff schools because they are likely to have fewer resources, less qualified teachers, and substandard facilities.

Today, a significant issue in education is the retention of highly qualified teachers, specifically in hard to staff schools, because not enough empirical evidence exists about the retention of highly qualified teachers in these types of settings. Highly qualified teachers are teachers who have earned at least a Bachelor's degree in the field in which they are teaching, have at least three years of teaching experience in their academic subject, and have passed a proficiency exam in a particular subject. This study aims to provide researchers, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and community members with new insights regarding the retention of highly qualified teachers in hard to staff schools. Teacher retention, and not teacher attrition alone, must be the central focus of today's research if we aim to attract and keep highly qualified teachers in hard to staff schools.

Background of the Study

Two general assumptions regarding teacher shortages have resulted in policies that have addressed the teacher recruitment viewpoint instead of teacher retention. One assumption is that teacher shortage is due to the graying teacher workforce retiring, and the second assumption is that student enrollments are increasing (Ingersoll, 2001). Watlington, Shockley, Earley, Huie, Morris (2004) agree that "teaching shortages will remain until the fundamental problem of teacher retention is addressed" (p. 56). Merrow (1999) pointed out that people in education are treating the wrong problem entirely; "we're misdiagnosing the problem as recruitment when it's really retention" (p. 64). However, research has also revealed that issues other than retirement and increasing

student enrollments are only part of the problem related to the low retention levels of teachers.

Teachers' decisions to stay in the teaching field or exit the profession are influenced by many issues. Issues such as length of teacher education program (Darling-Hammond, 2003) initial commitment to teaching (Chapman, 1984) working conditions and teacher pay (Berry, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2003) teacher satisfaction (Lee, Dedrick & Smith, 1991) and lack of induction and mentoring programs (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Wong, 2004) are just some of the factors that have been found to shape aspects of teacher attrition and retention. In an early article, Charters (1956) conducted research to ascertain what causes teacher turnover. It wasn't until thirty years later that Chapman (1984) created a teacher retention model to test the factors of teacher retention. Although some insight into the factors that facilitate teachers' decisions to stay in teaching have been identified, retention persists as a complex equation with no apparent or immediate solution. Based on the fact that teacher turnover has been the focus of empirical research in recent decades (Ingersoll, 2001), retention of teachers in hard to staff schools needs to be examined further in order to understand what factors impact teachers' decisions to stay committed to these schools.

Research Question Formulation

Literature on school culture has reported that teacher retention diminishes when teachers experience "inadequate support from administrators, lack of resources, mismatch between traditional practices of teacher education program curricula and schools" (Yost, 2006, p. 60). These aspects of school culture overlap with the idea of working

conditions, which have also been found to reduce retention. Workplace conditions associated with attrition include, “large class size, heavy teaching loads, lack of administrative or other support, and lack of resources” (Yost, 2006, p. 60). So, the question needs to be asked as to which workplace conditions are the most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention in hard to staff schools. The research questions that provided a starting point for inquiry and guided the data collection for the study are listed in the next section.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence teachers’ decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years?
2. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention?
3. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years?
4. How do pictures tell a story about teachers’ decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools?

Foundational Theoretical Framework

Contemporary educational theory holds that it is the “inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 499) due to recent increases in teacher retirements and increase in student enrollments. From this perspective, teacher shortages have been the target of recent reforms and policies, and policy response has focused mainly on recruitment initiatives. Program initiatives such as Teach for America and “troops to teachers” have been implemented to increase the

number of available teachers. In addition, alternative certification programs and alternative routes to licensure have sprung up in numerous school districts and universities around the country.

Organizational theory attempts to expand contemporary educational theory by examining teacher turnover from an organizational perspective. It draws from the sociology of organizations, working, and occupations, and it is based on empirical literature of employee turnover (Ingersoll, 2003). Instead of focusing on teacher shortages from an individual perspective, organizational theory aims to investigate teacher turnover from the organizational perspective. Little information was known about how organizational factors affected turnover (Ingersoll, 2001) because turnover was seen as an individual decision. However, more recent reports are discovering that one aspect in particular, working conditions, is an influential organizational factor in teacher retention (NCES, 1996; Leadwood & Caddie, 2007) because working conditions were often the reason why teachers left a school or exited the profession. In order to narrow the scope of organizational theory, this study will focus on one aspect of it as it relates to teacher retention, namely workplace conditions.

My perspective also draws on the artistic frame of reference of aesthetic education. Greene (2001) declares aesthetic education is an “intentional undertaking to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed” (p. 6). The photograph will serve as an artistic and methodological tool for reflection because it will present the teacher with an image of the factors that assist them in continuing to teach in a hard to staff school. The image, which was previously nonexistent, was created by the teacher for this study.

Objects and events can only take on an aesthetic experience through the interaction of human consciousness, of seeing various meanings of what is there and what is left out, and by moving beyond the idea of seeing the world in black or white terms. In this respect, the photograph became the object that facilitated the reflective encounter. “When this happens, new connections are made in experience: new patterns are formed, new vistas are opened. Persons *see* differently, resonate differently” (Greene, 2001, p. 6). The photographs were intended to provide numerous entry points for discussion of issues related to continued teaching in hard to staff schools.

Research Design

In order to explore and investigate the factors that influence teachers’ decisions to continue teaching beyond five years in hard to staff schools, this study will employ a multi-case study design. Data were drawn from a survey and photographic interviewing with five teachers, or five cases. The brief survey, which was distributed in the first meeting, was utilized to obtain information such as: age, marital status, level of education, number of years teaching, whether they were highly qualified, if they are certified nationally, the type of teacher education program, whether or not the teacher participated in an induction or mentoring program, the types of professional development completed, and the teacher responses to professional development. A second interview was used to clarify data from the survey, member check interview information, and follow-up discussion. In order to keep each case organized, both interviews for each participant occurred over a two-week period and cases did not overlap. Interviews were transcribed within one to two days of the occurrence.

Participants were provided with a camera and instructed to take pictures from the perspective of what they think it means to be a teacher in a hard to staff school. Participants were not allowed to use pictures of their students for reasons of confidentiality and will be encouraged to find other symbolic representations. Participants were asked to rank the pictures in order from most representative of what it means to them to teach in a hard to staff school to least representative of what it means to them. The interview for each participant was conducted using the top five photographs. The interview was semi-formal because it was lead by the participants based on the photos they took. The photographs guided the interview conversation, which was a technique of drawing out data known as photographic interviewing (Merriam 1998).

Photographic interviewing has also been called image-based research in the research literature (Prosser, 1998). Image-based research has its roots in anthropology and sociology. It has been widely used in visual sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and ethnographic research. In psychology and photographic theory research conducted by Cronin (1998) photos were found to be a good form of breaking the ice, or starting conversations, when used by photo therapists with participants. Cronin (1998) found the “meaning of photographs arise in a narrative context” (p. 76). The notion of establishing a non-threatening role during the interview process was a necessary component of this study. Although certain aspects of image-based research are applicable to this study, the technique used in this study, referred to photographic interviewing (Merriam, 1998), emphasized the dialogic, reflective encounter with the photographic content, and not the image itself.

Significance of the Study

Some schools benefit from a consistent workforce while others suffer from exchanging one novice teacher for another and struggle to make gains in the area of student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2003) reported student achievement levels rise over time if taught by highly qualified teachers who choose to remain in their teaching assignment. “Teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other educational factor” (Shapiro & Laine, 2005, p. 6). The focus of this study was on the retention of highly qualified teachers who have been teaching beyond five years in hard to staff schools. Over fifty years ago, Charters (1956) found teacher turnover to be a problem and it continues to be problematic today, especially in hard to staff schools. Retention of highly qualified teachers is a more pressing issue today, than in the past, because all students need highly quality instruction in order to maintain adequate yearly progress, as mandated by the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Definition of Terms

The list of words that follow are defined in order to provide an understanding of the concepts used most often in this paper, making it possible for the reader to comprehend the concepts discussed herein and readily interpret the data.

Hard to staff schools: A hard to staff school is a term found in the literature that refers to schools with high poverty, a high percentage of minorities, and low achieving students (Berry, 2004).

Induction Programs: A type of professional development offered in a state or district (Wong, 2004).

Leavers: Teachers who exit the teaching profession.

Mentoring: One part of an induction program (Wong, 2004).

Movers: Teachers who move from one school or district to another (Elfers, Plecki & Knapp, 2006).

School Climate: School climate characterizes the organization of the school at the school building and classroom level.

Self-efficacy: A person's estimate of their own ability to succeed.

Stayers: Teachers who stay in the teaching profession either in the same school or district.

Teacher attrition: Refers to teachers who exit the teaching profession.

Teacher retention: Teachers who continue to teach from year to year.

Transfers: Teachers who transfer to different schools in the same or different district. (Imazeki, 2005).

Limitations

The principal limitation of the study is that the teachers will be drawn from two schools in a large urban school district, in one state.

Summary

The stability of the teaching workforce has been a long-term concern for educators, administrators and policy makers. Recruitment is only part of the solution. Research shows specific kinds of recruitment tools are needed to attract teachers for hard to staff schools (Shapiro & Laine, 2005). "Work conditions such as administrative leadership and

support, school climate, teacher autonomy in the classroom, student behavior, and parental support are directly associated with the job satisfaction of teachers” (Norton, 1999, p. 53). Two main types of data, surveys and interviews, were collected to find out more about teacher retention in hard to staff schools, survey and interviews. Photographs of the teachers’ experiences in a hard to staff school, the narratives they created during the interviews, and member checking of interpretations in the follow-up interview were analyzed using qualitative research methods. One survey will be administered and two interviews will be conducted, recorded, transcribed. All data were analyzed for each case in order to triangulate data sources.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historically, there is a wide range of terms have been used to describe teacher retention. Information about teachers' retention patterns and career choices are often labeled under numerous headings. These terms include "teacher attrition, teacher survival, teacher retention, teacher burnout, and teacher turnover. At times, there appears to be no clear taxonomy and often these terms may overlap" (Adams & Dial, 1994, p. 358). Research on teacher attrition and retention has generated its own terminology, which continues to evolve. Early descriptors included teacher turnover (Charters, 1956) and survivors (Mark & Anderson, 1978).

By the mid-ninety's, and into the new millennium, the terms transformed into movers, stayers, and leavers, (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener & Weber, 1997; NCES, 1996), teacher migration (Ingersoll, 2001) and teacher mobility (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001). Some studies described retention of teachers as voluntary movers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003), while others used terms such as: stayers, leavers, lovers, and dreamers (Cochran-Smith, 2004). The research articles included in this review of literature were selected to frame the questions that guided this study. The research questions formulated for this research project were chosen to help answer the following questions: What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years? Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in

stimulating teacher retention? Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years? How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools? The historical context of teacher retention and the evolution of teacher retention as a construct is outlined next, and then the literature is presented in four categories: mentoring and induction programs, working conditions, retention in hard to staff schools, and teacher satisfaction. The definition of retention will be discussed in the next section followed by the four categories of literature related to the study of teacher retention for the purposes of this research venture.

One of the difficulties in trying to make sense out of the research conducted on teacher retention is that the research does not consistently use the term retention. Instead, attrition is often used to discuss the phenomenon of why teachers leave. Attrition frequently includes both the teachers who leave the profession and the teachers who move, or transfer, to other schools or districts. As a result, the research can be misleading in understanding exactly how many teachers are being retained in a particular school and how many teachers are being retained in the teaching profession. It is also difficult to know how many teachers exit the profession compared to those who transfer, or migrate, to teach somewhere else.

For example, if teachers move to teach in a different school, district or state, they cannot exactly be counted as leavers. Leavers are defined as "those who left the teaching profession entirely" (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener & Weber, 1997, p. 394). Movers are defined as teachers who continue to teach, but who move to teach in other schools districts or states (Boe et al., 1997). Some researchers separate leavers from movers in the data, but others count movers and leavers as part of the same group. Most research

studies need to be cross-examined in order to discern the meaning of retention and how it is used in that study.

Ingersoll (2001) reported that approximately 50 percent of teacher turnover is due to teacher migration from one school to another. Teachers who migrate to other schools are referred to as movers. However, movers sometimes can be referred to as leavers if it means they left a school to teach in a different state or district (Ingersoll, 2001). Despite the fact that movers can be counted differently in the research, a broad definition of retention can simply mean teachers who remain teaching in the profession from year to year. In some research articles, these teachers are distinctly referred to as stayers (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Boe et al, 1997), but the definition of teacher retention seems to change from one research article to another.

Stayers can also refer to teachers who stay in the same school or teachers who stay in teaching; it depends on the research report. Making matters more complicated, when retention is defined in the literature it can mean retention for one year, as in the case of a teacher who sticks around to teach for a second year, or it can mean teachers who make teaching a career, as in those who stay in teaching for fifteen or twenty years (Nieto, 2003). The definition of retention is not consistent across scholarly reports, government reports, and research articles.

The studies reviewed for this paper revealed a variety of ways researchers have investigated the topic of teacher retention. When looking across the research it has been hard to generalize the findings because studies have used different sample sizes, different types of data analyses, and different types of populations. Some studies investigated teacher attrition factors while others inquired about teachers' perceived attrition or

retention. Many studies have conducted research with teachers in their first few years of teaching while others investigated teachers who have more than fifteen or twenty years of teaching, (Brunetti, 2006; Nieto, 2003, Marantz, 1991).

Despite the disparities in methods, it appears that induction programs, working conditions, support, age, and organizational factors that impact teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession, especially when it comes to teaching in hard to staff schools. Research related to teacher retention will be presented in four categories beginning with a historical context of teacher retention. The categories include: mentoring and induction programs, working conditions, retention in hard to staff schools, and teacher satisfaction. These main topics of retention will be discussed in the next section.

Historical Context

In a report on the causes of teacher turnover, Charters (1956) found that almost 25 percent of high school teachers left their positions at the end of the 1954-55 academic school years. Even though Charters (1956) labeled this turnover as a problem, the author did not spell out the whether or not the remaining 75 percent of teachers were retained, or if retained the school, the district, or the state. It is implied that the retention of teachers may be the reverse phenomenon, but retention is not addressed. The concern about education was not teacher retention per se, but "in trying to explain differences in rates of turnover" (Charters, 1956, p. 297). From a labor market perspective, analysts say some turnover in work force is necessary and even beneficial (Ingersoll, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006). However, in an organization that is well-managed turnover is relatively low. The educational system, and its students,

continues to suffer from high rates of teacher turnover despite the fact that it has been a topic of research for over fifty years.

Charters (1956) referred to turnover as a particular behavior of the teacher. This researcher called for a new approach to understanding teacher turnover, one that focused on finding out the reasons behind an individual's career choices, motivations, goals, and aspirations. Teachers were described as psychological beings that need to be approached and understood as complex, thinking beings. He suggested an approach to determine which teachers were "turnover-prone" and how schools varied in the types of teachers they were able to attract. Retention was not specifically named in this early study.

In a study on teacher attrition, Chapman & Hutcherson (1982) aimed to find out the characteristics of individuals who remained in teaching as opposed to those who left teaching. They divided the 690 subjects into two groups, those who remained teaching and those who changed careers. No minimum amount of years in teaching was mentioned to define retention, but their first job after college had to be as an elementary or high school teacher and they still had to be teaching in order to be considered retained. These researchers reported that the personal characteristics and income of those who stayed in teaching were not significantly different from those who did not. Three variables were found to explain 10 percent of the variance, which were the ability to organize time effectively, cooperate with a team, and interpret numerical data. However, whether or not these teachers were retained beyond three, four, or five years was unclear.

Mentoring and Induction Programs

Research shows that teacher attrition rates decline when teachers are offered and participate in quality induction and mentoring programs (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). Induction programs have positively impacted teacher retention rates (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Wong, 2004; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Chapman, 1984). Induction programs were defined by Wong (2004) as a, “systemwide, coherent, comprehensive training and support process that continues for 2 or 3 years,” (p. 42). Mentoring is one part of an induction program. In states with structured professional development programs, support for new and continuing teachers continues throughout a teacher’s professional career.

One study suggested that less academically able teachers are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Schlechty & Vance, 1981). However, research has found teachers with more education and training tend to remain in the profession at higher rates (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Adams & Dial 1994). Induction programs that nudge novice teachers towards completing more education may have a positive impact on the retention that continues after the induction period has concluded.

In a recent study, Ingersoll & Smith (2004) used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and examined teacher induction programs. They found the number of induction programs teachers participated in from 1990 to 1999, increased from 41 percent to 79 percent over that decade. The study revealed that when induction supports were in place for the teachers, the rate of retention increased. Induction supports included an assigned mentor, the degree of helpfulness of that mentor, a common planning time with teachers in their subject area, a chance to collaborate with other teachers, participation in

an educational association, reduced teaching schedule, extra classroom assistance, and a supportive principal.

Ingersoll and Smith (2004) also found that the teachers who had participated in some type of induction program had a lower rate of predicted probability of turnover. More importantly, those who had more induction supports had the lowest predicted probability rate of turnover, which was 28 percent. Teachers with no induction program supports had a much higher rate of predicted turnover probability, which was 40 percent. In this example, one can see how the road to gaining knowledge about teacher retention is steeped in facts about teacher attrition. One has to actively invert the findings in order to begin the discussion on the rates of teacher retention.

Odell and Ferraro (1992) have also found that teacher mentoring has resulted in a reduction of teacher attrition among beginning teachers. They surveyed 160 teachers in their fourth year of teaching that had participated in a mentoring program during their initial year of teaching. They found that of the teachers they were able to contact, 96 percent of the teachers who participated in the mentoring program were still teaching. However, in order to compare this finding to other research, it must first be inverted to an attrition rate, which is 4 percent.

Watlington, Shockley, Huie, Morris, & Lieberman (2004) conducted a longitudinal study to identify who was at-risk for leaving the teaching profession and found that mentoring had a positive affect on retention. The study was conducted in south Florida, and target four school districts that all had a growing, multiethnic student population. Analyses were collected for 3 years following the 2000-2001 school year. Age, gender, race, preparation and assignment were analyzed. T test and chi square analyses were

performed on variables and multiple hypotheses were examined. The purpose of the study was to create a model for predicting teacher retention.

The first year attrition rate was 95.6 percent, 79.8 percent for year two, and 72.8 percent for the third year. However, over the next two years they found that out-of-state hires were less likely to be retained, older new hires were less like to stay, males were less likely to stay, teachers teaching out-of-field were less likely to stay, and teachers with no preparation, on emergency or provisional licenses, were also less likely to stay. Teacher retention was greater in Broward County which has a program called the New Educator Support System, which is consistent with research by Odell and Ferraro (1992) who have found mentoring programs to have a positive impact on teacher retention.

Empirical evidence exists to show that mentoring programs increase teacher retention. The four percent attrition rate from the Odell and Ferraro (1992) research and the 29 percent attrition rate from the Ingersoll and Smith (2004) research are evidence that induction supports, including mentoring, do have a positive impact on teacher retention. Darling-Hammond (2003) reported, “early pilots featuring carefully designed mentoring systems found rates of beginning teacher retention exceeding 90 percent on the first several years” (p. 11). These examples make the case that researchers need to pinpoint a clear and more direct and consistent way of reporting retention numbers and rates.

Mentoring and induction programs also act as an incentive for veteran teachers by providing a new challenge and keeping teachers energized by participating in a variety of capacities. Cochran-Smith (2004) summarized Johnson’s argument from Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools (2004) that asserts

today's teachers are of a new generation, a generation that demands more opportunities to advance. The idea of differentiated roles is also highlighted as a way to make teaching more attractive to today's teacher. If providing such opportunities to teachers entices teachers to remain in the profession in a meaningful and productive way, it appears that there are numerous avenues of induction programs that can positively impact teacher retention.

Although a host of factors influence teacher retention, (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, administrative support, teacher education program, and collegiality), the first year teaching experience has also been an influential factor when it comes to a new teacher's decision to continue in the profession (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Chapman, 1984). For a beginning teacher, the quality of the first teaching experience was positively related to retention when compared to the teacher's prior academic performance or the adequacy of their teacher preparation programs. Teaching has a steep learning curve because novice teachers are expected to do the same job on day one as veteran teachers.

Chapman (1984) pointed out that even though his study did not find that administrators had a high degree of influence on teachers' decisions to stay or leave, administrators could have a positive impact on retaining teachers by providing programs that help teachers during their first year(s) of teaching. This research supports the significance of induction programs on the retention of teachers. Similar to Odell and Ferraro's (1992) findings, and the research by Darling-Hammond (1997, 2003), induction supports (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) and mentoring are key factors in the retention of qualified teachers.

Working Conditions

Working conditions is a broad category and research has listed many items under the working conditions heading. Some aspects that affect teacher retention found under working conditions include salary, size of class, administrative support, school climate, and organizational factors. Berry (2004) listed salary, support from school administrators, student motivation, teacher's influence over decision-making, and discipline problems all as aspects of working conditions. In a paper presented at the annual American Education Research Conference, Little (as cited in Berry, 2004), found working conditions affected teachers' motivation to stay or leave teaching and included factors such as: appropriateness of teaching assignments, sufficient time to work with teachers and students, professional development, access to materials and technology. These aspects of working conditions are somewhat different from what Berry (2004) identified as working conditions, but share some similarities, i.e. support, time, and materials.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) established that organizational factors at the school level, for example, administrative support and student motivation, might have negatively impacted retention because "after just five years between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers have left the profession" (p. 32). The data were drawn from the Teacher Follow-up Survey, which was administered to a large sample of teachers from the United States who left the teaching profession. The findings revealed that the pursuit of another job and job dissatisfaction were the prominent reasons teachers gave for leaving. The reasons teachers were dissatisfied included poor salary, student discipline problems, poor administrative support, and poor student motivation. The issue of teacher

support appeared to be a recurrent theme in the research, as well as, student discipline and motivation.

Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley (2006) looked at retention through conditions of the labor market and how recruitment and retention policies have directly impacted teacher retention. These researchers revealed teacher turnover was related to age and occurred either early or late in a teacher's career, which resulted in a U-shaped pattern. "The highest turnover and attrition rates for teachers occurred either in their first years of teaching and after many years of teaching, when they were near retirement" (Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006, p. 188). Research on the labor market reveals that some turnover is necessary and beneficial (Ingersoll, 2001). However, Ingersoll (2001) warns that organizational factors in schools and working conditions may be the driving force behind teacher turnover.

Salary was another factor that affected retention at the school level. In addition, salaries outside of education lured some teachers away and the low salary often associated with teaching equaled a diminished level of commitment to the profession. Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley (2006) reported that when looking at compensation policies, and their relationship to retention, they found a higher salary equaled higher retention. According to these findings, one could say that higher salaries and longer commitment to the profession may be partly due to the fact that salaries rise over time. The longer teachers remain in the profession, the higher the salary, which is consistent with what Imazeki (2005) established as well, "Higher salaries for more experienced teachers also reduces attrition, for both exits and female transfers" (p. 440). However, salary is inconsistently found to have a positive affect on teacher retention and

satisfaction (Kim & Loadman, 1994; Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006), which means that for many teachers factors other than salary are more influential in their decision to stay, transfer, or leave.

Buckley, Schneider and Shang (2005) made the argument that fixing up facilities might help convince teachers to stay. School facilities affect the climate of the school and in turn, affect the educational outcomes of its students. Factors such as air quality, ability to control classroom temperature, ambient noise level, and lighting have been known to affect teacher morale and student performance.

A study that systematically isolated the condition of a facility as a reason for retention had not been done until these authors conducted this particular study. They questioned 835 teachers in Washington D.C. and asked them to rate their response to several items, including satisfaction with administration, satisfaction with community, satisfaction with pay and most importantly, their satisfaction with their school facilities.

They were asked to grade their school facility where an A = 5; B = 4; C = 3, etc. They found that the level of satisfaction teachers expressed towards the condition of their particular school facility was statistically significant, at the $p < .05$ level, in terms of whether they planned on staying in teaching. The condition of a school facility had more of an impact on whether or not teachers were planning to stay than their salaries did. Several studies have reported that working conditions were a very influential factor in teacher retention (Berry, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Billingsley, 2004).

Beginning teachers are exploring the field of teaching in their first years, and consequently, have a lower tolerance for poor working conditions. These findings are

consistent with the hypotheses that working conditions affect retention. “Individuals new to the labor market may be exploring options and less likely to accept working conditions than more seasoned professionals,” (Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006, p. 188). This idea is also consistent with the notion that improving working conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2003) and the condition of the facility (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2005) may improve teacher retention.

Darling-Hammond (2003) reported factors like improving working conditions, effective teacher preparation, and providing support for new teachers could reduce teacher turnover. She urged school leaders to focus on teacher retention because highly qualified teachers have the greatest impact on the achievement levels of their students. She wrote, “Substantial research evidence suggests that well-prepared, capable teachers have the largest impact on student achievement” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 7). Teacher attrition interferes with students’ access to the best teachers, and it is also very expensive, annually costing districts millions of dollars.

One researcher has directly focused on teacher retention by asking why teachers persevere in the hardest of working conditions, which include urban schools, hard to staff schools, and schools with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Almost half of teachers quit teaching in urban schools within the first five years, but Nieto (2003) found teachers stayed for a variety of reasons. Based on the What Keeps Teachers Going inquiry group she conducted with eight high school teachers’ who taught poor, minority, culturally and linguistically diverse student populations several reasons emerged relating to why teachers stay in teaching. Teachers had a love for the students and they wanted to positively shape the life of the student. Teachers also expressed the

desire to be part of a collegial community and approached teaching as an intellectual endeavor.

Nieto's research (2005) has aspired to be a counter narrative to the prevailing wisdom about what qualifications teachers who teach in hard-to-staff schools need to have in order to qualify as excellent teachers. Although she does not specify how many years qualify as retention, she harvested her data from focus group interviews with teachers and found these teachers continued to teach for from a few years to many. Nieto (2005) found five core qualities of teachers who continued to teach. These five attributes were: a sense of mission, solidarity with, and empathy for students, the courage to question mainstream knowledge, improvisation, and a passion for social justice.

Due to the fact that teacher effectiveness increases greatly after the first few years, teacher turnover is counterproductive to student achievement in education because research has shown student achievement levels rise over time when taught by highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Shapiro & Laine, 2005). Darling-Hammond (1997) reported "high quality preparation, induction and mentoring programs lower attrition rates for new teachers and can enhance teacher effectiveness," (p. 255). Although research has suggested these three factors influence retention, policies have only addressed the recruitment side of teacher retention. Darling-Hammond (2003) urges, "Unless we develop policies to stem such attrition through better preparation, assignment, working conditions, and mentor support we cannot meet the goal of ensuring that all students have qualified teachers" (p. 9). Thusly, a paradigmatic shift from a focus on attrition to a focus on retention is imperative.

In a critical review of the literature on teacher retention and attrition in special and general education, Billingsley (1993) found that administrative, parental, and collegial support repeatedly materialized as critical retention factors for both general and special education teachers. Administrative, parental, and collegial support were aspects of working conditions which affected teacher retention, which is consistent with other research regarding some factors of working conditions. The author notes that the conceptual model includes examining retention through three main categories, external factors (economic, societal, and institutional), employment factors (working conditions and rewards, professional qualifications, and commitment to teaching), and personal factors (variables outside of employment). However, the author reported work related factors, including teacher characteristics and personal factors, teacher qualifications, work conditions, and affective reactions to work have played a major role in retention.

Due to the fact that different research studies define retention in different ways, the author defined retention as teachers, “who remained in the same teaching assignment and the same school as the previous year,” (p. 40). An important element of teacher retention is differentiating between different types of leavers, stayers, and those who transfer to other teaching positions versus those who exit the profession. Findings indicated that teachers who were younger, less experienced, and uncertified were more likely to leave teaching, as well as, teachers with higher test scores. However, Billingsley (1993) concluded that more in-depth analysis is needed to provide a better understanding of the reasons why stayers remain in teaching and committed to their profession.

Working conditions were recently analyzed as one part of occupational well being when considering the well being of school community staff (Saaranen, Tossavainen,

Turunen, Kiviniemi, & Vertio, 2006). They defined working conditions as only one part of occupational well being, along with three other aspects, including: worker and work, working community, and professional competence. Working conditions referred to the working space available to teachers and access to equipment. Saaranen, et al. (2006) refer to the working space available to teachers, access to equipment, and working atmosphere as facets of working conditions that contributed to occupational well being of school community staff. Saaranen et al. (2006) suggested their framework for occupational well-being may be useful as a framework for planning and evaluating school staff's occupational well-being once it has been tested nationally and internationally.

Retention in Hard to Staff Schools

Research has shown that when students are taught highly qualified teachers their achievement levels are higher (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Shapiro and Laine, 2005). In the landmark legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all teachers had to be highly qualified by 2006. Retention of highly qualified teachers in all types of schools is now a pressing issue. However, retention of highly qualified teachers in high poverty urban and rural schools requires an additional level of examination.

Cochran-Smith (2004) supports the notion that recruitment alone is the wrong answer to the retention problem. Cochran-Smith (2004) urged the need to focus on teacher retention in hard to staff schools because “the problem of teacher retention is most severe in hard-to-staff schools” (p. 387). Darling-Hammond (2003) quotes Ingersoll (2001) who says, “Teacher turnover is 50 percent higher in high-poverty than in low-poverty schools” (p. 7). Also, Darling-Hammond (2003) quoted Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin (1999) who

found, “new teachers in urban districts exit or transfer at higher rates than their suburban counterparts do,” (p. 8). Based on these findings, the need to spotlight teacher retention in hard to staff schools has become an urgent matter.

McCreight (2000) reports that school districts across the nation are experiencing a shortage of highly qualified teachers, and outlines strategies for reducing teacher shortages in her report. Some suggestions include: preparing new teachers through induction and mentoring programs, recruiting teachers from the private sector, offering alternative certification programs, giving bonuses, loan forgiveness programs, retirement credit increases, and day care for teachers’ children. McCreight (2000) urged states and school districts focus on teacher recruitment and retention by performing comprehensive analyses on the teacher retention issue and by improving working conditions. More importantly, she pointed out that it was hard for teachers to get certified in different states and this may prevent teachers from moving to districts that experience teacher shortages. The idea that enough teachers are produced annually, but they are unequally distributed throughout the nation is reiterated here, as well as in the literature (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Sotko, Ingram & Beaty-O’Farrell, 2007).

In a report prepared by the Education Commission of the States (1999) twenty-seven education leaders from across the United States met to discuss teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention in hard to staff schools. The recommendations they identify for teacher retention include strengthening teacher preparation programs, increase high quality alternative teacher certification programs, implement solid beginning teacher support programs, create a fruitful learning and teaching environment, and increase incentives for teachers who remain in hard to staff schools. The commission

recommended that we need a national commission to convene in order to set up similar data collection procedures across our nation, specifically in hard to staff schools. It also seems that individual school districts need to begin collecting data to inform policy decisions in their own districts.

Berry (2004) focused on teacher pay and working conditions in order to increase teacher retention in hard to staff schools. Increasing salaries is not enough to keep teachers. Although different types of initiatives have been tried, programs to pay teachers more money who teach in hard to staff schools have often fallen defunct or resulted in attrition. Fowler (as cited in Berry 2004) found that Massachusetts “spent \$900,000 to attract and train 74 recruits” (p. 11), but these recruits still left the schools in which they were teaching. Berry (2004) also found that even though there are not a lot of studies that have evaluated the cost-effectiveness of induction programs, attrition rate is lower for new teachers who participate in some type of induction program, which suggests that if schools are going to spend money it may be best spent on programs that support teachers, like induction programs, especially in hard to staff schools.

Part of the problem Berry (2004) argues, is that since all teachers are paid the same regardless of class size, school facility, discipline problems, etc. that there is nothing stopping them from moving to less stressful and more attractive schools. Improving working conditions means giving teachers time to work with students, time to collaborate, professional development that focuses on the needs of teachers, access to information and technology, and helpful feedback. These school based type of supports need to happen in a variety of ways, in every school, but this is not the case in many of our nation’s schools (Kozol, 1991).

Ingersoll (2001) found turnover to be related to age, subject taught, and school poverty level. High poverty schools had higher rates of turnover. He clarified that turnover is comprised of leavers, those who left teaching altogether, and movers, those who moved to teach in other schools or districts. Since this study aimed to discern reasons for turnover, no distinction was made of the term retention. However, it was reported that too much turnover might have a negative impact on school effectiveness and student achievement, which implies that retained teachers may positively impact school effectiveness and student achievement.

Teacher education programs typically do not prepare teachers to work in urban settings with diverse learners and programs with this type of focus are usually part of alternative, or progressive education programs (Sotko, Ingram & Beaty-O'Farrell, 2007). Empirical evidence has illustrated that there are certain beliefs, dispositions and even traits of successful urban educators. A variety of research has shown that successful urban teachers are persistent, refuse to give up on their students, they are flexible, and hold high standards (Sotko, Ingram & Beaty-O'Farrell, 2007). However, urban schools continue to have a problem with retention due to limits on salaries, poor working conditions, educational materials, and maintenance of school environment.

Berry & King (2004) found that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) have a positive impact on student achievement, yet they are not likely to be working in hard to staff schools. There is an uneven distribution of qualified teachers in our country and the authors point out three issues policymakers and practitioners must address. These issues included: insufficient salary incentives, lack of qualified teachers into hard to staff schools, and strategies to convince NBCTs to teach in low performing or high minority

schools. For example, Georgia requires that NCBTs teach in hard to staff schools for two years or more in order to receive a pay incentive other states offer immediately upon completion of the National Board Teaching requirements.

Shapiro & Laine (2005) conducted a study with teachers who continue to teach in hard to staff schools. Approximately 130 teachers with an average 12 years teaching experience participated in focus groups from rural, suburban and urban schools. Four policy scenarios were given to teachers to read in order for researchers to solicit teachers' opinions about which policies were more or less likely to attract teachers to work in hard to staff schools. The conversations from the focus groups were analyzed. The breakdown revealed four main findings: new recruitment tools are needed to attract and retain high quality teachers in hard to staff schools, committed school leadership coupled with measurable goals are a must have to attract and retain high quality teachers in hard to staff schools, extensive mentoring along with useful, ongoing professional development may encourage teachers to continue in hard to staff schools, and pay for performance is controversial for these teachers, mainly because it was considered antiunion.

Teachers' level of organizational commitment is another factor in teacher retention. Dee, Henkin, and Singleton (2006) examined teachers' level of organizational commitment in urban schools because a "substantial body of evidence indicates that organizational commitment is an important determinant and a powerful predictor of organizational behavior, including turnover and absenteeism," (p. 604) from a particular school. Some schools have redesigned their governance structures and employed site-based management, or teams of teachers, who ultimately have more input into the decision-making processes of the school. More input in decision-making may lead to a

higher level of commitment to the school organization from the teacher and offer a feeling of ownership.

Dee, Henkin, and Singleton (2006) used path analysis to examine four variables of organizational commitment, which were teaching teamwork, curriculum teamwork, administrative teamwork and community relation's teamwork. They found respondents participated more frequently in teaching teamwork and curriculum teamwork, but teaching teamwork had the biggest impact on organizational commitment. The team teaching aspect had some effect on openness in communication, and thusly, may have led to a stronger organizational commitment. Activities that are more consequential to the member of an organization, such as being part of a teaching team and having input into curriculum decisions, are both factors of working conditions that in due course affect the retention of teachers in a specific school.

Theobald (1989) conducted a study to find out which factors influence the retention of K-12 teachers in Washington State between 1984 and 1987. Using profit analysis, an econometric model was estimated for a sample of these teachers based on their decisions to stay or leave the school district. Female teachers with graduate degrees were not any more likely to leave, but males with graduate degrees were 50% more likely to leave their positions. Personal characteristics such as: age, years of teaching experience, salary and elementary teaching assignment were all found to be statistically significant each year of the study. The ratio of student to teacher was also a significant factor, as well as, assessed student valuation. Interestingly, teachers in wealthier school districts were more likely to leave when compared to teachers elsewhere. Districts with higher percentages of Indian and Asian student populations were negatively correlated with a stay decision.

Teacher Satisfaction

Many studies address teacher attrition and teacher burnout. Lack of administrator support, collegial and parent support and lack of input into decision-making are the main factors cited by teachers as reasons for attrition (Shann, 1998). However, the demand for effective teachers requires a new empirical focus. More information about how teachers remain satisfied and maintain enthusiasm about their teaching career is necessary considering today's demand for high quality, long-term teachers. Marantz (1991) reported that qualitative research on successful veteran teachers was practically nonexistent in research literature. Teacher satisfaction is critical because it "influences education reform, job performance, teacher persistence, and student performance," (Marston et al., 2006, p. 113).

Satisfaction in working with young people was found in the research to be a principal motivator for teacher satisfaction (Marston, Courtney and Brunetti, 2006). Student to teacher relationships also contribute to job satisfaction (Kim & Loadman, 1994; Brunetti, 2006). Yee (1990) found that teacher-to-teacher relationships were very influential in promoting job satisfaction because they provide a stimulating and collaborative environment. Collegial interactions and collegial support also stimulate job satisfaction and play a large role in teacher retention (Stanford, 2001; Theobald, 1989). Principal leadership and support have also been found to influence teacher satisfaction in urban schools. Ultimately, these factors, which include interactions with students, colleagues, administration and parents, input into decision making, and teacher satisfaction have an effect on teachers' decisions to stay at a particular school, move to a different school or district, or completely leave the teaching field.

Marston, Courtney and Brunetti (2006) conducted a study to investigate the level of career satisfaction among teachers with at least fifteen years teaching experience to find out what has kept them in the profession. Marston et al. (2006) wonder why teachers continue to teach despite challenging work conditions, such as, large class sizes, deteriorating facilities, extremely diverse student populations, low salaries, declining status of the teaching profession, and growing demands from parents and administration. Two of the research questions they used to guide the study asked included: To what extent was experienced teachers satisfied with their work? Among those who were satisfied, what were the principal motivators or sources of satisfaction that affected their decision to stay in the classroom?

The setting for the study was in one large, ethnically diverse school district in Northern California and also in two medium-size, diverse socio-economic districts in Pennsylvania. The subjects were mainly between 40-49 years of age, although the age range was from 40 to over 60, and included 93 women and 7 men. The elementary schools in California ranged from 300-800 students and the majority of the student population was Caucasian, 67.8 percent, with 15.6 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian, and less than 5 percent African American. The Pennsylvania schools were primarily Caucasian, 5 percent Asian, 6 percent African American, and less than 1 percent Hispanic students.

Teachers completed the Experienced Teacher Survey (ETS) designed by Brunetti in 2001 to collect information concerning professional and social satisfaction from teachers about their teaching career. There was also a three-hour, open-ended interview. The surveys were analyzed using t-tests to establish significance of differences between the

two groups of elementary teachers. The interviews were analyzed with the constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which includes comparing the data, determining sets of data with similar characteristics, and designating themes for data sets. Results indicated that most teachers were satisfied with their jobs with a mean score of 3.39 on a 4-point scale, but Californian teachers' satisfaction level was significantly higher ($p < .05$). The principal motivators for both groups of teachers to stay in the classroom were professional factors, including, satisfaction with working with young people, satisfaction in seeing young people learn and grow, and satisfaction at being successful at something you enjoy. The latter reason was significantly higher ($p < .05$) for the Pennsylvanian teachers. Teachers also specifically mentioned the student to teacher relationship factor as a reason for staying in the profession because it provided a high level of job satisfaction. In this study, qualitative and quantitative data both show students are the primary reason teachers decide to remain in the profession.

Brunetti (2006) conducted a study with high school teachers working in inner city schools. Inner city schools were described as schools that serve poor and minority students from low socioeconomic neighborhoods. The setting of the study was in a high school with about 950 students in a large Californian city. Of its 950 students, most were Hispanic or Latino, 44 percent, with African American, 23 percent, and Asian, 23 percent, populations from impoverished areas. Thirty-three percent of the school population was classified as English language learners (ELL) and almost twenty percent were identified as special education students. According to the district, the high school ranked in the lowest decile (10%) in terms of academic performance. There were nine subjects total, five women and four men, and they were predominantly white. Their total

teaching experience ranged from 13 to 36 years, but years at the specific high school in this study ranged from 2 to 33.

Through the use of Brunetti's (2001) ETS survey and interviews he found that there are three main reasons teachers stay, or persist, in the profession, they are: the students, professional and personal satisfaction, and support from administrators. Although teachers' decisions to stay in the classroom were influenced by these main factors, the data also revealed a necessary condition to persist in an inner city school was teachers' resilience in the face of serious challenges and frustrations. Brunetti (2006) claims teachers' resilience is what enables them to overcome obstacles and persist in inner city schools, despite enormous challenges. Resilience is defined as a "quality that enables teachers to maintain their commitment to teaching and their teaching practices despite challenging conditions and recurring setbacks" (Brunetti, 2006, p. 813). The interview transcripts exposed numerous daily challenges in the high school, and yet, teachers were able to continue on course and stay committed to, and even enjoy, their teaching assignment.

Teacher satisfaction is a factor in teacher retention, and in fact it has been found to be a predictor of retention. Shann (1998) used interviews and questionnaires from 92 teachers in four urban middle schools to assess the importance, and satisfaction, these teachers allocated to a range of their job features. Shann (1998) found, "Teacher-pupil relationships ranked highest overall in terms of importance and satisfaction. Parent-teacher relationships commanded respondents' highest concern. Teachers in the lower achieving schools were more dissatisfied with teacher-teacher relationships and their school's curriculum than those in the higher achieving schools, and they reported a

greater discrepancy in student achievement” (p. 67). Teacher satisfaction is a vital connection in the succession of teacher reform policies and programs because it ultimately influences teacher attrition and student performance.

Marso and Pigge (1997) completed a longitudinal study to compare academic and personal characteristics of persisting and nonpersisting teacher candidates. The sample of teacher candidates, n = 551, came from a large Midwestern university in the mid-nineteen eighties. Candidates were mainly White (98%), female (79%), elementary education majors who were certain or very certain about the decision to become teachers. Male candidates (21%) and candidates, both male and female, majoring in secondary education (46%) were also included. Sixty percent of candidates in the study had immediate family members who were also teachers.

The data revealed that 7 years after the teacher preparation program began, 433 (79%) of teacher candidates had become certified. Interestingly, 153 of the certified candidates (28%) did not find jobs as teachers or chose not to work as teachers. Approximately, 49% of the original teacher candidates, never successfully transitioned into teaching seven years after beginning their teacher education program. Of the 280 (51%) candidates who did transition into teaching, only 162 (29 %) of the original 551 candidates made successful transitions and persisted into full-time teaching. Most of these teachers sought jobs similar to the rural and suburban communities where they received their education.

The teacher candidates’ initial commitment was found to be a factor in whether or not they persisted and successfully transitioned into the teaching field. In fact, Marso & Pigge (1997) discovered that if teacher candidates were sure they wanted to be a teacher in elementary school they were twice as likely to become a teacher than those who did

not decide to become teachers until high school years or later. This finding is similar to what other researchers have exposed, as well, that a teacher's initial commitment or degree of assurance may be a predictor in determining their persistence as a teacher (Chapman & Green, 1986).

Marantz (1991) conducted a study with five veteran high school teachers to find out what factors influenced their decisions to continue to teach. The subjects were three men and two women who were successful practitioners according to their administrators, their colleagues, and their professional accomplishments. In order to present her subjects from many angles, Marantz (1991) used an ethnographic approach along with the tools of a cultural anthropologist. She included open-ended interviews letters from students, observations, lesson plans, and stories from spouses, friends, and colleagues to breath life into her subjects. She called her case studies portraits because they were constructed with an organizing aesthetic. The voices of these veteran teachers revealed some striking common characteristics. They include, the passion for their subject, lack of concern for conventional career mobility regardless of gender, originality in their teaching, persistence of the novice perspective, and self-enablement coupled with student-enablement.

The characteristic passion for their subject in this study revealed itself as an all-pervasive aspect of these teachers' lives. "It is a passion that pervades every aspect of their lives, extending far beyond the boundaries of the classroom, into speech and habit, hobby and quirk" (Marantz, 1991, p. 98). The interest in content enables them to sustain their efforts in teaching despite the inherent challenges. These teachers were not interested in moving into administrative positions. Historically, men, more so than

women, have been known to diverge from teaching and turn to administrative positions or careers in law or business, whereas, women were less interested in competitive salaries, but not in this study. These subjects compete more with themselves rather than colleagues or supervisors and strive to do their job better and better. For both men and women, job satisfaction comes from within themselves and from meeting standards of excellence in their teaching.

Originality in their teaching can be described as finding a unique way to capture their students' attention. It also meant reinventing how to present the material, adding the personal charismatic touch, and not reusing the same lesson plans over and over. The persistence of a novice perspective refers to these teachers displaying characteristics usually associated with beginning teachers. The veteran teachers were concerned with self-protectiveness and what their colleagues and students thought of them. Qualities of veteran teachers were also found amongst these teachers; confidence and understanding the impact of education, to name a few. Nonetheless, it is the novice perspective that provides an ongoing fresh perspective and energy that prevents burnout and is an important factor in the longevity of these teachers.

Self-enablement and student-enablement from Marantz's (1991) study are described next. Veteran teachers are great student enablers. They teach their students how to look for the answers and attempt to awaken their curiosity. Contrary to conventional wisdom on effective teaching, these teachers did not run student-centered classrooms with student directed learning and small group work. They employed a teacher-centered approach to teaching, which included a focus on their teaching identity and effectiveness. This focus on self may be a vital part of teacher longevity.

Stanford (2001) conducted a qualitative exploration to find out more about resilient, preserving urban elementary teachers in two very economically depressed areas in Washington, D. C. The participants were nine African American elementary teachers, five of whom had twenty-eight or more years of teaching experience and the rest who had between ten and twenty-one years of experience. She chose her participating teachers based on the presence of high morale, years of teaching experience, teaching at the elementary level, and teachers who were working in troubled urban environments. The urban environments were considered troubled because the district in which Stanford (2001) drew her subjects from was reported in the newspaper as a failure. It was accused of having cheated its students and was soon to be taken over by the state's financial control board. In contrast, the criteria for high morale among her participating teachers included a positive attitude, enthusiasm about teaching, involvement in their work, and a style all their own.

Stanford (2001) used four types of data sources, which included semi-structured interviews, self-ranking activities, field notes, and a focus group with three participants. She used a combination of the Glaser and Straus (1967) method of grounded theory and content analysis to analyze the data. Her analysis revealed five patterns about which elements played a role in the positive retention of this group of teachers, and they were: love and commitment to the type of children in these schools, their sources of satisfaction as teachers, their ideal and worst possible teaching scenarios, their sources of support, and their choices of metaphors.

Their sources of satisfaction included seeing children succeed academically and making a difference in their students' lives. The analysis revealed their sources of support

were unanimously their colleagues first, their spirituality and church affiliations for some, and lastly, their family and friends. Ideal teaching scenarios were teaching with enough supplies, parental involvement, and 21 children or less. Worst teaching scenarios were described as parents working against teachers, not enough materials, and unsupportive administration. Metaphors like being on a team, and family, were used to describe what being in school was like, or should be, for teachers. Although war was used to depict what it can actually be like for children in an urban school, safe haven and family were metaphors which were also used to describe what being in an urban school should and can be like for the children.

The idea that teachers are committed to their students and value being witness to their academic growth is consistent with what other research has revealed about the positive impact of student to teacher relationships on teacher satisfaction (Marston, Courtney and Brunetti, 2006; Brunetti, 2001; Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Stanford's (2001) finding that teachers who persevere in urban schools cite teacher support as a factor for positively stimulating retention is also consistent with research (Theobald, 1989). The finding that was surprising to Stanford (2001) was that the teachers claimed their spirituality contributed to their perseverance, despite the distressed school setting. The researcher asked, is spirituality unique to this group of teachers or does spirituality play a role in perseverance for teachers in these schools. The role of spirituality and its effects on teachers who thrive in urban and impoverished settings is an avenue for further study.

Consistent with the research reviewed herein, Kim & Loadman (1994) reported that one in four students who completes a teacher training program never enters teaching, or if they do, they leave within the first five years (Chapman, 1984; Berry, 2004). Although

we know some factors that influence job satisfaction include working conditions, administrative support, and teachers' relationships with students and other teachers, predictions of teacher shortages and surpluses are elusive. More needs to be learned about what factors relate to teachers' decisions about their teaching careers.

Kim & Loadman (1994) conducted a meta-analysis of approximately 2,000 ERIC documents that discussed teacher satisfaction between 1982 and 1995. They also employed a survey, which was completed by 2054 respondents, that examined six areas: employment history, ratings of program quality, ratings of professional knowledge, ratings of competence in selected teaching skills, and views of teaching and demographic information. Some items from the survey were then used to predict job satisfaction.

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess "how much of the total variation in teacher satisfaction can be accounted for by seven independent variables with satisfaction level as a dependent variable" (Kim & Loadman, 1994, p. 7). Interestingly, all seven variables were determined to be statistically significant. The seven predictors of job satisfaction included: salary, opportunities for advancement, level of personal and professional challenge, professional autonomy and decision making, general working conditions, interaction with colleagues, and interaction with students. The predictors with the highest means were interaction with students followed by interactions with colleagues and behind it level of personal and professional challenge. Although salary was found to be a significant factor in this study, it was still the last factor in terms of importance to teachers' satisfaction.

Summary

Articles in this review of literature were found to address the teacher retention topic in a variety of ways. For example some used the concept of the labor market theory (Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006) or organizational theory (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004). Some examined teacher retention through working conditions (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2005). Some articles focused specifically on teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools (Ingersoll, 2004; Shapiro & Laine, 2005) or retaining quality teachers (Certo, 2002; Berry & King, 2004). Chapman (1984) tested a model of teacher retention. Adams & Dial (1994) examined the effects of education on teacher retention and Inman & Marlow (2004) conducted a study with beginning teachers on what factors may lead them to stay in teaching.

The articles reviewed for this research project presented the historical context of turnover as a particular trait of the teacher and clarified the need for an empirical turn from recruitment efforts to retention efforts of experienced teachers. New research has shed light on the impact of working conditions on teachers and job satisfaction of teachers, but more needs to be learned. Unusual high rates of transfers and leavers continue to plague hard to staff schools. The poor rate of retention for highly qualified teachers in hard to staff schools ultimately affects the achievement levels of its students. It is now time to conduct more thorough investigations into factors that stimulate teacher retention in hard to staff schools and that is the aim of this research study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons teachers choose to continue to teach in hard to staff schools beyond five years. The main research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools?
2. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention?
3. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years?
4. How do photographs tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools?

The goal of this study was to explore the reasons why teachers continue to teach in hard to staff schools beyond five years in order to add to the literature base on teacher retention. Research has reported that a large percentage of teachers leave hard to staff schools within five years (Ingersoll, 2003), yet little empirical evidence exists to show the reasons why they stay. It was appropriate to select qualitative case design because this study aimed to answer a why question which is best answered with open-ended line of inquiry.

In this study, the unit of analysis was the individual teacher and bounded by the criteria that each was teaching in hard to staff school beyond five years. Each participant

must have been teaching in a hard to staff school at the time of the study. Although the criteria were that the years of teaching experience must be consecutive, the years did not have to be all from the same school. In this study, one teacher was in the last month of her fifth year of teaching in a hard to staff school. One was in her sixth year, one was in her seventh year and the other was in her tenth year of teaching in a hard to staff school. Hard to staff schools were characterized at the onset of this paper as schools with high poverty status, high minority population, and low achievement. Teachers who taught in regular schools were de-limited from this study because research has shown that teachers exit hard to staff schools at higher rates (Ingersoll, 2001; Berry, 2004).

School Settings

The setting of the study occurred at two school sites in a large urban school district in the southwest part of the United States. One school will be called Diaz Elementary School (DES) and the other will be called Parker Elementary School (PES) to protect the anonymity of the schools and participants. Both elementary school sites fit the hard to staff schools definition. The two schools each had over 80 percent Hispanic student population and over 98 percent of its students on free lunch. Both schools did not reach adequate yearly progress. Snowball sampling and purposeful sampling were utilized to identify the participating teachers at these two school sites. Three teachers were teaching at DES and one teacher was teaching at PES at the time of the study.

Interview Setting

The interview sites were negotiated between the participant and researcher. The interviews were conducted in the teacher's rooms when no children were present prior to the start of day or after the school day had ended. The teachers' rooms consisted of low ambient noise with good lighting, little distraction and plenty of seating. The interviews were recorded as a digital file using iPod technology and transcribed with voice recognition software. The transcribed interviews were analyzed with a variety of qualitative analysis techniques, including the data event map, content analysis and domain analysis.

Access

After the study was approved through the appropriate channels, I contacted four principals who taught in schools that met the hard to staff criteria, which included schools with a high minority population, high poverty status, and low achievement levels. Three principals granted me permission to talk to select teachers with more than five years experience. Initial contact was made in person with two teachers, and via email for three teachers. Contact was then made on the telephone to explain procedures for the study, to describe the amount of time involved and to elucidate the two-week timeline of events for each participant. Four participants agreed to participate and all four participants completed all required phases of the study.

The Informed Consent form was explained to the participants and they were given an opportunity to ask questions. Once participants agree to be involved in the study, the Informed Consent form was signed and the facility authorization form was distributed to

and signed by the principal. Once the survey was administered and completed, the camera was given to each participant. Contact was made by this researcher to collect each camera within 1-2 weeks of reception and then contact was made again to return the developed photos. The first interview occurred after the participant had time to choose her top five pictures and rank them in order of importance.

Data Collection

I did both photographic interviews and a demographic survey. The purpose of the survey was to collect general information about the teacher's education, number of years teaching, type of induction program, types of professional development, and its usefulness. The purpose of the photographic interview was to provide teachers a way to conceptualize and document photographically their primary reasons for continuing to teach in a hard to staff school. Photographic documentation has its roots in the social sciences (Banks, 1998) and cultural and visual anthropology (Knowles & Sweetman, 2004). Therefore, visual methods such as photographs can be a valuable methodological tool in particular research contexts.

Photographic Interviews

Various researchers from different perspectives have documented the use of photographic interviewing as part of a qualitative study. According to Berg (2007), before the 1990s photographs were used in qualitative research as a type of data or to enhance the descriptions of a qualitative report (Spradley, 1979). More recently, photographs have been used to give voice to participants through interviews. For

example, Connelley, and Clandinin (2000) gave paraprofessionals cameras to take 12 pictures of their experiences as a bilingual para-educator. They used open-ended interviews, grounded theory approach, through which five themes emerged, and they also used a constant comparative method.

Weade and Ernst (1990) used photographs as metaphors to conjure up images of life in the classrooms, and sought to “examine the nature of metaphors in our language in teaching/ learning processes” (p. 133). They wanted to investigate the differences between preservice teachers’ view of teaching when compared to teacher educators.

My study aimed to explore inservice teachers’ perspectives of teaching in hard to staff schools and analyze the words they use to frame their experiences. Therefore, the interviews in this study were conducted through stories these teachers told about their pictures and the words they used to describe the factors that have influenced their decision to remain teaching in hard to staff schools. The focus was on images, words, and phrases each teacher used to describe the photographic representations, revealing numerous reasons of what it meant to the to continue teaching in a hard to staff school.

Photographic Technique

Each participant took five to ten photographs of the factors that influenced their reasons to stay in a hard to staff schools with a camera I provided. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) have stated a photograph provides a “means of remembering and studying detail that might be overlooked if a photographic image were not available for reflection,” (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 119). They were encouraged to take as many as they wanted, but were reminded that they would be asked to choose their best five photos for the

interview. In this case, best pictures meant the ones that were best in terms of their content, not best in artistic ability. Teacher participants were relieved to know that artistic ability was not a requirement, but glad that they also had room to take more than five pictures in case a particular photo did not capture what they had hoped once developed.

Once I retrieved the camera, I developed two sets of photographs and a CD containing the digital photos. I returned all of the pictures to participants and asked them to rank the photos in order of importance so they would be ready to discuss their photos during the interview. Once we met for the interview, the participants revealed their top five photos. I kept their chosen pictures in digital form to include in this study and gave the original copies to them with the photo CD. The meaning of each photograph was revealed throughout the interview process. The interviews occurred over a two-week period. In order to focus on one case at a time, each participant was the only one I interviewed during that two-week time frame.

Many teachers showed enthusiasm to begin taking photos because they already had an idea of the types of pictures they wanted to take. Some teachers were not sure of what to take. Therefore, I described two pictures I had taken for a different photographic project, a project where we were asked to take photos of what graduate school meant to us. One picture was of a pathway in the woods that represented my educational, spiritual, and professional journey as a teacher. The other was a picture of my classmates, which represented a cohort of colleagues simultaneously attending graduate school with me. Photographic interviewing was used because it provided an avenue for learning about what factors influenced teachers' decisions to continue to teach beyond five years in hard to staff schools.

Survey Results

The research study included a 27-item open-ended survey in addition to the photographic interviews. The surveys were used to collect general characteristics of the teachers and the type of education each had completed. It also asked about the types of professional development the participants had, and their opinion of its usefulness. Based on the literature describing the importance of having a mentor, or induction programs, in the first years of teaching (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Wong, 2004), the survey asked what year they started teaching and if they had a mentor, and if they participated in some type of induction program. The survey also inquired about how many years of consecutive teaching they completed in a hard to staff school.

Role of the Researcher

I employed interview strategies suggested in the research literature for effective interviewing. Strategies suggested included listening more and talking less, not interrupting, exploring laughter, following up on hunches, and acting as a conversational partner (Seidman, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Merriam, 1998). As a result, I listened to participants' responses on numerous levels and concentrated on the substance of what was said. I followed up when I did not understand what they were describing by asking them to please explain. In addition, I focused on staying in the moment and remaining aware of the interview process in order to explore additional avenues of inquiry.

Initially, my goal was to listen first. However, at key points, my second goal was to also act as a conversational partner with the participating teacher during the interview. As a researcher, I wanted to explore the factors that affected the decisions of these four

teachers to keep teaching in hard to staff schools. Through the use of photographic interviewing and my role as an attentive listener and a conversational partner, I discovered numerous reasons why these teachers have chosen to stay in hard to staff schools despite the obstacles inherent in such schools. The data process and the results of the analyses will be presented in Chapter Four.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded using iPod technology. The digital audio files were transcribed and later analyzed using three forms of analyses, which focused on formulating a thematic approach. The thematic approach is considered one way of presenting the study in written form that employs uncovered themes as guiding principles for parts, or headings, of the study. Van Manen (1990) described writing up a study using thematic approach in this fashion,

one may use the emerging themes as generative guides for writing the research study. In other words, the entire study-or at least the main body of the study-is divided into chapters, parts, or sections which elaborate on an essential aspect of the phenomenon under study (p. 168).

All interviews were photocopied and reformatted for the domain analysis. I worked with the text throughout all phases of analysis and discovered words and categories in each case.

I placed the photographs in order and created a graphic organizer for the photos teachers took to represent their reasons they continued to teach. Next, I formulated

questions for follow up and contacted the participant via telephone or in person. I used one copy of the interview to perform content analysis. I reformatted the interview into units of data (Merriam, 1998), instead of paragraphs, to carry out the categorical analysis. I made use of reading, marking, bracketing and highlighting words and phrases of the transcribed text that resonated with the research. I also made note of key ideas, words and phrases throughout the analysis process and jotted down repeated words and phrases in the margins of the transcript.

Photographs

The photographs were used as a source of data and are included with each case in Chapter Four. The photographs served as a tool to guide the interviews. They also were used to organize participants' reasons for continuing to teach. Categories emerged as a result of comparing one participant's photos to another. Analysis conducted on the photos contributed to an overall understanding of each participant's story.

Content Analysis

Content analysis was another form of analysis I employed on the interview data in the research study. My approach to the content analysis involved reading the transcript and highlighting words that were repeated often and working through numerous levels of analysis to construct categories (Merriam, 1998). Berg (2001) further described content analysis as analyzing themes, or a string of words, concepts and words grouped together into conceptual clusters. I looked to see if additional concepts and categories were revealed in the text of the interview when compared to the photographs. Results of the content analysis for each participant are described in the next chapter.

I constructed categories from units of data and applied categorical analysis to each interview transcript in order to identify the relationship between the terms and their corresponding categories. First, I formatted the interview into units of data and then I grouped them according to categories. Next, I added up the number of phrases under each category and then I cut and pasted each phrase or word under its category. This method yielded hierarchical categories and participants' categories are listed in order from highest number of units of data to lowest. See Appendixes B-E for each participants' categories.

I adopted methods of organization in order to label and find particular passages that reoccurred in each transcript and among all of the transcripts. The logistical decisions I made regarding organizing and storing data proved to be an extremely important part of the data analysis phase. I numbered every page of the interview transcript and used different colored folders to organize each participant's information. I created a folder on my computer desktop for each participant that included the pictures, the interview transcripts in their original form, the interview transcripts in categorical form, and the digital photographs. I used different colors to code the themes, which served to identify the common variables among the multiple cases.

The methodology for the multi-case study design included three components, the survey, the photographs, and the photographic interview. Each participant completed the 27-item survey and the photographic interview(s). Each participant included at least five photos to illustrate their reasons they continued to teach in a hard to staff school. Content analysis and categorical analysis were executed on the data for each case. The data analysis will be presented next in Chapter 4, Data Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The research questions investigated by this study focused on identifying factors that influenced teachers' decisions to stay in hard to staff schools. Hard to staff schools were defined earlier in this paper as schools with low achieving student populations, high poverty levels, and high numbers of minority children (Berry, 2004). I investigated what factors influence teachers' decisions to stay in such schools beyond five years through the use of photographs and teachers' narratives of the photographs. My case was bound by the criteria that teachers have to be past their fifth year of consecutive teaching in a hard to staff school and still teaching in a hard to staff school.

My personal experiences teaching in hard to staff schools for over thirteen years served as the foundation for this research project. I have taught in hard to staff schools in three different states, Arizona, Florida, and Nevada. I taught for two years in a multi-grade charter school in Arizona. I also completed two years of teaching in hard to staff public secondary school, which was in the Second Chance School Department in the Palm Beach County School District in Florida. The Second Chance Schools Department consisted of several schools comprised of students in middle school and/ or high school who had been expelled from their home school for a variety of reasons. Many of the students who attended these schools had a history of anti-social behaviors in school, most

had some type of special education designation, such as, emotionally handicapped, or learning disabled, and some were on juvenile probation.

I earned a Master's degree in Special Education eleven years ago. I am between the ages of 35-39. I am not married. I have participated in professional development workshops, some which were more helpful than others, but I have stayed because of the students. I have also stayed due to the emotional and technical support I have received from my colleagues. I wanted to find out what makes other teachers thrive in hard to staff schools while others quit or burn out. My motivation to pursue this line of inquiry was fueled by my desire to learn more about retaining highly qualified teachers in hard to staff schools because there is a serious need for highly qualified teachers in these schools.

The two schools chosen for this study each had a high concentration of poor and minority students. Both schools struggled with achievement levels and both schools had not met adequate yearly progress at the time of the study, according to the No Child Left Behind legislation. Both schools used in this study qualified as hard to staff schools based on the definition and both have been given pseudonyms. The teachers who participated in this study continue to teach in hard to staff school settings and this research study is designed to bring into light their story of teacher retention. My research questions included:

1. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years?
2. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention?
3. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years?

4. How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools?

Data Collection and Analysis

In this section, I provided a brief description of each teacher based on the 27-item survey, See Table 2: Teacher Characteristics on the following page. See Appendix A: Survey for specific items surveyed. I included the photographs for each case and described the story of retention for each participant as it was relayed to me through photographic interviewing. I described how I collected data for each case and explained the type of analysis I applied to each case. As part of each case, I restated the research questions and answered the questions based on the reasons teachers revealed for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools and based on the analysis conducted.

I used the following pseudonyms for each teacher: Connie, Antonia, Isabella and Penelope. Teachers had an average of 16 years of teaching in general and an average of seven years teaching in hard to staff schools. See Table 1: Total Years Teaching in Hard to Staff Schools for each teachers specific number of years taught, which is located on the next page. Isabella had a combined ten years teaching experience in two different hard to staff schools. Connie had seven years teaching in the same hard to staff school. Antonia had six and a half years teaching in the same hard to staff school, and Penelope had six years teaching in two different hard to staff schools.

I transcribed the interviews for each case one at a time. Despite the fact that the cases are presented in a linear fashion, data analysis moved in a circular fashion among all of

the different levels of analysis. Each teacher ranked her photos from first to fifth and I performed analysis on the photos by grouping them into initial themes. I conducted

Table 1: Total Years Teaching in Hard to Staff Schools

| | Years Taught in Hard to Staff School as of July 2008 | Total Years Taught |
|----------|--|--------------------|
| Connie | 7 | 15 |
| Antonia | 6.5 | 28 |
| Isabella | 10 | 13 |
| Penelope | 6 | 8 |

preliminary data analysis on the interviews by highlighting words and phrases that captured the reasons teachers continued to teach in hard to staff schools and by writing notes in the margins of the interview transcripts.

Table 2: Teacher Characteristics

| | Year Started Teaching | Induction or Mentoring | Masters | Grade Level or Subject Taught | HQT | NBPTS | Marital Status | Age |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|
| Connie | 1993 | N | Y | 5 | Y | N | Y | 45-49 |
| Antonia | 1980 | N | Y | 3 | Y | N | Y | 60-64 |
| Isabella | 1995 | Y mentor only | Y | PK | Y | N | Y | 30-34 |
| Penelope | 2000 | Y induction only | Y | Music | Y | N | N | 30-34 |

Next, I used the constant comparative method of analysis and constructed categories with the units of data to organize the recurring patterns revealed within the data (Merriam, 1998). Tables depicting the categories and the units of data are included in the Appendices. Each teacher's case includes a description, the photos, content analysis, categorical analysis, and responses to the research questions. A summary of the findings is at the end of this chapter. Cross case analysis will be reserved for Chapter Five.

Case One: Connie

I want them to achieve and I want them to be successful. I want them to know there is a better life for them. I also feel that I am needed at this kind of school and I feel like I am doing a good job here. (Connie, 2008)

Description

Connie is a Caucasian woman between the ages of 45-49. She has taught in the same hard to staff school for 7 years, Diaz Elementary School. Her teaching experience prior to working in a hard to staff school was as a special education teacher in Montana. She earned her Elementary Special Education degree from Eastern Montana College, which is now called Montana State University, Billings. She described her teacher education degree as a 4-year program. She completed one semester of student teaching in elementary education and one semester of student teaching in special education. She majored in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and earned her Master degree from Nova University.

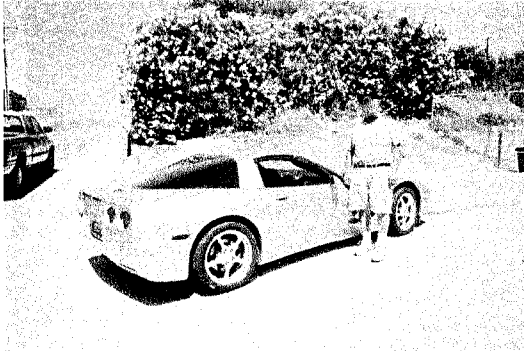
Her first year of teaching was 1993 and she reported that she did not receive any type of induction support. She is considered a highly qualified teacher in the state of Nevada.

She is not certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and is not planning on pursuing certification. At the time of the study, she was finishing her seventh year of teaching fifth grade at Diaz Elementary School and reported her average class size was 25 students.

According to the survey Connie completed, she reported that Diaz Elementary School provided professional development training on teaching students of poverty based on Ruby Payne's concept of teaching children of poverty, which she found somewhat helpful. She also clarified that it was her prior coursework and previous special education teaching experience that helped her most in her current position as a fifth grade teacher. She described teaching in Las Vegas, NV, as a shocking experience because she did not teach a diverse student population in Montana. She said, "All my kids were white. It was really a culture shock." She taught mainly Caucasian students with very few Native American students while in Montana.

Connie's room was organized with the desks in groups of three. There were colorful maps and educational posters displayed around the room. Her desk was in the back of the room behind the clustered desks furthest from the door. Her idea that education can create opportunity for her students was evidenced in her room, and in her conversation with me as well, which will be explained later in the content analysis part of this paper. A poster of the world hung on her wall and declared, "Education offers you a world of opportunity." Connie's room also had a Library area and kidney-shaped tables for group work near the teacher's desk. We sat at two student desks in the middle of the room for the interview.

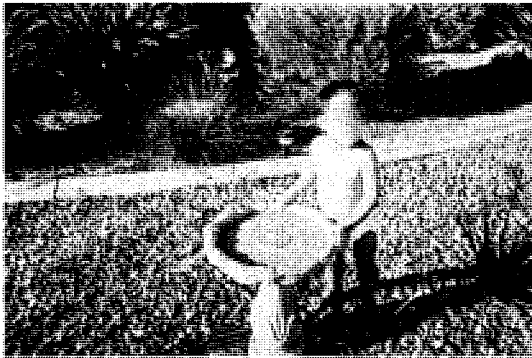
Connie's Photos



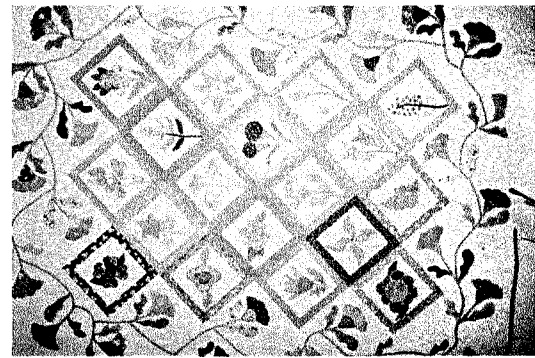
Connie's Photo 1



Connie's Photo 2



Connie's Photo 3



Connie's Photo 4



Connie's Photo 5

Research Questions Answered by Connie

In this section the description of the photos, the content analysis and the categorical analysis for Connie are discussed in relation to the research questions.

Research question one. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff school beyond five years? Connie's photographic representations of her reasons to continue to teach in a hard to staff school were organized into three initial categories, support, family, and hobbies. Support came from her husband who was also a teacher. He was a Mexican-American and shared the same ethnic background as the majority of her students and offered insight into the Hispanic culture. Support also came from Connie's colleagues, who represented a variety of grades one through five. She explained that the presence of collegial support was a crucial factor in her decision to continue teaching at a hard to staff school.

Family, specifically her grandson, was her third reason and served as a reminder of what was most important to Connie. She said that no matter how crummy her day was that she could go home and feel renewed by interacting or playing with her grandson. She said he could essentially erase a bad day. Her hobbies, quilting and beading were her last two reasons. These hobbies provided her an avenue to relieve stress. She referred to them as free therapy. She explained that by getting into the act of making something she could refresh herself to return to work the next day ready to face the challenges again. The pictures outlined her reasons, but the content analysis and the categorical analysis, which follow, provided a deeper level of analysis.

The units of data (Merriam, 1998) gathered from Connie's photographic interview were used to construct five categories, which are listed here from highest frequency to lowest: support from spouse, support from colleagues, her grandson, therapeutic hobbies, and her background in special education. See Appendix B: Connie's Categories. Although three of the same reasons were also identified in the preliminary analysis,

category construction using the units of data separated support into two types and revealed an additional factor for continuing to teach in a hard to staff school, which was Connie's previous experience and background in special education.

One unit of data that repeatedly came up during Connie's interview was the word support. Support emerged in two contexts; support outside of the school and support from within the school. She received support from her husband who was also a teacher. Connie spoke about the support she received from a fellow teacher who also happened to be her husband. She described the kind of support she received from her husband as a type of balance or reality check, "I can call him and talk to him... he'll give me advice and sometimes he'll just listen." She mentioned that he grounds her and provides perspective by adding the male point of view to the situation, "...females can be much more emotional and males are kind of cut and dry and sometimes I personally need that check because I do really get involved." She described him as someone who offers her invaluable support because she said she sometimes gets too emotionally involved with the students.

According to Connie, her husband Ronnie was able to provide a realistic perspective because he has also taught in elementary and middle schools characterized as hard to staff. She disclosed that he was also a Mexican-American. Connie described how she relied on his experience and saw him as source of support in terms of learning about the Mexican-American culture. She said he was successful in her eyes because he has been able to provide help for the students and families who need it at his school, but does not get emotional when families do not make time for their children's learning.

At the same time, Connie reported that her husband has been able to articulate his disappointment to parents when they are not able to take the time out of their schedule to meet with him regarding their child's educational needs, which she admires because she has had trouble communicating with parents. She mentioned that when she was teaching in Montana, prior to her position at Diaz Elementary School, she became so involved in her students that she became sick. "When I worked in Montana and I did special education I took my job up there way too seriously. I got way too emotionally involved and I was getting physically ill. And that's why I kind of learned to let things go and know that I can't fix everything." Connie described him as someone who simply does what he can and does not take it personally when the family is unwilling to be involved in the child's education. Connie stated that his disposition has helped her learn to not take things so personally.

Connie also mentioned that her husband has provided her with support for understanding the Hispanic culture. She came from the Midwest and experienced a culture shock when she arrived in Las Vegas as a teacher. She was used to a community that was primarily made up of Caucasians. She mentioned that there was little diversity in the student populations, "coming from Montana, I dealt with white. I guess I had one student who was Native American." She commented on how Ronnie explained Hispanic cultural views of family and education. Connie learned, according to Ronnie, that Hispanics value education up to a point, but family takes priority over education as a cultural value for many families.

Ronnie explained to her that many Hispanic families raised their girls to get married and raised their boys to work so they can take care of the family. So, when Connie ran

across female students who scoffed at the idea of education because they would marry and be provided for by a man, she realized that it was not just an attitude as she had previously thought, but a family, and cultural, value she was bumping up against. “I guess I felt that it is partly my job to let them know through education they can get out. There is another world out there they can experience and the only way out is through education.” However, Connie finally realized that not all students would come to share her cultural values toward education and only some students would strive to complete their education. With a deeper understanding of the Mexican-American culture, Connie no longer took personally her students’ indifference toward education.

The message Connie received growing up was different. It was, “to work hard and go to college. It was just expected you go to college and get a career and you work hard. The focus was definitely wasn’t on marriage.” She shared that she initially struggled to change the cultural values of her female students. However, after learning that education was not valued the same way in many Hispanic families like it was in her family, she realized there was only so much she could do to emphasize the importance of education to the children she taught. The support she received from her husband regarding the Hispanic culture provided her with insight into a different cultural point of view, and thusly, lowered her stress level.

Connie’s grandson was emotional support for her and a source of inspiration. She explained that her grandson enriches her life everyday and reminds her of how important family is to her. Her grandson lives with her and she explained that her daily interactions with him revitalize her. She commented on his ability to keep her grounded, as well, “Yeah, he does it without words whereas Ronnie does it with words” (Connie, 2008).

Keeping perspective regarding family and teaching was paramount for Connie because when she was too involved in her past teaching assignment she reported that she became physically ill from the stress, combined with an unhealthy balance of work and personal life. Her grandson has helped her keep perspective and has helped Connie maintain balance between work and personal life.

Connie's hobbies, quilting and jewelry, served as another form of emotional support. Her hobbies played a therapeutic role for handling the stress of teaching in a hard to staff school. She said she enjoyed doing them because they enable her to get into a zone and forget about the troubles of the day. "This is my therapy. Instead of paying a therapist, I have spent an awful lot of money quilting and beading." She described how physically demanding and mentally exhausting teaching can be and how her hobbies provided her a time to give back to herself. She felt her hobbies were an important part of her self-renewal. "That's what I have to do to get through," she said in a determined, introspective tone.

Research question two. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention? The second source of support was technical support. Connie said she relied on colleagues from different grade levels for a variety of support throughout the school day. Due to the proximity of her classroom to her colleagues' classrooms, two were next door, one was across the hall, and the other was in a nearby hall, her colleagues were able to immediately provide emotional and professional support as needed. Connie said she did the same for them. "I think you have to have, or I have to have that support amongst the teachers that you work with." Her colleagues provided

support by being available to talk, by sharing discipline of students, and by sharing the responsibility of teaching and supervising each other's students on an as needed basis.

She explained how important it was to have other teachers to collaborate with, "It's important you have someone to bounce ideas off because I think if you're not a teacher you don't really understand what you're going through." She also stated that non-teachers really do not understand the complexity of the teaching profession. Connie described a non-teacher's perspective of teaching.

You know I can tell you about my brother. He is a very successful person, and he thinks teachers have it made. You know we're here from 8 am to 3 pm and you're done. You get all this time off. What's the deal? I swear he would not last an hour in a classroom. Yeah because I don't think you have an inkling of what's going on if you don't teach (Connie, 2008).

Connie thought it was essential to have dialogic encounters with her colleagues as a form of support, "I definitely think you need that support outside of school and definitely inside of school." She said that both types of support, support from her husband and collegial support, were crucial in her decision to continue teaching at a hard to staff school.

Another factor in Connie's retention was her special education training and teaching experience were vital in her role as a fifth grade teacher at Diaz Elementary School. She said that because her students were at various grade levels in math and reading that she had to often create individualized lesson plans. She said very few of her students were on grade level and she constantly had to supplement materials and differentiate instruction. She stated,

My special education background has really made a difference. When I was doing my regular education back in college, they didn't have classes on behavioral management or anything. I had all of those classes through my special education training. I mean that's what the kids basically are. You have to do behavioral management, adaption, differentiated instruction. Their math ability is so widespread. I have a girl that is on the first grade level and very few on fifth-grade. In reading, I have four out of nineteen that are reading on fifth grade level. In math, I have six at fifth grade level. (Appendix B: Connie's Categories)

Evidently, Connie's fifth grade students were not all performing at the fifth grade level. Her special education training also afforded her several classes in behavioral management, which were not required through regular elementary education coursework, and she said they greatly helped her manage behavior. She said students often acted up when faced with work that was not at their ability level and that's why the training in behavior management made the biggest difference.

Research question three. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years? The teacher characteristics that have lead to retention beyond five years included her level of education, marital status, and her age. Connie has completed a Master's degree. She is married to at teacher, and she is between the ages of 45-49.

Research question four. How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools? The pictures Connie chose to represent her decision to continue to teach in a hard to staff school told the story of how she has learned to balance work and personal life. Connie explained that she used to get too emotionally involved with her students because she was unable to leave the challenges of

work at her school. She took them home with her. However, during her tenure at DES she has had access to collegial support and has had technical support, which has eased her stress level. She has also had the support at home from her husband in understanding the Mexican-American culture.

Summary of Case One: Connie

The photographs, content analysis, and categorical analysis together painted a picture of Connie as someone who has chosen to stay in the hard to staff school setting because she is supported in school and outside of school. She reported that support from her husband and her colleagues were the two most important factors in her decision to stay. She also described how her grandson and her hobbies were a form of renewal and helped her balance work and personal life. She communicated how important her special education background was to her teaching such an academically diverse group. Connie said she would not have been able to remain in a hard to staff school without all of these elements working in consort.

Case Two: Antonia

The number one reason why I teach at the school is Mr. Goodman, the Behavior Specialist. He is really supportive of the teachers. He is really good with the parents. If the administration is not supportive of the teachers, which I have had happen before, Mr. Goodman has been there to back up the teachers,” (Antonia, 2008).

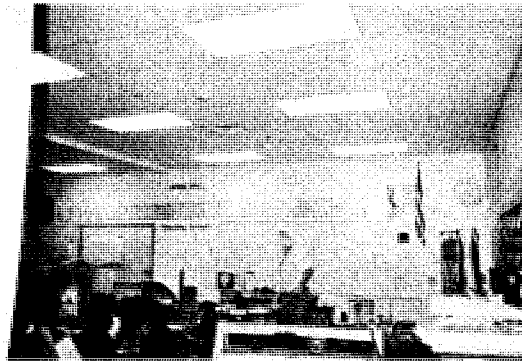
Description

Antonia is a Caucasian woman between the ages of 60-64. She has taught in the same hard to staff school for six years. She is considered a highly qualified teacher in Nevada. She received her Elementary Education degree from Lamar University and completed one semester of student teaching. She described her teacher education program as a 4-year program. Her teaching experience prior to working in a hard to staff school in Las Vegas, NV, was teaching in a middle-income school in New Mexico. She also taught at a high-income school as a gifted and talented educator (GATE) in Texas.

In Las Vegas, NV, she has taught in only one elementary school, Diaz Elementary School. She has taught fifth grade, fourth grade, third grade, and first grade. She was teaching third grade at the time of the interview and reported that the average number of students in her classes over the years at Diaz Elementary School had been 25. She completed her Master's degree in Elementary Education and has 45 credits beyond her Masters. She received her special education certification from University of New Mexico and her English as a Second Language (ESL) certification from University of Houston. She is considered a highly qualified teacher in the state of Nevada.

During her first year of teaching, which was 1980, she was not offered any kind of induction program. She was offered High Quality Sheltered Instruction training and Differentiated Instruction training as part of the professional development offered at MES, however, she has not found these types of training very helpful. Her classroom is organized and colorful. She has the desks arranged in groups of 2-4 with areas for independent work. Her desk was placed inside the entryway to the right behind two bookshelves. We sat at the student desks in the middle of the room for the interview.

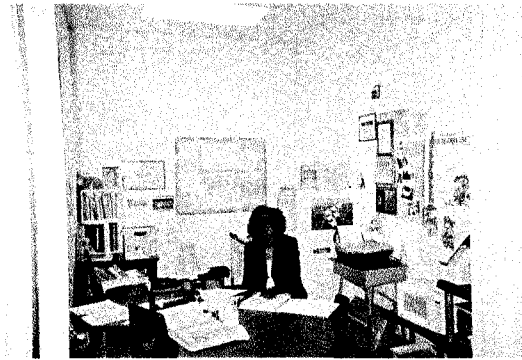
Antonia's Photos



Antonia's Photo 1



Antonia's Photo 2



Antonia's Photo 3



Antonia's Photo 4



Antonia's Photo 5

Research Questions Answered by Antonia

In this section the description of the photos, the content analysis and the categorical analysis for Antonia are discussed in relation to the research questions.

Research question one. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years? Antonia's reasons fell into two distinct categories: support and resources. Support for discipline came from the Behavior Specialist. Support with teaching reading and understanding assessments came from the Literacy Specialist who was assigned to the third grade. Collegial support came from a colleague in her same grade with whom she would often team-teach. The resources she photographed included the computers, which represented the software programs on them that were available to her students. The other resources included photos of the names of each specialist at the school, including the Art, Music, Library and Physical Education (PE) teachers.

Research question two. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention? Support with discipline was another factor in her retention. Antonia said emphatically the behavior specialist was, "The number one reason why I teach in a Title 1 school." A Title 1 school is a school that receives federal money to aid in the teaching programs. High minority and high poverty student populations often characterize these schools and DES was a Title 1, hard to staff school. The Behavior Specialist position was actually funded by Title 1 funds.

She described numerous ways that the Behavior Specialist has helped her over the six years she has taught at DES. Some of these ways included: coming into the classroom every other day to say hi, providing positive attention to the students, providing extra attention to the students, checking on the students and making sure they were behaving, setting up a 1:1 meeting with the student if needed, calling a parent meeting to discuss or suspend a student, and when necessary, involving the school police. She stressed that he

is very supportive of the teachers. She articulated that parents can be very intimidating and administration is not always supportive, but the behavior specialist, Mr. Goodman, “has always been one to stand up and take the teacher’s side.” She said that she has experienced working in schools where the administration was not supportive and Mr. Goodman provided support to teachers for student issues at DES.

In talking about how Mr. Goodman was her primary reason for continuing at DES, she mentioned how important it was for students to have a positive male figure in their lives. She illustrated this point by stating that less than half of her students have a father figure at home, and if they do, he is often not a positive role model. She mentioned that some of the fathers are prisoners or are on probation. Students have reported that they also have relatives that are in prison and it seems to be the norm for them. She said, “I seem to get a big percentage of kids that have relatives in prison. They seem to think that is normal. They have no clue as to what’s really the norm in America.” Mr. Goodman provided support to the students and was also a positive authority figure that helped students improve their behavior.

When she described the support Mr. Goodman provided, she said, “He is very good to them. Compliments them. Leads them off in a positive direction and follows up on them. He’s a very good, positive role model for these kids. I don’t know what’s going to happen if we don’t have him next year.” She said not having Mr. Goodman next year might possibly influence her decision to stay at DES. She is worried that the lack of administrative support with student issues might return without Mr. Goodman in his role as Behavior Specialist. She explained that the current administration was not supportive

of the Behavior Specialist position because they took most of his decision-making power away when they arrived during Antonia's fourth year at DES.

Lack of administrative support for the behavior specialist was a factor that may negatively affect Antonia's retention. It was the previous administration that created the Behavior Specialist position and secured funding for it. The current administration stopped funding for the Behavior Specialist position and directed its funds elsewhere. In the 2008-2009 school year, the position will no longer exist. She declared, "You can't teach anything if you don't have discipline. It only takes one student to disrupt your class." It will be interesting to see if Antonia remains at this hard to staff school once the behavior specialist position is no longer funded and the support he provided is no longer available.

The other resources Antonia named were the teaching specialists. These are professionals who are certified and licensed to teach art, music, physical education and library. Specialist teachers had a direct impact on Antonia's decision to continue to teach because it related to her daily teaching responsibilities. In New Mexico, where she reported no funding for specialist positions, she was expected to teach subjects she was not certified in, like music. "I don't know anything about music. I could play a record, as far as teaching, I did not teach it" (Appendix C: Antonia's Categories). Antonia advocated arts instruction for students and explained multiple forms of learning were essential for children's academic growth and human development.

Antonia also relied on the technical support she received from the Reading Specialist, Ms. Baker, at DES. She exclaimed she was the best Reading Specialist she has ever had. She told the story about how she had never taught at a school where the third grade was

assigned their own Reading Specialist. “She’s wonderful. She has gone above and beyond what I’m used to with reading specialists.” Antonia said Ms. Baker did all of the required reading assessments for her students and explained what the scores meant. She reported that having help from Ms. Baker’s has taken some of the pressure off of her because last year she was required to implement and score all of the tests herself, while teaching.

Access to technology was another workplace condition found to stimulate her retention. One of the resources she photographed was the computers and their software programs. “This year we’ve added three programs that have been fabulous. Fast Math, Odyssey Learning and Ticket to Read.” She also mentioned three other programs the school already has, Starfall, Reading Counts and Waterford. Many of her students are not on third grade in reading and math and she has to differentiate instruction. “I have pre-primer readers that barely know their letters or sounds, or have trouble putting words together, all the way up to fifth grade readers.” The software programs have helped Antonia because they move to the individual pace of each student and she has found that the kids find them very motivating.

Research question three. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years? The teacher characteristics that have lead to retention beyond five years included her level of education and marital status. Antonia has completed a Master’s degree and she is married. Although research has shown a U-shaped pattern in regards to teacher attrition and retention (Guarino, Santibanaz & Daley, 2006), Antonia’s age, which is between the ages of 60-64, was evidence of retention.

Research question four. How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools? Antonia's dialogue surrounding the photographs revealed a story about a veteran teacher whose retention is stimulated by multiple workplace factors. All of her photographs depicted some aspect of conditions found in the workplace, such as collegial support, technical support, access to technology, and specialist teachers. Antonia described how the administrator's support or lack of support affected the type of technical support she received. It will be interesting to see if Antonia remains at the hard to staff school beyond the 2008-2009 school year without support from a Behavior Specialist.

Summary of Case Two: Antonia

The photographs, content analysis, and categorical analysis worked together to portray a clear picture of Antonia's reasons to continue to teach at her hard to staff school. Support from the behavior specialist, funding for technology, and specialist teachers were three of the main reasons. Support from the reading specialist and support from her third grade colleague were also reinforced at all levels of analysis. Interestingly, Antonia did not identify any personal factors as reasons she continued to teach.

Case Three: Isabella

The bottom line is, the reason why I come here, is because of the kids. These kids in my class, over half of them are first generation kids in this country. Their parents are not legal in this country. And I am first generation in this country. So, I have walked in these shoes when I was little...I see me when I look into their Eyes. (Isabella, 2008)

Description

Isabella is a Hispanic woman between the ages of 30-34. She has taught in the hard to staff schools for ten years and has been teaching at DES for ten years. She received her Elementary Education degree from University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (UNLV) in 1995 with a minor in Spanish. She described her teacher education program as a 4-year program, but said it took her 5 years to complete. She completed two teaching practicum's, which were each a semester long of observations combined with a few teaching lessons, and one semester of student teaching. She also completed her Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education in 2002 from UNLV, as well.

In Las Vegas, NV, she taught at two hard to staff schools. She was an English Language Learner Facilitator (ELLF) for three years and taught first grade only one year. At MES, she has only taught Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) during her ten-year tenure. She reported that she typically has 24 students in each Pre-K session, morning and afternoon, for a total of 48 students per year. She is considered a highly qualified teacher in the state of Nevada.

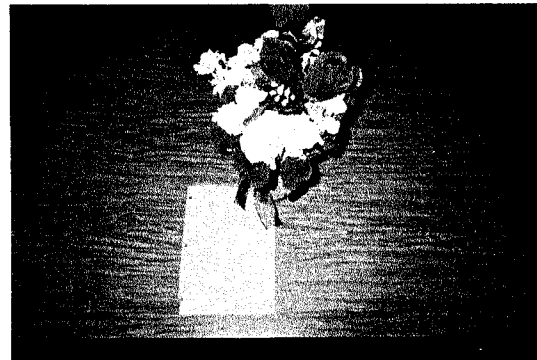
According to the survey she completed for this study, she was offered two types of induction support during her first year of teaching, which was in 1995. The two types of induction support were new teacher orientation and a mentor. She explained that the new teacher orientation lasted one week prior to the start of her first year of teaching. She recounted the fact that when she taught first grade she was assigned a Kindergarten teacher mentor with whom she met only once at the beginning of the year and never saw again. The mentor came one time and asked if she was okay, to which Isabella replied, yes, and she never came to check on her again.

When Isabella was an English Language Learner Facilitator (ELLF) during her first 3 years in CCSD, she worked with teachers, students in grades K-5, and their families. She

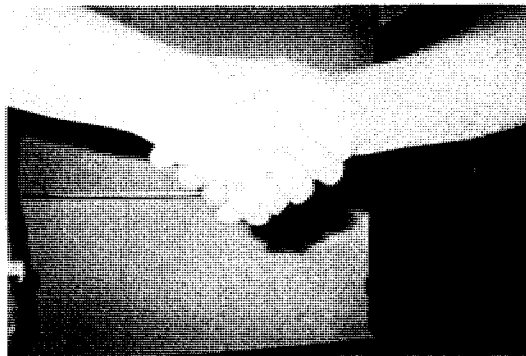
Isabella's Photos



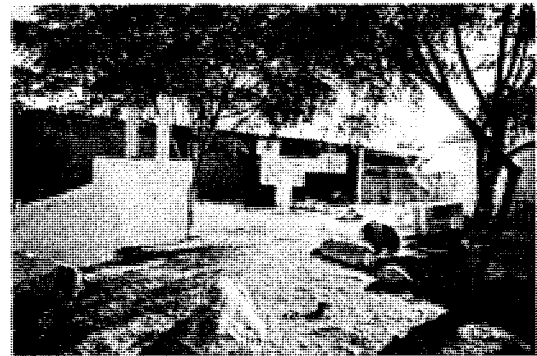
Isabella's Photo 1



Isabella's Photo 2



Isabella's Photo 3a



Isabella's Photo 3b



Isabella's Photo 4



Isabella's Photo 5

facilitated trainings on second language learner strategies and theories. She attended various early childhood conferences at her expense, including a Ruby Payne Conference and Dr. Jean's Music and Learning. She also paid for her own TESL endorsement. The district for which she has been employed required her to implement programs at the Pre-K level and provided the training for the programs, such as the Letter People, Trophies Reading, Harcourt Math, and Journeys Math. She participated in other types of professional development offered by DES over the years, such as literacy workstation training and differentiated instruction training. She reported in the survey that these types of training ranged from being very helpful to not very helpful.

Isabella has been teaching for over thirteen years and has ten years of teaching experience in hard to staff schools. We conducted Isabella's interview in the music room to minimize noise level and to respect the workplace of her co-workers. We sat on the carpet and she laid the pictures out in front of us as she described each photographic representation.

Research Questions Answered by Isabella

In this section the description of the photos, the content analysis and the categorical analysis for Isabella are discussed in relation to the research questions.

Research question one. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years? Isabella's photographs revealed five initial themes, including: family, caring relationships, partners with parents, collegial support, and students' academic success. The words that Isabella repeated numerous times throughout the interview included belonging, value, community, commitment, stability, and support. Isabella reported that it was hard to photographically represent or

put into pictures what has kept her driving to this hard to staff school every day. She said, "I looked at it from the perspective of what are the five things or so that really make me want to wake up in the morning and be a part of what happens here." Stability was a retention factor that was revealed in the interview.

Research question two. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention? Isabella's first reason for continuing to teach was the students. She commented that she has established traditions with the families she has taught over the years. The four children pictured in Isabella's first photo were students of hers who had passed through her Pre-K classroom and were from the same family. She said, "I feel like I belong in that family." Next year, she said she would get the fifth sibling. She described the situation by saying that parents have enough faith and trust in her to bring their children to her year after year, after year. Based on teaching entire families, Isabella's first three factors for retention represented students, relationships with parents, and building partnerships with the community.

Students' success was another factor that influenced her decision to continue to teach. Although not all kids are able to read at the Pre-Kindergarten level, they are able to look at pictures, decode some words, and discover the story. Isabella captured her entire class looking at books and reading during Library time. "I jumped on the table to take that picture. It's not staged. It speaks to me in terms of why am here. It's those little bodies. It's that." She was very proud of this particular photograph because it represented children's success in reading. She also said that seeing her students all engaged in reading reminded her of herself when she was as a child. She said she struggled because Spanish

was her first language, too. She had to learn English, just like most of her students, and it started by looking at pictures and interpreting the meaning.

Another reason Isabella continued to teach was the parents. She photographed a letter and flowers a parent had given her, which she explained was evidence of a caring relationship. A caring relationship is defined as one that both parties recognize the efforts of the giver (Noddings, 1992). She reported that the letter thanked her and her teaching team for providing the children of the parent with the best start they could ever have in life and in education. She said that that letter was a reminder of what their program means to the community. "I'll never get rid of it. I'll never throw it away." It showed how important the parents thought the services offered by her Pre-K program are to them. She said that she has kept the letter in her classroom as a reminder of how important the program is in her community.

Isabella photographed herself shaking hands with a parent, which represented her connection to the community and the formulation of partnerships. She described the concept of forming bridges with her families and that the handshake was a representation of that strong bond. The way that she described her ability to form bridges was by meeting the needs of the parents first. For example, at the beginning of the year she conducted a parent meeting called Mugs and Moms.

In the Mugs and Mom's meeting, mothers were asked to bring an empty mug and were provided with coffee and something to eat. Isabella and her teaching partner asked the parents what they wanted to talk about prior to presenting any planned agenda. The parents' initial concerns served as the opening topic. She said that last year the topic was the new road that was being built next to the school. It was their main concern because

they wondered which of their homes was going to be torn down. There were only a few families who owned homes in the neighborhood around DES. However, if the home was tagged for demolition, renters were not always privy to the same information as the owners, and in some cases, families were given just a few days to move out and vacate their residences.

Isabella wanted to help her families avoid this fate and empower them with knowledge. Isabella felt it was important to let the parents know that she would be there to help them with more than just what their children needed. In one example, a parent was distraught about her high school daughter not going to school. Isabella asked the mother why her daughter did not want to go to school, but her mother did not know. Isabella asked the mother to bring in her daughter so she could talk with her. Isabella clarified that her program was more of a family Pre-K program. She said emphatically, “I serve a greater purpose in this community, and that's getting information to people who need it.” Later, she heard a girl decided to go back to high school, and the parent was grateful.

Another workplace factor of retention for Isabella was her teaching team. The team is made up of two Pre-K teachers, including Isabella, and two assistants. She mentioned that another reason why she continues to teach at DES is because she has strong professional relationships, which provide her with a lot of support. Her teaching partner at DES was someone she met during her student teaching. Their professional relationship has evolved over time and continues to evolve. She said she feels fortunate to have someone in her classroom to collaborate with throughout the teaching day.

Research question three. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years? Isabella said it was her goal to be something stable to the people in the community. As long as they have Pre-K at DES, she reported that she would continue to teach at the school. In one of her photographs, Isabella showed a picture of a house that had been torn down. See Isabella's Photo 3b. She said she saw the demolition of the homes as an example of the lack of stability in the community. She added,

As long as they have our program I'm going to stay here. I think I represent stability. I have a responsibility to be here because I want to show them I care. I don't live in the neighborhood and I travel a long way to come here every day. It's money well spent on gasoline as far as I'm concerned because I can be present in the moment with them. (Isabella, 2008)

She was committed to the program and described how the parents have also shown their commitment. Due to the fact that there was no transportation to and from the Pre-K program, the parents had to make a commitment to transport their children to and from school every day. She reported that she does not have any problems with attendance in her program.

Another factor of retention was Isabella's organizational commitment. She said switching to Pre-K was the best career move she ever made. She created the program and opened it herself. She exclaimed she felt as if she gave birth to it. Although there were some difficulties during her first year, she called the Title I office numerous times to figure out how to run things. She reported that having to call several times a week was a good experience because she was able to create a program that moved beyond its minimal requirements. For example, she instituted an end of the year parent survey, which is

distributed to the parents at the end of each year. The title I Pre-K program adopted her survey and implemented it in all of its Pre-K programs.

Commitment to the community also emerged as a reason she stayed. She explained that students of this community need commitment from their teachers because they do not learn in spite of their teachers. Students in higher socioeconomic situations have a lot of experiences to learn from. For example, “they go to zoos in other states. They travel. They see things and experience things our kids can't even touch.” She said students in this community, “We need great teachers. We can't settle for good. Good teachers are not enough. They have to be great.” So, she explained the bottom line, and the reason she stays, is because she is committed to the families and the kids.

Isabella discussed her commitment to the students, the families, the community, and the Pre-K Program numerous times throughout the interview. Due to the fact that the neighborhood was being dismantled, she explained that she wanted to be a stable force for her students. She also said that commitment was important to her because a lot of teachers leave hard to staff schools due to the challenges of teaching minority students from a high poverty climate. She articulated the significance of commitment to these students by saying, “I think this type of population needs strong teachers and teachers that are willing to be here. They need commitment from their teachers because they don't learn in spite of their teachers,” (Appendix D: Isabella's Categories). Her point was students in hard to staff schools need the consistency that comes from a committed teacher.

Research question four. How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools? The dialogic encounter with the photographs

unraveled a story about a veteran teacher who was motivated by a feeling of commitment, community, and an identity with her students. Isabella felt it was important to teach the students and create partnerships with the parents. Isabella reported that over half of her students are first generation of kids in this country, and that she was a first-generation in this country, as well. She claimed that she has also walked in the same shoes as these children do when she was little. She said her mom was illegal in this country when she had her and her mom struggled to learn English in order to raise her and go from school with her. She claimed that the most important reason why she was committed to the students at the school, because she identified with her students.

Isabella explained she considered putting a picture of her dog in with her reasons she has chosen to continue to teach at a hard to staff school. However, she realized that even though she earned a paycheck from this teaching position, she could earn a paycheck anywhere. Her comment was, "I can work anywhere to feed her (my dog). I can't go anywhere earn a paycheck to feed my soul, too." Isabella reported that she has no plans of leaving her position and continues to teach at DES.

Summary of Case Three: Isabella

The photographs, content analysis and categorical analysis yielded six reasons why she stayed in a hard to staff school. The factors were students' academic success, caring relationships, commitment to community, and collegial support. The interview revealed that stability was also another factor in her retention. Her beliefs about her students and her focus on maintaining caring relationships had the most impact on her retention based on the high number of comments Isabella made throughout the entire interview. See Appendix D: Isabella's Categories. The multiple levels of content analysis provided

insight into the five original reasons Isabella continued to teach in a hard to staff school and will be expanded in Chapter Five, Discussion and Implications.

Case Four: Penelope

They're so loving. They're so appreciative. I think that's the majority of the reason why I do it. I appreciate being here. (Penelope, 2008)

Description

Penelope is a female Pilipino American teacher who is between the ages of 30 and 34. She has never been married. She completed her Bachelor degree in 1999 in Music and Elementary Education, K-8, from Western Washington University. Her teacher education program was a 4-year program, but completed it in five years because she was a double major. She earned her Master degree in Creative Arts in Education from Lesley University in 2006 and just finished her second Master's degree, Technology in Education, from Lesley University in 2008.

Penelope has eight years of teaching experience with six years in hard to staff schools. During her first year of teaching, which was 2000, she was not offered any kind of mentoring program. She explained that she participated in ongoing professional development offered by the school district, and bi-monthly workshops designed for music educators. She found these trainings to be very helpful. See Penelope's Photos. We sat on the floor near her desk for the interview.

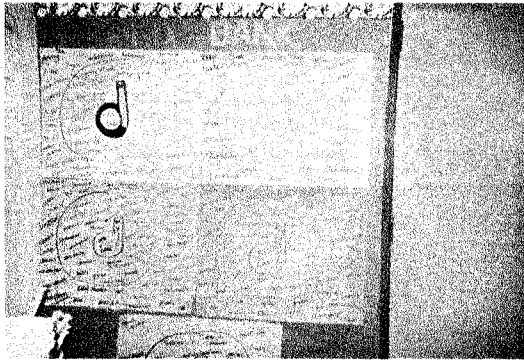
Research Questions Answered by Penelope

In this section the description of the photos, the content analysis and the categorical analysis for Penelope are discussed in relation to the research questions.

Research question one. What are the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years? Penelope's photographs, content analysis, and categorical analysis revealed six categories for continuing to teach in a hard to staff school. Confidence in their teaching skills, concern for students' affective learning, and school climate were the reasons revealed in the photographs. Additional factors of retention revealed throughout the interview pointed to her teacher beliefs, her classroom climate, and her advocacy for the arts. See Appendix E: Penelope's Categories. Four areas were found to have higher numbers of statements, or units of data, than any of the other categories. In order from highest to lowest they were: teacher beliefs, school climate, concern for students' affective learning, and confidence in teaching skills. Other categories that emerged in the interview were classroom climate and advocate for the arts. Her beliefs about her students had a positive influence on her retention.

Research question two. Which workplace conditions are most efficacious in stimulating teacher retention? School climate was a factor that stimulated retention for Penelope. Penelope taught in a science inquiry based school. The school climate was organized around four guiding principles: questioning, wondering, discussion and reflection. She stated that teachers and administrators encourage this kind of scientific thinking. She said that her dad taught her in a similar fashion so she identified with the science inquiry focus. Evidence of a positive school climate as a reason for her to stay at Parker Elementary School (PES) will be articulated in greater detail in the section that follows.

Penelope's Photos



Penelope's Photo 1



Penelope's Photo 2



Penelope's Photo 3



Penelope's Photo 4



Penelope's Photo 5

School climate surfaced as a reason Penelope continued to teach. She clarified that Parker Elementary School had two school-wide behavior programs, HALLS and Kelso's Choices. Kelso's Choices was successful because not only was it emphasized all year long, but also most teachers appeared to reinforce it. Prior to Parker Elementary School,

she taught at a hard to staff school that did not have a school-wide behavior program. She left there as a result. “That’s why I left. We had a behavior intervention teacher, but it didn’t work,” (Penelope, 2008). In addition to Kelso’s Choices they used the a few other school-wide procedures that reinforced consistent expectations for all students, for example, a procedure for how to walk through the halls of the school.

Research question three. Which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years? The statements that focused around the category of teacher beliefs were indicative of a teacher who believes in the ability of her students. She said that just because her students do not do as well on standardized assessments as students in higher socioeconomic areas doesn’t mean that her students are not smart. She exclaimed that, of course, her students are smart despite the fact that her students may be limited in English. “Don’t tell me my little Victor is not smart or capable just because he doesn’t speak English. When he sees what I am doing movement wise, or sees the letters, the recorders... These kids pick up on recorders like that,” (Penelope, 2008) and she added a snap on the word that for emphasis.

Another factor in Penelope’s retention in a hard to staff school was her confidence in her own teaching skills. The phrases that surfaced indicated she was very inspired by what she did in her classroom and by seeing the development in her students. She beamed when she said; “My inspiration is always in my room.” For example, she described how she used the circle map with her students to define music. She explained the students were able to brainstorm numerous words despite their limited English and how excited she was that they could be successful. She said that her students were respectful and that, “They were a reflection of my teaching,” (Appendix E: Penelope’s Categories). Penelope

declared that their success is the reason why she continues to teach in a hard to staff school.

Penelope's concern for students' affective learning was another factor of her retention. She described her population as 85 percent Hispanic and most of them as English language learners. Despite their language challenges and the fact that her school struggles to make adequately yearly progress (AYP), Penelope takes notice of their innate abilities, "those Hispanic kids can dance. They can stay on beat," (Penelope, 2008) and explained that she ultimately wants them to be happy. She took pictures of her students dancing, smiling and enjoying the aesthetic pleasure of a dance activity because she said, "the whole class responds. It's like my success," (Appendix E: Penelope's Categories). She said she photographed those students in particular because they were normally very shy and quiet, but due to her positive classroom climate in which she advocates openness and a safe learning environment, they were smiling and appeared successful in their learning.

Penelope described the fact that she is an advocate of the special subjects taught in the school district and in her school, which are Art, Physical Education (PE), Humanities and Library. "They need this (music) outlet so they feel successful," (Penelope, 2008), and described how important it was to have all of the various outlets. Her school enjoyed a Humanities teacher who taught drama, but she expressed disappointment because budget cuts will cut out the Humanities position at her school during the 2008-2009 academic years.

Research question four. How do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools? Penelope's narrative about the reasons she

stayed in a hard to staff school portrayed someone who believes in her students' ability and in the importance of affective learning. She described herself as a teacher who has been able to thrive in the science based inquiry school climate. She disclosed that her father taught her the same through a similar method, which relies on questioning, reflecting, and discussing. She explained that PES was a good fit for her. Her success carried over into her classroom climate. She said she has been able to create an environment that is fun to learn in, safe enough to make mistakes in, and one that welcomes reflection.

Summary of Case Four: Penelope

The photographs, content analysis, and categorical analysis revealed the main reasons Penelope has chosen to continue to teach in a hard to staff school. Her belief in her students and in her teaching effectiveness seemed to have fueled her reasons to continue to teach in the hard to staff school environment. The inquiry-based school climate combined with Penelope's safe classroom atmosphere enabled her to provide her students with successful school experiences. The fact that the large urban school district employed specialists for music provided her an opportunity to focus on students' affective learning.

Conclusion of Case Findings

The cases presented demonstrated the variety of factors teachers reported for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools. Although each teacher had different reasons for continuing to teach, more than one teacher shared some of the same reasons, for example, collegial support, family support, specialist teachers, and students' academic success. The first question, which asked what factors influenced teachers' decisions to

remain in hard to staff schools beyond five years can not be answered with one simple response. For example, no one factor represented everyone's reasons for staying. Each teacher had different reasons for continuing to teach in a hard to staff school.

In short, Connie remained in her position because her husband, who was also a teacher, and her colleagues provided a lot of support, and because she found a way to balance work and personal life. Antonia stayed because of the behavior specialist. Isabella stayed because she was dedicated to the students and the community. Penelope stayed because she felt she was effective teaching her students and she felt like she belonged at her school.

The second question regarding which workplace conditions were most efficacious in stimulating retention in hard to staff schools resulted in four workplace conditions that teachers cited as reasons they continued to teach, collegial support, students, specialist teachers, access to technology, and school climate. The third question, which teacher characteristics lead to retention beyond five years yielded the following information about the teachers in this multi-case study: all four completed their Master's degree, three of the four teachers were teachers were married, all four teachers were considered highly qualified teachers, two were between the ages of 30- 34, one was between the 45-49 age range, and one was between the 60-64 age range.

The two teachers who began teaching prior to 1993, Connie and Antonia, did not receive induction or mentoring programs. Isabella, who started teaching in 1995, was assigned a mentor with whom she met once, but the mentor did not teach the same grade as her and a fruitful mentor relationship never developed. Penelope, who started teaching in the year 2000 participated in a 1-week induction program prior to the start of her

employment with the school district, was not assigned a mentor. See Table 2: Teacher Characteristics, which is located on page 58 in Chapter Four.

The last question, how do pictures tell a story about teachers' decisions to continue to teach in hard to staff schools, provided each teacher with an opportunity to identify and reflect on the reasons that they have continued to teach in the hard to staff school environment. The teachers in this study each commented about how they really had to think deeply about their reasons they continued to teach because they had to find photographic representations. As a result of this study, the reasons were photographed and identified. The photographs provided each teacher with various representations of the main factors that have stimulated their retention in a hard to staff schools. The encounters with the arts, which were the photographs and the photographic interviews, provided such an opportunity. In Chapter Five, Discussion and Implications, the reasons all four teachers revealed for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools will be compared and contrasted.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The table on the following page represents the reasons all four teachers continued to teach in hard to staff schools, as evidenced in their photographs and revealed in their interviews. See Table 3: Reasons Revealed from Photos and Interviews. In this chapter, the reasons all four teachers acknowledged will be discussed and compared. In the table the reasons they stayed are numbered in the order in which they presented their photographs. Additional reasons for staying, which were revealed in the interview but not photographed, are labeled as factors revealed during the interview. Following completion of initial comparisons, a second look at the data was conducted in order to identify and compare subcategories revealed in the interview compared to the photographic representations. A discussion of the results concludes this chapter.

Surprisingly, there was not one reason shared by all of the teachers for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools. However, collegial support was a workplace condition shared by three out of the four teachers, Connie, Antonia, and Isabella. Penelope did not name collegial support as a reason she stayed. However, she was the only Music Specialist at her school. Therefore, she did not have access to colleagues who taught the same subject at her school. The other teachers all had access to the same grade and different grade colleagues in their schools. Penelope was the one Music Specialist assigned to her school in the large urban school district in this study.

Table 3: Reasons Revealed from Photos and Interviews

| | Connie | Antonia | Isabella | Penelope |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|--|
| Reasons | | | | |
| Spouse | 1 st photo | | | |
| Colleague (different grade) | 2 nd photo | | | |
| Own Family | 3 rd photo | | | Interview |
| Hobbies | 4 th &5 th photo | | | |
| Confidence in teaching | | | | 1 st photo |
| Affective Learning | | | | 2 nd - 4 th photos |
| Students' Acad. Success | | | 1 st & 5 th photo | |
| Caring Relationship | | | 2 nd photo | |
| Community | | | 3 rd photo | |
| School Climate | | | | 5 th photo |
| Special Ed. Bkgrnd. | Interview | | | |
| Behavior Specialist | | 1 st photo | | |
| Computer programs | | 2 nd photo | | |
| ELL/Literacy Specialist | | 3 rd photo | | |
| Specialist Teachers | | 4 th photo | | Interview |
| Colleague (same grade) | | 5 th photo | 4 th photo | |
| Stability | | | Interview | |
| | Connie | Antonia | Isabella | Penelope |

Connie the fifth grade teacher, Antonia the third grade teacher, and Isabella the Pre-K teacher, appreciated having support from teachers in their same grade. Connie pointed out that she also relied on the support she received from her colleagues who taught different grades, first grade and second grade. She also included the Literacy Specialist and the English Language Learner Specialist. All three teachers described collegial support as a reciprocating kind of support. These teachers mentioned that the kind of support they received, they also offered in return to their colleagues. For example, support with discipline of students, support regarding curriculum decisions, and support with lesson planning was described as a shared support.

Antonia, Connie, and Penelope all identified support from various specialist teachers in their stories of teacher retention. Support can also be classified as a workplace

condition because these specialist teachers are responsible for teaching the same students as Connie, Antonia, and Penelope. Isabella may not have named specialists as a factor in her retention because the Art, Music, Library, and P.E. Specialists do not teach the Pre-K students. The Pre-K schedule does not include instruction from the specialist teachers.

Antonia and Penelope named the specialist positions in art, music, library, and physical education as reasons they continued to teach in hard to staff schools. Antonia mentioned that she taught in New Mexico where they did not fund these types of positions and felt that it was unfortunate for the students. Both Antonia and Penelope felt that the arts were vital to the students' learning because it gave them more outlets and other forms of learning. Both of these teachers stated that affective learning and psychomotor learning were just as important as cognitive learning for child development.

Isabella and Penelope identified their students' success as one of their top five reasons they continued to teach in a hard to staff school. Initially, Isabella said she heard many statements of "I can't," from her students in regards to reading. However, she captured all of her students successfully participating in their Pre-K curriculum during Library time. Isabella pointed out that she felt connected with her students and focused their academic achievement. Penelope also photographed her students successfully participating in the music curriculum.

Penelope explained that her students' success was very important to her because she also experienced, like Isabella, students' self-doubt. She said,

I like what we do in music. The need release. You can see when they are feeling it. Singing, dancing, playing the xylophone, or the drum. We can make their learning feel substantial. Compared to all day long, I can't read, I can't, I

can't... They're getting better! (Penelope, 2008)

It was important to Penelope that her students were successful in music because she believed in the importance of students' affective learning in the context of our NCLB standards climate, which is driven by achievement levels and increasing percentages of adequate yearly progress.

Penelope said it made her happy to see her students experience academic success. "They know what they're doing. They know. They have that confidence," (Penelope, 2008). Although her school did not make adequately yearly progress, Penelope said she knows her students are smart. She admitted she was frustrated with NCLB assessments because her students' scores were not representative of their success, especially in other parts of the elementary curriculum, like music. Penelope said she felt students' affective learning was important because it gave them additional avenues to experience success.

Connie was the only teacher who mentioned her hobbies as a form of stress relief from and therapy for continuing in the hard to staff environment. It is unclear if the other teachers also had hobbies that helped them reduce stress from their working environment, and to what extent they experienced stress, because the pictures represented their top reasons and were not intended to represent an exhaustive list. Isabella was the only teacher who named community, stability, and caring relationships in her reasons she remained. Despite the fact that two other teachers were also married, Connie was the only teacher who named her husband as a reason she stayed.

Antonia and Connie both photographed the Literacy Specialists as reasons they stayed. Connie and Penelope both photographed family members as top reasons they stayed. Connie photographed her grandson and Penelope named her dad as an influential

factor, which was revealed in the content analysis. Antonia was the only teacher who named the Behavior Specialist as a reason she stayed, and she was also the only teacher who explained that the technology resources were a reason she stayed.

Discussion

After organizing the data from the photographs and scrutinizing the data from the categorical analysis tables, a deeper level of analysis became evident. Two participants, Antonia and Penelope, supported their initial reasons for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools. In these two cases, the photographs combined with the interview transcripts seemed to be representative of the reasons they stayed in a hard to staff school. In contrast, the two other cases revealed additional reasons for continuing to teach in hard to staff schools that moved beyond the five photographs. Further analysis of Connie's data and Isabella's data pointed to additional motives for staying in their positions. In the next section, the data for each participant will be expanded on and additional motives for continuing to teach will be exposed.

In Connie's case, her reasons fell into two main categories, support and professional competence. Connie's additional motive for continuing to teach, which was not revealed in the photographs, was her professional competence. She claimed her professional competence came from her special education coursework and prior teaching experience dealing with an academically diverse student population. Thusly, support was derived from two forms, emotional and technical. She received emotional support from her husband, her grandson, and her hobbies. Technical support came mainly from her

colleagues, but did overlap to an extent with the support she received from her husband because he was also her colleague.

As mentioned previously in Chapter Two, Billingsley (1993) found that three types of factors influenced regular and special education teachers' retention, which were external factors, employment factors, and personal factors. Billingsley's (1993) factors of teacher retention will be used to discuss the data from each case and to provide one avenue for a common language in cross case analysis. In Connie's case, external factors, such as: economic, societal, and institutional factors did not play a role in her continued teaching. However, employment factors, which included collegial support as a working condition and professional qualifications, played large roles. Personal factors, which included variables outside of employment, such as hobbies, were also critical to Connie's decision to continue to teach in a hard to staff school.

In Isabella's case, all of the photographs depicting reasons she continued to teach can be placed in the employment factors category. Her photographs represented the students, the parents, and her colleagues, which are also considered workplace conditions. However, her interview transcript data revealed two additional motives that kept her teaching in a hard to staff school, her teacher beliefs and her commitment. Commitment to teaching is considered an employment factor, whereas, teacher beliefs is considered a personal factor. Isabella's teacher beliefs were discernable in her comments throughout her interview; they appeared as a conviction in her students' abilities.

Isabella said that she saw herself when she looked into the eyes of her students. Her identity as a Hispanic American teacher who started as a Spanish speaking student and the daughter of an illegal immigrant framed her belief in herself and in her student

population. She stated that the students were the biggest motivating factor in her decision to stay in a hard to staff school. “The bottom line is, the reason why I come here is because of the kids.” Her commitment to her students was also evident in her comments. When her students told her they could not read, she responded passionately, “Yes, you can. You can because you can tell a story. You can look at the pictures because, you can, you can, you can.” Therefore, her personal reason seemed to be strongest motivator for Isabella.

In Antonia’s case, external factors and personal factors did not influence her decision to continue to teach in a hard to staff school. Employment factors had the most impact on her decision to stay in a hard to staff school. The employment factors included several specialist teachers, her colleague, and access to technology. These employment factors can also be considered workplace conditions in the research literature (Ingersoll, 2003). No additional factors emerged as reasons to stay in teaching a result of a second look at the data in Antonia’s case.

In Penelope’s case, she was influenced most by workplace conditions, or employment factors, as well. Her workplace conditions included the students, school climate, classroom climate, and her confidence in her teaching skills. Confidence in teaching skills was also classified under the professional qualifications heading, which is classified as an employment factor (Billingsley, 1993). Like Antonia, Penelope’s external factors and personal factors were not as motivating as employment factors to continue to teach in a hard to staff school.

Employment factors did play a large role for all teachers who participated in this study by affecting their decisions to continue to teach in a hard to staff school. Personal

factors also played a role in Connie's decision to stay in hard to staff school, but did not factor into any of the other teachers' decisions to continue to teach. External factors, which included economic, societal, and institutional factors, did not enter into teachers' decisions to continue to teach, or at least these factors did not surface in the photographs and interviews from the cases presented in this study. In the next chapter, implications and recommendations based on the findings from these four cases will be discussed.

Implications

Findings from this study indicated collegial support was a factor that stimulated teacher retention for three teachers. Resources in the form of computer programs and in the form of added teaching staff, such as specialists, were also workplace conditions that affected teacher retention for three of the teachers in this study. Another workplace condition, school climate, had a positive impact on Penelope's decision to stay because her school, which focused on discussion, questioning, wondering, and reflection, resonated with how she said her dad taught her. Penelope identified with and was satisfied with the school climate and the school-wide behavior program in place at her school.

A school-wide behavior program is one aspect of school climate, and in organizational theory school climate would also be considered one aspect of working conditions. According to research working conditions is often a factor that affects teachers' decisions to stay, leave or transfer to a particular school (Berry, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Billingsley, 1993). In

Penelope's case, positive working conditions were a large part of why she continued to teach in a hard to staff school.

Although research reported that less academically able teachers were more likely to stay in teaching (Schlechy & Vance, 1981), all four teachers in this study completed their Master's degree. This finding reinforced recent research, which has found that teachers with more education are more likely to remain in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Adams & Dial, 1994). Having a mentor did not seem to positively influence the decision of teachers in this study to continue to teach because three out of four teachers reported that they did not have a mentor. The only teacher who was assigned a mentor, Isabella, explained that because they only met once, their relationship never developed into a quality mentor experience.

Marital status and age may have been positively impacted teachers' decisions to stay because both factors have been reported in the research to influence retention (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Chapman, 1984). Three out of the four teachers were married. In regards to age, three out of the four teachers were from the 30-49 age range, which research has found to be the age range many teachers who remain in teaching are from (Ingersoll, 2003). Many young teachers leave the profession, as well as, teachers who are at retirement age, which results in a U-shaped pattern of attrition based on age (Guarino, Santibanez & Daley, 2006). However, contrary to research findings one teacher from continued to teach despite the fact that she was in the 60-64 year age range.

Research has often identified student issues, such as discipline problems and poor motivation, as reasons teachers leave (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). However, two out of the four teachers professed that their students' academic success was one of the main the

reasons they continued to teach. Research on teacher satisfaction has established that satisfaction in working with young people was a strong motivator for teacher satisfaction (Stanford, 2001; Marston, Courtney & Brunetti, 2006). Two of the teachers, Isabella and Penelope, reported satisfaction with the type of children in hard to staff schools.

Confidence in teaching skills was identified also as a reason why Penelope and Isabella continued to teach because they reported that they felt successful in their teaching. Professional satisfaction, personal satisfaction, and administrative support have all been found to impact retention. However, administrative support, which is also considered a workplace condition, was not found to be a factor on the retention of any of the teachers who participated in this study despite research that has found it to be influential (Brunetti, 2006). Collegial support as a workplace condition was found to be the biggest factor that stimulated retention for three out of four teachers who participated in this study.

Recommendations

Researchers need information on teacher retention that is comparable between states, as well as information that uses common definitions, common data collection methods, and common reporting frameworks (Education Commission of the States, 1999). The difficulty in developing a commonly accepted definition of retention can be partly attributed to the many ways research regarding teacher retention has been addressed. When looking across the research it is hard to generalize the findings because the studies used different sample sizes, different types of data analyses, and different populations. Some studies investigated teacher attrition factors while others inquired about teachers'

perceived attrition or retention. Despite the disparities in methods used in past teacher retention research, it is clear that working conditions, teacher characteristics, and teacher satisfaction have had an impact on teacher retention in hard to staff schools.

The topic of teacher retention is a term that has been operationally defined at the onset of numerous empirical reports reviewed for this paper. There has been no clear taxonomy for reporting about this topic because it is a multifaceted issue in education. For example, teacher retention has included teachers who remain in the teaching profession, which is very broad, to teachers who remain in the same school as the previous year, which is very specific. As noted earlier, retention has also referred to teachers who transferred to other schools and teachers who moved to other districts or states. Perhaps, there needs to be a standard format for reporting retention.

Short-term retention can refer to the teachers who have taught from two to five years. Mid-term retention can refer to teachers who have taught from six to fifteen years, and long-term retention can refer to teachers who have taught sixteen years and longer. This study included teachers who taught an average of sixteen years in general and an average of seven years in hard to staff schools. Therefore, the teachers who participated in this study would have all fallen in the mid-term retention range for number of years teaching in general and in hard to staff schools.

This study revealed that collegial support, specialist teachers, access to technology, school climate, and witnessing the growth of young people were working conditions that contributed to teacher satisfaction. However, the main factor that had a positive impact on teacher retention was collegial support. While it is clear that these teachers were a diverse group of professionals with a range of professional and personal needs, three out

of four created their own support networks in their respective hard to staff schools. Due to the central role collegial support has played in stimulating retention for the four cases in this study, school district personnel should provide ongoing training that focuses on professional learning communities, especially in hard to staff schools.

Effective induction and mentor programs that extend beyond the first three years of teaching are also necessary components for retention. In order to keep experienced teachers energized, school site administrators should also provide ongoing professional development specific to the student populations in hard to staff schools. School district administrators should survey teachers in hard to staff schools and specifically respond to the needs of teachers in those schools in order to stimulate mid-term and long-term retention. As school populations continue to become more economically diverse, as minority populations continue to rise, and as NCLB achievement levels continue to increase, further research must be directed towards deciphering the factors that stimulate mid-term and long-term retention of highly qualified teachers in hard to staff schools.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Teacher Retention Survey

DATE: _____/_____/_____

All questions are optional and voluntary.

1. Age: ___ 20-24 ___ 25-29 ___ 30-34 ___ 35-39 ___ 40-44 ___ 45-49 ___ 50-54
___ 55-59 ___ 60-64 ___ 65+

2. Current Marital Status:

___ Never Married ___ Married ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___ Widowed
___ Domestic Partner

3. Highest level of education attained:

___ Bachelor Degree ___ Master Degree ___ Doctorate
___ Other (specify) _____

4. Major Field of study for Bachelor degree: _____
(Examples: Elementary Education, Science, Math, etc.)

5. College/University _____
Year Obtained _____

6. Major Field of study for Master degree, if applicable:

(Examples: Special Education, Math, Science, TESL, etc.)

7. Master Degree College/University _____
Year Obtained _____

8. Major Field of study for Doctorate, if applicable:

(Examples: Literacy, Administration, Curriculum and Instruction, etc.)

9. College/University _____
Year Obtained _____

10. Major Field of study for Other, if applicable:

(Examples: Specialist, Second Master, Vocational, etc.)

11. College/University _____
Year Obtained _____

12. Type of teacher education program:

4-year 5-year Post-Baccalaureate Masters
 Alternative Certification Other

13. Please describe type of teacher education program:

14. Participation in an Induction Program during the first year(s) of my teaching:

Staff Development Mentoring Other None

15. Please explain the type and duration of induction program:

16. Level of usefulness of induction program, if applicable:

Extremely helpful Very helpful Somewhat helpful
 Not Very helpful Not helpful at all

17. Was the induction program voluntary? Yes No

18. What year did you start teaching? _____

19. What year did you start teaching in a hard to staff school? _____

20. Total years of teaching experience in hard to staff school:

21. Are you considered a highly qualified teacher in Nevada? _____

22. Are you certified by the National Board for the Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)? _____

23. If no, are you pursuing NBPTS certification? _____

24. What grade(s) have you taught, or are currently teaching, during your years in a hard to staff school? _____

25. What is the average number of students assigned to your classes? _____

26. Please describe any professional development provided to you for working in a hard to staff school (teaching limited English learners, differentiated instruction, etc.):

27. Level of usefulness regarding professional development (Please use other side if necessary to explain the usefulness of more than one kind of prof. development):

____ Extremely helpful ____ Very helpful ____ Somewhat helpful
____ Not Very helpful ____ Not helpful at all

If you have further explanations or comments, please write them below or on a separate piece of paper. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B

CONNIE'S CATEGORIES

| Category | Included Terms and Phrases |
|-------------------------|--|
| Support from Spouse | <p> this is Ronnie I would say he helps just because I can call him and talk to him. And tell things He kind of grounds me It's a reality check Yes a new perspective I guess I can kind of talk to him tell him what's going on Sometimes he'll give me advice sometimes he'll just listen to me sometimes he'll just tell me to knock it off You know why are you letting that bother you Let it go things like that Yes a reality check is a good way of putting it I guess I say he kind of grounds me He says just something like, "Oh knock it off," sometimes I personally need that check Because I do get really involved I guess it's just more of a reality check I like the way he talks to parents when he tries to get them in for conferences. He just comes right out and says it how it is He also gives you the Hispanic cultural point of view and that really helps </p> |
| Support from Colleagues | <p> my next picture is a group of teachers I work with I think it just kind of helps when you're having a bad day sometimes you need somebody to talk to like right then </p> |

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| <p>Support from Colleagues Continued</p> | <p>Especially if (my colleague) is really struggling with a student she will say, "Can I bring him over here? Can he sit in your room for a minute until I calm down and he calms down?" So we kind of do that back and forth or I'll just say, "Hey can you just take this one for a little bit?" So I think you have to have or I have to have that support amongst the teachers that you work with It's important you have someone to bounce it off I think if you're not a teacher you don't really understand what you're going through I definitely think you need that support outside of school Definitely need it inside of school I think having that support you have to have that support, I mean, even if they just listen to you because you need that</p> |
| <p>Support from Background in Special Education</p> | <p>my special ed. background has really made a difference when I was doing my regular education back in college they didn't have any classes on behavioral management or adaption or anything I had all of those classes through my special education training I mean that's what basically the kids are but you have to do the behavioral management and the adaption and differentiated instruction their math ability is also widespread I have a girl that is probably in first grade math And I have kids that are really right on grade level there's very few that are on fifth-grade level in reading I have maybe four that are reading On fifth-grade level out of 19 in math I probably have five maybe six at true fifth-grade level I use groups, volunteers, or pair them up We just do the best we can</p> |
| <p>Grandson as Support</p> | <p>This little guy... he just makes it all go away! I can have the worst day of school and I come home and see him and We go out and play, or Sit and do something, and it just all goes away</p> |

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| <p>Grandson as Support Continued</p> | <p>It just kind of makes it all worthwhile Yeah, he grounds me without words whereas Ronnie does it with words He just does it like, what is the meaning of this life? It's him So what if you had a bad day Or this kid wouldn't do any of their work you know like let it go this is the true purpose of life I think it's when you think about it this is a job As much as I put into it when it comes down to it This little guy is what's it! I would say he definitely grounds me</p> |
| <p>Hobbies as Support</p> | <p>This is my therapy Instead of paying a therapist I spend an awful lot of money quilting and beading when I sew or I do my beading work everything is just gone because I'm concentrating so much on that It does really relax me and let me forget about the day I just enjoy doing it I guess I do just say it's my therapy Yeah, and I think you need that it's like finally I can get something back for myself My colleague and I talk about it this is not a physically demanding job I'm just exhausted! It is very emotional my quilting and beading is my therapy That's what I have to do to get through</p> |

APPENDIX C

ANTONIA'S CATEGORIES

| Category | Included Terms and Phrases |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Teaching as a Political Act | <p>I plan on writing a book when I retire</p> <p>about what really goes on in public schools</p> <p>I know that people don't know</p> <p>When I talk to my friends at church</p> <p>or in the neighborhood</p> <p>and tell them what goes on, they are just appalled</p> <p>it's not just this school</p> <p>it's every school I have been at, Texas and New Mexico</p> <p>they don't want anybody to know</p> <p>it causes problems for them and</p> <p>they have to deal with them</p> <p>it is very political</p> <p>We'll see how it all plays out</p> <p>especially when you have an administration</p> <p>that's not that supportive</p> <p>I wonder what we'll do without him next year</p> <p>administrators don't want heat from their administrators</p> <p>calling down on them</p> <p>and what's going down at your school and</p> <p>why aren't you handling this</p> <p>therefore, they just don't deal with things</p> |

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| <p>Teaching as a Political Act Continued</p> | <p>I've seen that in my many years of public schools in every situation</p> <p>I've seen it in all three states (MV, NM & TX)</p> <p>The first money that schools cut are the arts if you're a poor state, you don't get that</p> <p>We had it (the arts) in Texas</p> <p>none in New Mexico</p> <p>which is really a shame</p> <p>because New Mexico is an artsy state</p> <p>they just don't have the lobbying for the money</p> <p>was really difficult because</p> <p>I don't know anything about music</p> <p>I could play a record</p> <p>as far as teaching I did not teach it</p> <p>it's all political</p> <p>it depends on the legislature and the governor</p> <p>a lot of these people are lawyers</p> <p>they don't see having the arts</p> <p>so that's where they cut first</p> |
| <p>Support from Behavior Specialist</p> | <p>The behavior specialist is supportive of the teachers</p> <p>good with parents</p> <p>has been able to step in and take that up</p> <p>has been the one to back up the teachers</p> <p>he's great at his job</p> <p>very supportive of the teachers</p> <p>he'll come immediately</p> <p>talk to the whole class</p> |

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| <p>Support from Behavior Specialist Continued</p> | <p>or single one out to talk to them</p> <p>put them in time out in his office</p> <p>he'll have them RPC'ed and sent home</p> <p>very supportive with parents</p> <p>Mr. G. has always been the one to stand up and take the teacher's side</p> <p>You feel much more supported w/ him in the conference</p> <p>last year he was in here pretty frequently</p> <p>great about getting disruptive out</p> <p>called his parents</p> <p>Behavior straightened up for a while</p> <p>he comes in and</p> <p>takes one child out for extra attention who has none</p> <p>takes him out and reads to him</p> <p>Talks to him</p> <p>like a mentor for him</p> <p>he comes in on a regular basis</p> <p>to check on those that need extra support</p> <p>every other day</p> <p>Kids know he is going to check on him</p> <p>he really helped me iron out the wrinkles</p> <p>supportive of the kids</p> <p>Do not think I will have that support form administration</p> |
| <p>Support from Resources</p> | <p>The computer programs</p> <p>We are fortunate this school gets Title 1 money and</p> <p>We have been able to buy so many</p> <p>good tutoring programs for these kids</p> |

Support from Resources
Continued

I've never had this kind in teaching before
We've added three programs that have been fabulous
Fast Math, Odyssey Learning
We just got one called Ticket to Read
The words are highlighted for kids and
it moves across the page, the highlights do
it also reads it to them as it highlights
Kind of like back in the bouncing ball day
We have Reading Counts, Starfall
The first grade has Waterford
these are excellent programs to help kids
succeed in reading
everyday they rotate out as they're reading
Kind of like a center
They absolutely love it
it's very independent
if they're not reading fast enough
The program will slow down
same thing with Fast Math
it tests them at the beginning
it tests their speed and response rate
it slows down if they can't do it fast enough
I haven't been in any other schools in Vegas
We definitely have more
than what I'm used to in other states
I'm sure it's because the states I have been in
were poor states and

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| Support from Resources Continued | they didn't have these programs |
| Support from Reading Specialist | <p>This is the only school that I have ever been at that we have had our own and it shows</p> <p>She's wonderful</p> <p>She has gone above and beyond what I'm used to with reading specialists</p> <p>She does all of my testing for the year as far as my reading tests</p> <p>She's really the first one who has ever done that</p> <p>She does every third grader once a month to see where they are</p> <p>She does every child in the third grade</p> <p>She's very good at her job</p> <p>She does a lot of numbers work</p> <p>She shows us once they are over the goal and below</p> <p>She had four kids highlighted for me on Friday</p> <p>She does a lot of number crunching</p> <p>She does a lot of vocabulary work with them</p> <p>She's really about the best reading specialist I have seen to get reading support in the early grades</p> <p>I had extra support there with her</p> <p>has really helped with the pressure that you feel at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year</p> <p>it's been wonderful having her</p> <p>She's a great lady to work with</p> |

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| Support from Reading Specialist Continued | <p>last year we did it ourselves</p> <p>but this year she has taken it upon herself to do this</p> <p>She's been really good</p> |
| Support from Colleague | <p>I stay here because of my friend, Ms. T</p> <p>we kind of co-plan</p> <p>we team teach together</p> <p>we do lots of planning together</p> <p>we do lots of activities together</p> <p>Like Friday, we were out in the pod</p> <p>with both classes planting seeds</p> <p>cooking together</p> <p>just various activities we do together</p> <p>even though she's on a different track than I am</p> <p>she'll pick up what I was doing</p> <p>we started planning for next year</p> <p>she and I shared a lot of materials</p> <p>If she finds something that works well (she'll share)</p> <p>I'll make 20 copies</p> <p>we just keep each other informed of what's going on</p> <p>that's worked really well</p> <p>we've thought about interviewing as a team</p> |
| Support from Specialists | <p>having specialists at this school</p> <p>the music teacher, the art teacher, the PE teacher</p> <p>has been wonderful to have specialists</p> <p>kids go somewhere everyday</p> <p>they're learning all kinds of things</p> <p>they are different ways of learning for the kids</p> |

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| Support from Specialists Continued | important for kids to learn academically another thing is to have a Librarian |
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APPENDIX D

ISABELLA'S CATEGORIES

| Category | Included Terms and Phrases |
|----------------------|--|
| Caring Relationships | <p>before she left she wrote a letter</p> <p>to my partner teacher and I and my two assistants</p> <p>Thanking us for all the years and</p> <p>the help we provided her children</p> <p>we saw three siblings in this family</p> <p>what it said was we provided her children</p> <p>with the best start they could ever have in life and</p> <p>in education</p> <p>she was very grateful</p> <p>that we were the first step for all of children</p> <p>she was sad her fourth child would not be able</p> <p>to be in our classroom</p> <p>she just wanted to say</p> <p>not every day we take the opportunity to thank people</p> <p>that help our children succeed and</p> <p>I just want to say thank you and good-bye</p> <p>she gave us these silk flowers and this note</p> <p>and we keep it in our classroom</p> <p>It's a reminder to us</p> <p>how much we are a part of this community and</p> <p>what it means</p> |

Caring Relationships
Continued

these families that want these services look to us for that
they have a vested interest in their children
starting out right and
they want them to start out right with us
I'll never get rid of it (the letter)
I'll never throw it away
It's a reminder to me that
even if I don't see them they're thinking of me
they appreciate what you can do for their kids
this picture of shaking hands
we have to meet with our parents
it's part of the program
we built a very strong bridge with our families
something that's worked very well with our families
we have a meeting called Mugs and Moms
the just bring an empty coffee mug and
we brew the coffee
and we provide pastries and whatever and
we talk about whatever the parents want to talk about
it's an opportunity for them to talk about the things
they want to know
and so from day one we have buy in
a hook
that was our hook
from what do you need
the next question is
what do you want for your child

Caring Relationships
Continued

what can I do to fulfill what you want for your child
we start talking about Pre-K'ers
we end up talking about their fourth grade children
their high school children
I was sharing information with her
and she shook my hand
I said I need that picture
it's not just a relationship with the kids
it's a relationship with the community
there are people in this community who have needs
being able to address those needs is important
that picture captured that relationship
the connection I have with them
they have enough faith in me
the other day I had another mom I shook hands with
every time I shake somebody's hand like that
it's that connection
I don't work with just Pre-K kids
It's like a family Pre-K program
every time I shake a hand like that it brings me back
I am not here just for the purpose
of being a Pre-K teacher
I serve a greater purpose in this community
that's getting the information to the people who need it
I know I touch them in a way
I can hit their spirit and answer what they need
I know my families are grateful

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| <p>Caring Relationships Continued</p> | <p>I feel that from them I know I am a stable point we have a good team here</p> |
| <p>Commitment</p> | <p>in order to be effective to be in this building through all of the siblings and connection I have with families I can be something stable to them I want to be something stable to them there is no stability one day there is a family in the house and than that house is boarded up a week later the house is torn down in every home leading up to this building (the school) I have had the child come (to the program) as each house falls it's like a piece of my heart falls I think of the memories I have been in those homes Because I have had to do home visits every day I get up in the morning to show I have a commitment to be here Present not in and out I think a lot of the teachers leave schools like ours because it's hard</p> |

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| Commitment Continued | <p>there's lots of challenges</p> <p>I feel if I am not here, I don't know</p> <p>I know I am going to be here next week</p> <p>I have a commitment to this</p> <p>as long as they have our program</p> <p>I am going to stay here</p> <p>I think I represent stability</p> <p>I have a responsibility because</p> <p>I want to show them I care</p> <p>I don't live in the neighborhood</p> <p>I travel a long way to come here</p> <p>It's money well spent on gasoline</p> <p>I can be present in the moment with them</p> <p>this picture represented the instability</p> <p>in the community right now and</p> <p>that's what I don't want to be</p> <p>I don't want to be in and out</p> <p>I think this type of population needs strong teachers and</p> <p>teachers that are willing to be here</p> <p>they need commitment from their teachers because</p> <p>they don't learn in spite of their teachers</p> <p>we provide that soil, that cultivation, that weeding,</p> <p>the water, the sun to make the root grow</p> <p>kids in other areas learn in spite of their teachers</p> <p>kids in our area need great teachers</p> <p>we can't settle for good</p> <p>good teachers are not enough</p> |
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| <p>Commitment Continued</p> | <p>they have to be great the reason I'm here the bottom line is the families who send me their kids year after year I know I touch them in a way I can hit their spirit and answer what they need I know my families are grateful I feel that from them the bottom line is, the reason I come here is because of the kids more than half of them are first generation kids and I am a first generation kid in this country I have walked in these shoes when I was little I see me when I look into their eyes In a lot of ways it's the main reason It's above and beyond all of the rest It really is why I am here</p> |
| <p>Collegial Support</p> | <p>another big reason why I come here I have strong professional relationships I am lucky to teach with somebody that is not only an excellent educator but is also a very valued friend in my life that I have known for many, many years prior to this job even in my last job I worked with my teaching partner as far back as my student teaching when she was the teacher across the hall from me</p> |

Collegial Support
Continued

I have known her
it's not just a relationship that budded here
it's been budding for a long time on a professional level
another reason to be here
I have very good relationships
with the people I work with
the only reason she's here is because
I called her to this school
she had already taken a year off
she was almost done being in the classroom
During her year off was the year I started the Pre-K here
I kept calling her, you need to come see this
you need to see what these kids are doing
I can't describe to you how wonderful this job is
it was the best career move I ever made
which was to go back into the classroom
it's the best job I ever had
she was just amazed at what these kids could do and
how interested the parents were
this is our sixth year together
that professional relationship is so important to me
I can't envision being with out her and vice versa
that's a strong reason why I come here
I like everybody I work with
they are all a piece of me
and if I have a question about something
I am fortunate enough to have someone

| | |
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| <p>Collegial Support Continued</p> | <p>who is right next to me to say, hey what do you think about this what should we do about that? I don't have to go traveling throughout the building to find a relationship with somebody I have them right there in my classroom with me all day</p> |
| <p>Teacher Beliefs</p> | <p>what keeps me driving here to work everyday what are the five things that really make me want to wake up and be a part of what happens here everyday a picture of an entire family I've seen for generations starting with fifth grade, down to third grade, Second grade, and down to Pre-K next year I'll have another one in this family I know I belong here and they belong to me their parents put enough faith and trust in me to bring me their children year after year, after year they have value in what we do in our program and how we teach It gives me a lot of confidence to know that I have a lot of people depending on me to be here I feel like I belong in that family</p> |

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| <p>Teacher Beliefs Continued</p> | <p>I have known them so long And that's not the only family I could have taken a picture like that Two weeks ago I had a mom whose daughter I taught in Pre-K and their family moved out of the area she was wanting to put her son in our program It's good you can see they have value in what we do they care enough to know we have their kid's best interests at heart when we start and end in Pre-K it's a reason to get up in the morning to come here</p> |
|--------------------------------------|--|

APPENDIX E

PENELOPE'S CATEGORIES

| Category | Included Terms and Phrases |
|-----------------|---|
| Teacher Beliefs | <p>If you give these kids a pencil and paper test They can't succeed at it like the kids Who already have support at home My children helped each other discover these words They are so loving They're so appreciative I think that's the majority of the reason why I do it I appreciate being here I feel wanted I feel I belong Those Hispanic kids can dance Don't tell me my little Victor is not smart Because he doesn't speak English Dancing is just part of their culture It's important to me that kids know Appreciate each other Know how to work together Whatever happened to music just for aesthetic pleasure? We have a great Art teacher here She is open to what kids bring Everything is a celebration of those kids That's what they need I like what we do in music They need that release You can see when they're feeling it Singing, dancing, playing the xylophone or the drum We can make their learning feel substantial Compared to all day long I can't read, I can't I can't They're getting better We are using really good programs here They are just beautiful children</p> |

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| <p>Teacher Beliefs Continued</p> | <p>You can see the development in them The reality of how I teach these kids I mean there is so much more meaning to it Here they want to be at school This could be their only 2 meals of the day They have changed tremendously And it shows</p> |
| <p>School Climate</p> | <p>This is a big part of this school especially Science inquiry-based school Questioning and discussion You can't stop them from asking questions That's what we teach here Is such a big thing not only in my classroom Even with the specialists A big school-wide behavior program I've never seen it implemented so much as here I left my last school because They did not have a behavior program We had an intervention teacher It didn't work Kelso's Choice is an amazing program As long as you're consistent with the whole school That's another thing I love about my school We've got a few other programs, too HALLS, which is amazing I can say get ready for HALLS And they know what to do Every grade, even fifth grade You don't have to remind them of the rules You say it and they're like, "Okay, okay." Everybody out there is good about monitoring There's more funding when you go to a high-risk schl. Every school I've been to has been Title 1 It's nice to have Title 1 funding Although they are cutting tutoring next year</p> |
| <p>Student's Affective Learning</p> | <p>Perform a musical pattern I will ask you to create later Dance is huge in my class They're so natural Music moves them It reminds me that they're thinking and They're dancing and They're so excited</p> |

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| <p>Student's Affective Learning Continued</p> | <p>They know what they're doing They have that confidence It made me happy because You can see these two girls smiling from ear to ear This kid...looks like he's ready to groove That's what I love about my classroom If I can make one kid's day Just by dancing or singing This picture is really neat because I see kids are happy and Open to learning I wanted to take pictures of kids that were really quiet Didn't say much normally, but Who were really successful doing music They really showed that they are comfortable The are happy That's what I want for all of my kids</p> |
| <p>Confidence in Teaching Skills</p> | <p>Circle Maps used as a teaching strategy Displayed completed circle maps Reinforced literacy and classroom rules We talked about it all year In my last picture These kids look like they are having a blast And they're fifth grade boys The whole class responds It's like my success When you get them to do something like that (dance) I've seen both of these kids grow up They were both quiet and Now they talk so much They know to be respectful They are a reflection of my teaching Seeing them grow up Knowing and seeing Where we could take their abilities That's another reason why I choose this because I've seen these two boys grow up from second grade I believe</p> |
| <p>Classroom Climate</p> | <p>We talk about safety This is a safe room You can discuss things without feeling uncomfortable Questioning kids Create your own scenarios</p> |

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| <p>Classroom Climate Continued</p> | <p>Create your own answers Rather than soon-feeding the kids Hands-on I have thinking chairs set up for my kids So they can think about what they're supposed to be doing I am pretty strict on them Not like a drill sergeant My expectations are high They know what to expect I use a lot of Power Points So kids can see the words</p> |
| <p>Advocate for the Arts</p> | <p>They need this outlet (music) so they feel successful They need art They need PE They need Library Humanities I think this is a different venue for many of them More outlets</p> |

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