

1-1-2012

# Exploring the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education: how do inductive teachers find their place in the teaching profession, and what motivates them to remain in the field?

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## Recommended Citation

Hollabaugh, Jaliene R., "Exploring the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education: how do inductive teachers find their place in the teaching profession, and what motivates them to remain in the field?" (2012). *Doctor of Education (EdD)*. Paper 1.  
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EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF  
INDUCTIVE TEACHERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: HOW DO INDUCTIVE  
TEACHERS “FIND THEIR PLACE” IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION,  
AND WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD?

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Presented to the Educational Foundations and Leadership Department  
and the George Fox University School of Education  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education

April 2, 2012

George Fox University  
School of Education  
Newberg, Oregon

“EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF INDUCTIVE TEACHERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: HOW DO INDUCTIVE TEACHERS ‘FIND THEIR PLACE’ IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION, AND WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD?,” a Doctoral research project prepared by JALIENE HOLLABAUGH in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Foundations and Leadership department.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education. My purposive sample included 11 licensed, inductive teachers from 10 different schools spanning eight school districts within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. I used personal interviews, within a microethnographic research design, to explore four issues related to inductive teachers: (1) the process of entering the teaching profession, (2) significant personal and professional transitions, (3) motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and (4) perceptions on self-defined roles. Five thematic claims emerged from the results of my research study. First, the high desire and ability of inductive teachers to build and maintain significant relationships is a principal reason why they enter, and remain in, the teaching profession. Second, the notable presence or noticeable absence of collegial relationships is the most significant difference between inductive teachers who view their professional entry experiences as manageable versus stressful, respectively. Third, the use of *a priori* teacher typologies provides a valid and reliable way to gain insight into the level of emotional development and career-stage maturity of inductive teachers, thus suggesting the most appropriate workload demands. Fourth, inductive teachers perceive decidedly different rewards for being in the profession, and attempts by administrators or educational policy-makers to use a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective. Finally, the more that *teacher* encompasses an inductive teacher's personal identity, the higher the level of accountability that inductive teacher will have toward being a mentor of not only students, but also of other colleagues and community members.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the people in my life who “by doing what they do” so well, allowed me to succeed in this endeavor. Thank you.

Brad and Joan Hollabaugh: I am proud to be the first Hollabaugh to earn a doctorate. However, I understand that it is because of *generations* of Hollabaugh families working hard that I was in the position to be able to earn a degree such as this. Joan, I would not have been able to meet all my commitments during the past seven years without your willingness to share your time and love with Peter and Coleman. Brad, you run a successful business with integrity, always keeping the needs of your family and employees foremost in your mind. Thank you both for your faithful commitment to your family in so many more ways than I can list on this page. This dissertation and degree belongs to my Hollabaugh family, both past and present.

Amy Cain, Cami Riley, and Elizabeth Tigue: My dearest friends, who have known me since my childhood, thank you for *always* being there for me. You each inspire me in different ways, and I feel so blessed and thankful to have such loyal and caring friends. The ability to “pick up right where we left off” despite the weeks or months that often must go without us seeing each other is a gift in and of itself. Thank you for sharing your lives with me, and I sincerely hope that I am able to give as much love and friendship to you as you do to me.

My Jesuit High School colleagues from 2000-2004 (Dave Nicholas, Tim Massey, Theresa Zimmerlee, Kirsten Ruchaber, Roxanne Asp, and Craig Webster): I had no idea that I was experiencing an *ideal* inductive experience when I was learning from each of you as both a student teacher and then as a colleague. I thought it was normal for more experienced teachers to help out newer teachers, for department members to have collegial friendships, and for teachers to display the same teaching *ethos* toward their students, colleagues, and community members. I am thankful to have worked with each of you.

Dr. Marie Ballance: My Ed.D. fellow classmate and friend, thank you for the many hours we have shared both completing schoolwork and in thoughtful discussion. I have found it consistently humorous that two people who on paper appear to be polar opposites regarding politics, religion, and just about everything else find agreement on so many topics. I look forward to many more years of discussion and friendship.

Dr. Ken Badley: I hold you in the highest regard as an intellectual, writer, and teacher, and I thank you for spending your professional career as an educator. Your work is valuable and far-reaching, and your influence extends to many other students through those you inspire as an educator and researcher. In particular, I did not believe that I was a writer before having you as a professor. Thank you for believing in my ideas.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, cont.

My research study participants: Thank you for your openness in sharing your stories as teachers with me. I was inspired and humbled when listening to the ways you support and care for your students. I worked diligently to present your attitudes and perceptions as accurately and honestly as possible in this dissertation. The time you spent as participants in my research project will add to the literature on inductive teachers, and provides yet another tool to help educational leaders support and care for their inductive teachers. Thank you.

My dissertation committee (Dr. Ken Badley, Dr. Amy Dee, and Dr. Terry Huffman): I hold your approval of my research in extremely high regard, and I thank you for the time and energy you have spent as my teachers both in class and with this project. Thank you.

To the many professors at George Fox University who I have learned from and have yet to be named, you exemplify scholarship and servant leadership as educators. In particular, Dale Issak, Scot Headley, Gary Tiffin, Steve Song, Eloise Hockett, and Raymond Gleason are professors who encouraged or asked me to complete tasks at levels of proficiency beyond what I thought I was capable of. Thank you for challenging me.

JohnDave C. Medina and Sierra S. Neiman: Thank you for your time and effort in editing my dissertation over the past year. I may have provided the substance, but you both helped to make my writing clear and grammatically correct. Thank you for helping me to become a better writer.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Chad, and our boys, Peter and Coleman.

Chad, you faithfully and unconditionally love me and were a *constant* source of encouragement in my completion of this dissertation and my doctorate. You patiently waited for seven years for me to finish this degree, and always provided just the right motivational speech when I was frustrated or discouraged in the process. Without your blessing, understanding, love, and encouragement, the completion of this research and degree would not have happened. This degree and dissertation is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you for being such a good husband to me and such a good father to our boys. I love you very much.

Peter and Coleman, thank you for being patient with me as I finished this dissertation and degree process, and for being excited with me to finish. I am excited to get to focus on helping both of you achieve your goals and dreams. God gave you each special gifts, and what consistently amazes me is how well your strengths compliment each other. Together, you make an unstoppable team, and it makes me so proud when I see you both show good stewardship of the gifts that God gave you. Your dad and I are very blessed to be your parents, and you will always be loved.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

I often wonder what the prevailing answers would be if every teacher hired to work with children answered the following question with the truthful first answer that came to his or her mind: “Why do you want to be a teacher?” I admit that my answer to this question now, eleven years after my first professional teaching placement, is significantly different from the answers I provided as a preservice and inductive teacher. I entered the teaching profession, initially, because it was what I knew I was good at; I enjoyed being in the school community environment, others had told me I would be a good teacher, and I wanted to be qualified for a professional job to support myself right out of college. Today, my answer would be as follows: *Teacher* is who I am. Without divulging more of my personal story prematurely, I want to highlight two phenomena from what I have already written: (1) My answers to why I wanted to teach changed; and (2) My current answer is quite a bit more abstract than the first. I was in a different mental place during the early years of my teaching experience. Did this make me an inferior teacher in the classroom? Not necessarily. The significant changes that I experienced in my personal and professional conceptual framework, however, made me wonder if an in-depth study on the attitudes and perspectives of new teachers could provide valuable insights on how to best mentor and encourage teachers through their early professional years.

Inductive teachers—that is, those teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience—are leaving the profession. Not all of them, of course, but enough of them to cause me to wonder why so many do not make it through the first five years. Johnson et al. (2004) and Darling-Hammond’s (2000) research showed that approximately 30% of teachers leave the profession by their third year. Data from the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, using results from the 2008-09 academic year as a baseline, showed that during the 2009-10 academic

year approximately 14% of teachers with one year of experience left the profession; approximately 10% more teachers left after two years of experience, and another 8% left after their third year (Schools and Staffing Survey [SASS], n.d.e). Johnson et al. (2004) concluded that 50% of teachers have left the profession after five years. The phenomenon is clear: Enough inductive teachers are leaving the profession that the question “why?” is unavoidable, and I believe the answer lies in the examination of the attitudes and perceptions of the inductive teachers who are still in the profession.

The U.S. Department of Education has supported a significant amount of teacher attrition research over the past two decades. Three major Census Bureau documents including the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), and Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) have provided and continue to provide a significant amount of quantitative data on teacher attrition in the United States. The SASS is the foundational document of the three publications listed above and emphasizes “teacher demand and shortage, teacher and administrator characteristics, school programs, and general conditions in schools” (Schools and Staffing Survey [SASS], n.d.b, para. 1). My research includes data from the last four collection cycles of the SASS (1993-94, 1999-2000, 2003-04, and 2007-08). Each of the four collection cycles of the SASS included an average of approximately 52,000 public and 10,000 private school teachers who were selected using a stratified probability sample design (SASS, n.d.a; SASS, n.d.c). The TFS is administered one year after each SASS cycle with the specific purpose of determining how many teachers either remain as educators or leave the teaching profession (SASS, n.d.d). The BTLS is the most recent addition to the U.S. Department of Education’s inductive teacher research methods; the first round of data collection for the BTLS was through the 2007-08 SASS. Recently, a BTLS report summarized the results of a

three-year focused analysis on approximately 1,900 first-year teachers who began teaching in 2007-08 (Kaiser & Cross, 2011). The researchers working on the BTLS study plan to track the 2007-08 cohort for a total of ten years (Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study [BTLS], n.d.). More results from the SASS, TFS, and BTLS are provided in chapter 2.

In summary, my study is on the attitudes and perceptions of teachers who have been in the profession five years or fewer. As stated above, the most recent educational literature on inductive teachers indicates that a significant portion of them do not remain in the profession beyond five years. I believe that careful analysis of the attitudes and perceptions of inductive teachers who have stayed in the profession has the potential to provide valuable insights on how to best mentor and encourage teachers through their early professional years. The remainder of chapter 1 outlines my research problem statement, research questions, key terms, and the limitations and delimitations of my study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education. I used personal interviews, within a microethnographic research design, to explore four issues related to inductive teachers: (1) the process of entering the teaching profession, (2) significant personal and professional transitions, (3) motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and (4) perceptions on self-defined roles. A major objective of my study was to provide insight into the influences that brought the study participants into the teaching profession and what motivated them to stay.

### **Research Questions**

I asked my study participants the following research questions to investigate the phenomena presented in my statement of the problem. The questions are written in an

exploratory manner and were intended to be open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional (Creswell, 2007).

Research Question #1: How do the participants describe their decision to become teachers?

Research Question #2: How do the participants describe their professional entry experiences?

Research Question #3: How does becoming a teacher change the participants' lives and views on the teaching profession?

Research Question #4: What motivates the participants to stay in the teaching profession or leads them to leave the profession?

Research Question #5: How do the participants describe themselves as educators or as individuals?

### **Key Terms**

The following definitions include key terms and concepts frequently used and/or referenced in my research study.

1. Inductive teacher: a licensed teacher who has been in the profession five years or fewer.
2. Leaver: in the context of back-to-back school years, a teacher who worked the first year but then left the profession the second year (SASS, n.d.e.).
3. Mover: in the context of back-to-back school years, a teacher who remained employed both years but who worked in different schools each year (SASS, n.d.e.).
4. Stayer: in the context of back-to-back school years, a teacher who remained employed both years at the same school (SASS, n.d.e.).
5. Involuntary leaver: a teacher who left the profession involuntarily due to poor performance ratings, layoffs, mandatory retirement rules, illness, or death (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987).

6. Voluntary leaver: a teacher who left the profession voluntarily for reasons such as the need to care for a child, the desire to work in another profession, or intolerance for poor working conditions (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987).
7. Career teachers: teachers who perceive themselves to be “committed to teaching as a long-term, permanent career with ambitions for remunerated promotion” (Smethem, 2007, p. 470).
8. Classroom teachers: teachers who perceive themselves to be in the profession long-term (although not necessarily on a full-time, permanent basis) and are generally “content to remain in the classroom with the pupils” (Smethem, 2007, p. 470).
9. Master teachers: teachers who believe that (1) “education consists of a set of ‘experiences’ which children encounter, learn to cope with, and eventually master”; and (2) the primary purpose of school is achievement and learning (Mitchell et al., 1987, p. 64).
10. Instructor teachers: teachers who believe that (1) students learn through “high-quality engagement in particular lesson activities, and . . . take a special interest in stimulating and directing that engagement”; and (2) the primary purpose of school is achievement and learning (Mitchell et al., 1987, p. 64).
11. Coach teachers: teachers who believe that (1) students learn through “high-quality engagement in particular lesson activities, and . . . take a special interest in stimulating and directing that engagement”; and (2) the primary purpose of school is to nurture child growth and development (Mitchell et al., 1987, p. 64).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

There are both inherent limitations to conducting microethnographic research and self-imposed delimitations to my study design. Regarding the limitations of microethnographic research, I am aware that my study results are not generalizable to a population beyond the actual

study participants. However, I attempted to achieve as much variation as possible in the perspectives, genders, ages, and ethnicities of my purposive sample of participants, and am confident that my study results identify phenomena with the potential to be used in future, and possibly more generalizable, research designs. In addition, I am aware of the potential for my own biases to influence the study. I attempted to collect and record my data in an objective manner void of personal biases; however, my understanding of the culture of inductive teachers is influenced by my experiences of leaving the practitioner aspect of secondary education as an inductive teacher.

The most significant delimitations of my research study are as follows: (1) My face-to-face time with my study participants was limited to one hour; (2) One of my selected study participants is a middle school teacher (not a secondary teacher); and (3) My study sample included a small number of participants and lacked significant variation in participant ages and ethnicities. I imposed the face-to-face time constraint of one hour in respect of the busy schedules of my study participants. I chose to include a middle school teacher—who is not endorsed at the secondary level—in my study sample because of the significantly unique perspectives this participant was able to bring the study. I chose a small sample size of 11 participants because it was necessary for me to limit the amount of data I collected (and thus needed to analyze) due to time constraints imposed by attempting to finish a dissertation on schedule. Finally, while I attempted to secure study participants of diverse ages and ethnicities, my final sample population did not end up reflecting significant diversity in those areas.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

As I stated in chapter 1, the purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education. While there is a significant amount of research available on inductive teachers and teacher attrition moderators, there is significantly less research on the attitudes and perceptions of inductive teachers from *their* own perspective. While inductive teacher reflections on the effectiveness of mentoring programs are somewhat common, an entire qualitative study focused solely on what inductive teachers *do, feel, and experience* is not.

Licensed teachers will typically spend anywhere from four to six years earning the degrees and endorsements needed to become professional teachers. Unfortunately, an estimated 20 to 50% of these teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson et al., 2004). Teacher attrition data consistently show that the majority of teachers who leave are either newer teachers or retirees (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Teachers leaving the profession to retire is logical; teachers leaving within the first five years of employment is the more problematic phenomenon. The most commonly cited reasons for teacher attrition include the occurrence of a major life-cycle event (e.g., the birth of a child or retirement), the pursuit of other career options, and/or the desire to find employment with more desirable compensation levels (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987).

The U.S. Department of Education, when conducting teacher retention and attrition research, classifies teachers under one of the following three categories: (1) leavers, (2) movers, and (3) stayers. As stated above, there is a significant amount of literature on why teachers leave the profession. Regarding movers, the research has shown that one of the following two

scenarios generally precipitates a move: (1) unavoidable events such as relocation due to a spouse's career (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987); or (2) desiring to work in a different school with perceived better amenities and/or support (Gardner, 2010; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Research on stayers, however, is more limited and hence was the focus of my research study. It is noteworthy that the majority of the research on teacher attrition focuses on the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession as opposed to focusing on the reasons they stay.

Grissmer and Kirby (1987) developed a life-cycle theory of teacher attrition that provides various hypotheses related to why teachers leave, move, or stay in the teaching profession. Their theory incorporates the basic cost-versus-benefit aspects of human capital theory and argues for the necessary collection of state, national, census, and Social Security data to provide a clearer understanding of factors influencing teacher attrition. While Grissmer and Kirby's life-cycle theory of teacher attrition is discussed in more depth later on in this review, these researchers stress that educational research, programs, and policies should focus on retaining newer teachers through the first few "turbulent years" of employment due to the established great risk of attrition early on in the profession. If the current statistic on the degree of new teacher attrition is accurate—anywhere from 20 to 50%, as cited above—there is a significant portion of newly licensed, trained professionals who find the costs of teaching too high. While understanding the personal and professional costs for those who teach is pertinent, a thorough examination of the attitudes and perspectives of those staying in the profession—despite the costs—may provide a different lens for policy makers in the educational and political communities to consider when deciding how to select, train, and support inductive teachers.

For the remainder of this review, I have summarized a selection of the academic literature on inductive teachers. Research has been included that addresses primarily the following six

topics: (1) the demographic data on teachers who leave the profession; (2) the influences that administrators and teacher mentoring programs have on inductive teachers; (3) the demographic data on teachers who stay in the profession; (4) the characteristics of individuals described as career, transitional, or classroom teachers (Smethem, 2007); (5) the characteristics of individuals described as master, instructor, coach, or helper teachers (Mitchel et al., 1987); and (6) the influence of motivation and teacher satisfaction on teacher attrition data. I concluded the review with a broad summary of the literature on teacher attrition.

### **Significant Contributors to Teacher Attrition and Retention Research**

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Grissmer and Kirby contributed significantly to the academic research on teacher attrition. These researchers published numerous reports for the U.S. government and private endowment organizations through the Rand Corporation, and their work cited in this review predominantly incorporates an extensive quantitative analysis of either national or statewide statistical data on attrition moderators for teachers (1987, 1991, 1993, & 1997). Grissmer and Kirby contributed to the literature on education in two major ways: (1) through the development of their life-cycle theory of teacher attrition, and (2) through identifying the data requirements needed to accurately portray teacher attrition moderators at the national level. Currently, the U.S. Department of Education conducts teacher attrition research using a majority of Grissmer and Kirby's suggestions, which will be discussed following an explanation of their life-cycle theory of teacher attrition.

Grissmer and Kirby (1987) developed a life-cycle theory of teacher attrition that provides various hypotheses as for why teachers leave, move, or stay in the teaching profession. Their life-cycle theory of teacher attrition draws heavily from the economic theories of human capital championed by Becker (1994) and Mincer (1974). For over three decades, Becker (1994) and

Mincer (1974) have explored how variables related to an individual's human capital (e.g., educational attainment, accumulation of knowledge, ability, environment, health, and productivity level) influence the economy. Along with the economic theories of human capital, Grissmer and Kirby (1987) also considered theories of occupational choice, family formation and women's labor market participation, individual migration, and the timing of retirement decisions when developing their life-cycle theory of teacher attrition. However, human capital theory could be considered the foundation for all four of the major theoretical classifications listed above and, as such, is described in more detail as follows.

Human capital theory uses the premise that monetary and non-monetary benefits plus occupation-specific, location-specific, and firm-specific capital explain the decisions individuals make regarding their career trajectories. In the context of education, examples of monetary benefits include the likely income, benefits, job security, and promotion opportunities of the profession; non-monetary benefits include aspects like work conditions, collegiality among coworkers, and preferred work schedule. Examples of occupation-specific capital might include a teacher's possessing specialized knowledge and/or having personal contacts and networks within the profession. Examples of location-specific capital might include factors that keep a teacher rooted in a community, such as home ownership and other established family members and friends. Firm-specific capital describes factors not transferrable to other schools, such as seniority or status and the institutional knowledge of school practices. An important system-specific form of firm capital (district or state) includes retirement benefits (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Grissmer and Kirby found human capital theory significant—yet incomplete—when explaining the breadth of teacher attrition moderators; their life-cycle theory of teacher attrition comprises ten factors.

Grissmer and Kirby (1987) believe that *voluntary* teacher attrition decisions depend on the following six factors:

- The degree of acquired occupation-specific, location-specific, and firm-specific capital.
- The informed nature of the original job commitment and the nature of the original job search.
- The previous work and teaching experience of the teacher at entry.
- The probability of changes in marital status, family composition, and residential location after employment.
- The salary and working conditions of teachers.
- The job characteristics and wage levels of alternative opportunities both inside and outside teaching. (p. 21)

Grissmer and Kirby (1987) argue that *involuntary* teacher attrition depends on the following four factors:

- The probability that the performance characteristics of the teacher will meet some threshold level set by the school district.
- The chance of teacher layoffs, which is primarily influenced by enrollments, fiscal environment, and perhaps union rules.
- Mandatory retirement rules.
- Illness and death. (p. 21)

One of Grissmer and Kirby's (1987) findings was the assertion that there was a critical lack of data on teacher attrition. Today, over two decades later, a plethora of data on teacher attrition exists, most of which is influenced significantly by the aggregate of Grissmer and Kirby's educational research on teacher attrition from the 1980s and 1990s (1987, 1991, 1993,

1997). The increase in credible national data has been due, in part, to the U.S. Department of Education and their collection of both static and, more recently, longitudinal data on inductive teachers. As introduced in chapter 1, the most comprehensive collection of these data sources comprises three major Census Bureau documents: (1) the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), (2) the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), and (3) the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS).

I credit the reports and articles by Grissmer and Kirby (1987, 1991, 1993, & 1997) and the statistics from the U.S. Department of Education (i.e., the SASS, TFS, and BTLS data sets) with providing the most recent major foundational works on inductive teacher research. A selected sample of other current research on inductive teachers is included, as well, in the remaining sections of this literature review. Especially noteworthy are the BTLS longitudinal data presented by Kaiser and Cross (2011), referenced earlier, regarding the career paths of approximately 1,900 first-year teachers over a three-year period. A significant amount of comparative data were obtained for this review through the works of Borman and Dowling (2008); they performed a meta-analysis on 34 studies and claim to have used “all quantitative studies related to teachers’ career trajectories and attrition from or retention in the field” (p. 367). Smethem (2007) and Mitchell, Ortiz, and Mitchell (1987) conducted qualitative research on the perspectives of teachers with regard to their professional experiences, educational philosophy, motivations for remaining in the profession, and projected career trajectories. Smethem (2007) created a three-category teacher typology framework to describe the attitudes, perspectives, and characteristics of the teachers in her study. Mitchell, et al. (1987) created a four-category teacher typology framework to classify the educational philosophies and incentive systems of the teachers in their study. Morgan, Ludlow, Kitching, O’Leary, and Clarke (2010) conducted

survey research on the “affective episodes” of 749 inductive teachers in search of “the influences that sustain teachers on a daily basis” (p. 192). Finally, Stockard and Lehman (2004) analyzed consecutive years of SASS and TFS data and then compared those results to their own survey research on 117 first-year teachers, from one western state, at the start and end of those teachers’ first year in the profession. The above researchers have all contributed valuable insights to teacher attrition and retention research and their work is described further in the appropriate categories, below.

### **Attrition Research: Leavers**

Grissmer and Kirby (1991) found that approximately 60 to 75% of teacher attrition at the district level is due to “normal and understandable changes in a person’s life” and cited homemaking, school, retirement, death or illness, and family-related relocations as significant attrition factors “relatively immune to the effects of educational policy” (p. 17). Research on inductive teachers by Kaiser and Cross (2001) support Grissmer and Kirby’s claim in theory; Kaiser and Cross found that of teachers who began teaching in 2007-08, approximately “31 percent of 2008-09 leavers and 35 percent of 2009-10 leavers left the teaching profession because their contract was not renewed” (p. 3). Nonetheless, this section provides a summary of the literature on reasons teachers leave the profession. I have divided the literature into five major categories: (1) teacher demographics, (2) teacher qualifications, (3) administrative leadership and mentoring, (4) school characteristics, and (5) teacher satisfaction.

**Teacher demographics.** The primary variables addressed in the teacher demographic category include gender, marital status, race, new-parent (or not) status, chronological age, levels of educational attainment, and professional qualifications. The research findings of Borman and Dowling (2008) suggest that the most significant demographic factor that influences a teacher’s

retention in the profession is his or her new-parent (or not) status. Teachers who become new parents compose a disproportionate number of teachers who leave the profession. Borman and Dowling (2008) found that teachers who have a new child are 6.69 times more likely to leave the profession relative to teachers who do not have a new child. In comparison to other demographic characteristics such as being a woman, married, and White (1.3, 1.4, and 1.36 times more likely to leave teaching, respectively, than a teacher who is a man, not married, and of a race other than White), the number of teachers who leave the profession due to parenting responsibilities is noteworthy (Borman and Dowling, 2008).

If Borman and Dowling's (2008) statistics, above, are taken in consideration with Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) findings that women are more sensitive than men to the erosion of real teacher income early in their careers, the statistics are clear on the life-stage challenges younger women face as teachers. Grissmer and Kirby (1991) found it surprising that women were more sensitive to real teacher income than men; their research results suggested that attrition among female teachers would decrease by 23% if fourth-year teaching salaries were equal to first-year teaching salaries in real terms. However, the cost of daycare for one or more children plus all the usual professional costs of teaching (e.g., costs associated with travel to and from work, professional wardrobe expenses) can quickly consume a large portion of a beginning teacher's monthly take-home pay. The combination of parenting responsibilities and low real teacher income suggests two reasons why female teachers and parents of new children make up a disproportionate number of the teachers who leave the profession in their first five or so years of employment (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1991; Wayne, 2000).

Chronological age is also a significant factor in teacher attrition probability data. The simplistic version of teacher attrition age data is that both the youngest and the oldest teachers (i.e., people of retirement age) are most likely to leave the profession. However, some more convoluted trends emerge when a teacher's gender and *age at entry to the profession* are considered along with chronological age. The results of Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) 24-year longitudinal study on public teachers in Indiana suggest that combining the variables of chronological age, gender, and age at entry of the profession provides perhaps the most helpful picture of how age influences teacher attrition data.

Over a 24-year period, Grissmer and Kirby (1991) were able to track not only if teachers left the profession but also if they ever came back into the profession. Not surprisingly, Grissmer and Kirby found that attrition for young teachers (i.e., 30 years or younger) was approximately twice the rate of all older teachers. In addition, they found that if a teacher under the age of 30 steps out of the profession, he or she is less likely ever to return to the field than a teacher who steps out at or above the age of 30. Men were found to have a 35 to 37% lower attrition rate than women; however, women were more likely to return to the profession after a leave of absence than men. The statistics differ a bit, however, when gender and age at entry to the profession are considered in tandem; men have a higher risk of attrition the older their age of entry into the profession, while the risk of women leaving the profession declines the older their age of entry. Specifically, "A man entering teaching at age 30 or older has a permanent attrition rate 20% higher than a man age 25-29 years; however, for women who enter when they are older, the attrition rate is 31-35% *lower* than for those age 25-29 years" (p. 60). In summary, the research suggests that newly hired teachers with the most attrition risk include males over the age of 30, females under the age of 30, and teachers with young children.

**Teacher qualifications.** The research findings on teacher attrition in relationship to professional qualifications are less straightforward than the demographic data noted above. While some consistent attrition trends are apparent based on student age and teacher content area specialty (e.g., physics and chemistry teachers leave the profession at a higher rate than any other group of teachers), other statistics on teacher qualifications in relationship to attrition are somewhat inconsistent. For example, some research results suggest that teachers with high levels of educational attainment (i.e., graduate degrees) are more likely to stay in the profession (Gardner, 2010; Greenberg & McCall, 1974; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987) while other data suggest that teachers with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to remain in the field (Borman & Dowling, 2008). The following is a summary of the major areas of agreement in teacher attrition data in relationship to professional qualifications.

The research consistently shows that secondary teachers have a higher attrition rate than primary teachers, with the science teachers leading in attrition numbers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1991). As stated earlier, physics and chemistry teachers are the most likely to leave the profession; these teachers are also the least likely to ever return to the classroom and the most likely to leave within just one or two years of employment (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). In comparison to elementary school teachers, physics and chemistry teachers of both genders are anywhere between 68 to 80% more likely to permanently leave teaching (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991, pp. 60, 69). Also in comparison to elementary school teachers:

- (1) Biology teachers of both genders are 65 to 66% more likely to permanently leave teaching;
- (2) male and female English teachers are 48 and 25% more likely to permanently leave teaching, respectively;
- (3) male and female math teachers are 21 and 25% more likely to permanently leave teaching, respectively;
- and (4) male special education teachers are 33 to 35% more likely

to permanently leave teaching (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991, pp. 60, 69). Like the secondary physics and chemistry teachers, the biology and English teachers are particularly at risk for leaving the profession within only one to two years of being in the classroom (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Overall, teachers with an undergraduate degree in science or math are 1.99 times more likely than teachers without a math or science degree to leave teaching (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

While the content-area specialist teachers in science and English are particularly at risk for leaving the profession within only one or two years of employment, a teacher's overall level of experience has been found to be a significant attrition moderator in and of itself. As consistently noted throughout this literature review, most of the research on teacher attrition moderators indicates that inductive teachers are the most likely to leave the profession. However, Borman and Dowling (2008) found that the *more* experienced teachers are the ones with the higher attrition risk.

With regard to teacher experience level, the odds of attrition among teachers with 5 or 6 years of teaching experience [is] 1.57 greater than those for teachers during the first five years of their careers . . . . with each additional year of experience, the odds of attrition increased slightly . . . . a difference of 5 years of experience [is] associated with odds of attrition for the more experienced teacher that [are] 5.10 times greater than those for the less experienced teacher. (p. 387)

Borman and Dowling's (2008) results are contrary to the findings of most other educational researchers regarding the attrition rates of inductive teachers in comparison to more experienced teachers. Most likely, these researchers' attempts to standardize the effects of age on teacher attrition across all age groups—including retirement-age teachers—has minimized the disparity in inductive teacher attrition rates that other researchers have found. Nonetheless, Borman and

Dowling's claim that a teacher with five or six years of experience is more likely to leave the profession than a teacher with one to four years of experience is particularly relevant to my study; this finding suggests that continual support and professional development may still be significant factors in reducing attrition odds even when a new teacher is nearing the end of his or her formal inductive years. However, the statistic that only 25% of teachers are still in the profession 20 years after entering the field suggests quite clearly that teacher attrition is not a challenge unique to the inductive teacher population (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991).

**Administrative leadership and mentoring.** The organizational structure of a school, and the leadership abilities of the administrators within a school, has been shown by some researchers to affect teacher attrition data. Borman and Dowling (2008) concluded the following from their research: "Initiatives that lessen the bureaucratic organization of schools and school systems and strategies that promote more genuine administrative support from school leaders and collegiality among teachers are strategies that may improve retention" (p. 399). One way to increase collegiality between teachers is through mentoring programs; the literature suggests that schools with well-designed mentoring programs have a reduced rate of attrition among inductive teachers (Danielson, 2007; Parker, Ndoye, & Imig, 2009).

Recently, statistics from BTLs data on approximately 1,900 first-year teachers showed a significant difference between beginning public school teachers who were and were not assigned a mentor in 2007-08. In the two years that followed (2008-09 and 2009-10), the attrition rate among teachers with a mentor were 8% and 10%, respectively; the attrition rate among teachers without a mentor were 16% and 23%, respectively (Kaiser & Cross, 2011). Research from Parker et al. (2009) provides current data on inductive teacher mentoring programs, as well; these researchers studied 8,838 teachers in North Carolina who were mentored in their first two

years of teaching. Three findings from the research conducted by Parker et al. bear mentioning here. First, 88% of novices matched with mentors in the same building intended to stay in the profession. Second, approximately 60% of the novices whose mentors taught in the same content area or grade level planned to stay in the field. Third, beginning teachers who received “a lot” of support versus “some” support were much more likely to stay in the profession. Especially notable, Parker et al. found a statistically significant reduction in attrition risk for novice teachers who were assigned a mentor who taught in the same grade level.

Teacher dissatisfaction with the workplace environment, especially concerning administrative and mentor support in the first few years of employment, has been a relatively recent focus of teacher attrition research. Many researchers consider the phenomenon of teacher satisfaction, as well as perceived levels of administrative and mentor support towards teachers, as factors that effective school leaders can address to mitigate inductive teacher attrition data (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). However, Croft, Caram, and Dworkin (1983)—in their analysis of over 3,000 teachers—found that mentoring performed by administrators for inductive teachers had little direct effect on inductive teacher retention or attrition status, a conclusion supported by the research of Stockard and Lehman (2004). Croft et al. (1983) found that the attrition status of inductive teachers was most affected by the availability of alternative career opportunities and/or the individual teacher’s skill level. Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that for inductive teachers, the “measure of teachers’ satisfaction was the most important influence on retention intentions and decisions” (p. 762). In summary, while the data suggest that administrators have little direct effect on the retention or attrition decisions of inductive teachers, the literature is clear that effective school-wide mentoring practices do reduce the attrition rates of inductive teachers.

**School characteristics.** The basic demographic characteristics of a school are also a significant determinant of teacher attrition risk. For example, teachers at urban schools, small schools (i.e., fewer than 1000 students), and private schools are more likely to leave the profession than teachers at suburban schools, large schools, and public schools, respectively (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Teachers at private schools have an especially significant attrition risk; private school teachers are 2.27 times more likely to leave the profession than public school teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008). The higher attrition rates of private school teachers may be due to the comparatively lower salary, benefit, and retirement incentives available to private school teachers in comparison to their public school colleagues. Additionally, educational researchers consistently find that teachers who are more likely to leave the profession (1) work at schools with poor student achievement test results, (2) work with student populations of predominately low-SES status, and (3) serve high minority student populations (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Finally, teachers who view their working conditions and/or salary as poor are also more likely to leave the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Grissmer & Kirby, 1991).

**Teacher satisfaction.** Earlier I noted that some of the data on administrative leadership have shown that administrators have little to do *directly* with teacher attrition and retention decisions (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Varied factors such as a teacher's alternative career opportunities, level of skill, and/or job satisfaction levels have been found to be more directly linked to teacher attrition and retention decisions. The phenomenon of teacher satisfaction is a relatively new focus of study in educational research; *teacher satisfaction* is an intangible and, as such, is difficult to measure through most traditional research methods. Mitchell, et al. (1987) contend that *satisfaction* is a concept without a strong

theoretical definition and as such is difficult to measure and describe. Danielson (2007), also recognizing the challenges with research on intangibles, asserts that “Research design depends on clear outcomes, measures of those outcomes, and control of other variables . . . . Unfortunately, educational research does not routinely meet any of these conditions” (p. 20). Despite the perceived conceptual difficulties of measuring *satisfaction*, recent research by Stockard and Lehman (2004) focused on investigating the satisfaction levels of first-year teachers and found a direct link between job satisfaction and teacher attrition or retention decisions. An extensive summary of Stockard and Lehman’s (2004) findings is cited below due to its significant relevance to the focus of my research study.

Although the measures of teaching effectiveness, support, and school management were the most important influences on teachers’ satisfaction, either directly or indirectly, they had surprisingly little direct influence on teachers’ retention decisions. None of the variables in these areas differentiated those who intended to stay in or leave teaching in the statewide sample, and the support-and management-related variables discriminated at a significance of only  $p < .10$  in the zero-order analysis of variance results for the national sample. (p. 762)

In summary, Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that teacher retention decisions were *not* directly related to extrinsic factors such as teaching effectiveness or relationships with administrators. However, these extrinsic factors did influence teacher satisfaction levels.

In contrast, the measure of teachers’ satisfaction was the most important influence on retention intentions and decisions, with 1st-year teachers who were highly satisfied with their work being much more likely to plan to stay in teaching (statewide sample) and to

actually do so (national sample) . . . . This more global sense of satisfaction may be most important in influencing retention. (Stockard & Lehman, 2004, p. 762)

Stockard and Lehman's (2004) study offers influential support for the need for future conceptual studies on inductive teachers. These researchers used the extensive quantitative data available on inductive teachers (e.g., SASS, TFS, and BTS data) and came to the conclusion that an intangible trait—job satisfaction—was the factor most *directly* linked to teacher attrition or retention decisions. While quantitative data on inductive teacher attrition and retention factors are useful and provide necessary foundational data, Stockard and Lehman's (2004) research has demonstrated the insufficiency of quantitative data in explaining teacher attrition and retention decisions. In summary, Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that perceived job satisfaction levels directly influence first-year teacher attrition or retention decisions.

### **Attrition Research: Movers and Stayers**

The literature on teacher attrition does appear to support Grissmer and Kirby's (1987) assertion that a significant portion of inductive teacher attrition is due to normal, life-stage changes and, as such, is relatively immune to educational policy. Unavoidable attrition factors like the need to care for family members, the desire to return to school, a relocation due to a spouse's job, and/or the acceptance of a higher paying job are factors that can influence workers in any profession. Furthermore, while a significant number of inductive teachers do leave the profession within their first few years of employment, longitudinal research by Grissmer and Kirby (1991) found that many of the leavers do eventually return to teaching. I begin this section with a basic summary of Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) data on the major differences between annual and permanent teacher attrition rates and conclude with summary statistics on teachers defined as movers or stayers by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Annual and permanent teacher attrition rates.** Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) research on Indiana's public school teachers provides extensive longitudinal attrition and retention data on teachers. Grissmer and Kirby were able to analyze teacher attrition and retention data collected over a 24-year period, which allowed them to delineate reliably between (1) teachers who temporarily stepped out of the profession (reflected in annual attrition data) and (2) teachers who permanently stepped out of the profession (reflected in permanent attrition data). The majority of this literature review has reported on what Grissmer and Kirby would define as annual attrition data, and annual attrition data have little significance when attempting to reconcile the long-term effects of inductive teacher attrition from the profession. In summary, Grissmer and Kirby (1991) found that the "attrition rates used in national models . . . [have] been greatly exaggerated . . . [and] that national rates of attrition from teaching are currently in the 1-3 percent range" (p. 71). These findings most likely did not surprise Grissmer and Kirby (1987) as they had reported in an earlier historical analysis that approximately 40 to 60% of those who leave teaching are likely to return. More recent research on public school teachers who began teaching in 2007-08 showed that of the 10% who left the profession in 2008-09, 3% returned in 2009-10 (Kaiser & Cross, 2011). The high percentage of teachers who end up returning to the profession after a period of absence gives additional credence to the need for future studies that investigate the reasons why teachers stay in the profession—instead of focusing on the reasons why they leave.

**Defining movers and stayers.** While a majority of the educational literature on teacher attrition and retention is organized within the three categories of (1) leavers, (2) movers, and (3) stayers, in the context of my research study I have generally considered movers and stayers as fitting in the same category. As previously defined in chapter 1, movers are teachers who

remained employed from one year to the next but who worked in a different school the second year. Kaiser and Cross (2011) found that approximately 21% and 31% of movers in their second and third year of teaching, respectively, moved because their contract was not renewed (p. 11). Stayers are defined as teachers who remained employed both years at the same school. In the context of my research, since both the movers and stayers remained in the profession, I have not been excessively concerned with segregating the data between the two.

Up to this point, a majority of the research included in this literature review has focused on quantitative data related to teacher attrition and retention moderators. However, as Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) longitudinal research on Indiana teachers showed, one drawback of most quantitative research is that it generally provides only a snapshot of information to analyze. As mentioned previously, Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) study suggested that the actual national attrition rate from teaching is around 1-3%, while throughout this literature review I have been presenting research results that suggest teacher attrition rates up to 50% for inductive teachers and 75% for teachers with 20 or more years in the profession. Most recently, research on inductive teachers by Kaiser and Cross (2011) showed that of teachers who began teaching in 2007-08, 12% were not teaching in 2009-10. I believe there is a need to look beyond quantitative measures in attempting to describe the attrition and retention decisions of inductive teachers.

### **Typology of Educators**

Smethem (2007) and Mitchell, et al. (1987) conducted qualitative research on the perspectives of teachers with regard to their professional experiences, educational philosophy, motivations for remaining in the profession, and projected career trajectories. Smethem (2007) conducted a four-year longitudinal study on the projected career trajectories of inductive teachers

and produced a three-category teacher typology framework to describe the attitudes, perspectives, and characteristics of the teachers in her study. Mitchell, et al. (1987) conducted case study research on teachers with varied years of experience in the profession and created a four-category teacher typology framework to classify the educational philosophies and incentive systems of the teachers in their study. While the final study presented in this section by Morgan, et al. (2010) does not directly deal with teacher typology data, the focus of their study was a search for phenomena that influences teacher motivation on a day-to-day basis. The similar research focus that Mitchell, et al. (1987) and Morgan, et al. (2010) shared with regard to teacher motivation warranted the inclusion of Morgan, et al.'s research in this section.

In summary, all three of the studies presented in this section address the affective experiences of teachers, with the conglomerate of the data providing insight on ways to understand the motivations of teachers based on teacher typology data. Of important note, Smethem's (2007) research on inductive teachers showed a connection between teachers' typology data and attrition rates; for example, "portfolio" teachers were found to be more likely to leave the profession than the "career" or "classroom" teachers. However, Mitchell, et al.'s (1987) results did not show connections between teacher typology data and attrition rates and, as such, indicates a gap in the educational literature suitable for future study.

**Career, classroom, and portfolio teachers.** The results from Smethem's (2007) longitudinal study on inductive teachers, which analyzed the experiences, ego identity, and expected career trajectories of 18 inductive teachers, supported the creation of a three-category typology of teachers: the "career teacher," the "classroom teacher," and the "portfolio teacher." Smethem (2007) defined the three categories as follows: (1) "Career teachers" perceive themselves to be "committed to teaching as a long-term, permanent career with ambitions for

remunerated promotion”; (2) “classroom teachers” perceive themselves to be in the profession long-term (although not necessarily on a full-time, permanent basis) and are generally “content to remain in the classroom with the pupils”; and (3) “portfolio teachers” perceive teaching to be a “temporary measure or actively consider leaving teaching, en route to another, perhaps temporary career” (p. 470). It was interesting to compare how each type of teacher described their career intentions and/or experiences. For example, 100% of the identified “career teachers” in the study stated that working with children was a primary reason why they wanted to become a teacher, while only 50% of the “classroom teachers” and 80% of the “portfolio teachers” articulated the same sentiments (pp. 470-471). In addition, while almost 90% of the “career teachers” expressed a “love or enjoyment of teaching” only 25% of the “classroom teachers” and 20% of the “portfolio teachers” conveyed the same feelings (p. 471).

The outcomes of Smethem’s (2007) study that were of particular interest to this study involved the responses of the “classroom teachers” in comparison to some of the “career” and “portfolio” teacher responses. Of the three groups, the “classroom teachers” expressed the most negativity toward national and subject-area initiatives to improve teaching and learning as well as the most discontent regarding their first year of teaching. In addition, while “career teachers” appeared to engage in “equal professional interaction with more experienced colleagues” after two or three years of experience in the classroom, the same was not noted of the “classroom” or “portfolio” teachers even though 95% of the study sample thought they were either a “proper teacher” or “competent, fully fledged teacher” by the end of their first year or two of teaching (p. 473). According to Smethem’s research, there appear to be significant differences between the different types of teachers. More longitudinal research on the attitudes and career trajectories of

these types of teachers—and the reasons they stay in the profession—might provide valuable insights for future teacher selection and inductive teacher retention policies.

**Master, instructor, coach, and helper teachers.** Mitchell, Ortiz, and Mitchell (1987) conducted case study research on the work orientation, job performance, and perceived incentives (i.e., motivations for remaining in the profession) of 15 teachers. The results of Mitchell, et al.'s study supported the creation of a four-category typology of teachers: the “master teacher,” the “instructor teacher,” the “coach teacher,” and the “helper teacher.” Mitchell, et al. (1987) defined the four categories as follows: (1) “Master teachers” believe that “education consists of a set of ‘experiences’ which children encounter, learn to cope with, and eventually master” and that the primary purpose of school is achievement and learning; (2) “instructor teachers” believe that students learn through “high-quality engagement in particular lesson activities, and . . . take a special interest in stimulating and directing that engagement” and that the primary purpose of school is achievement and learning; (3) “coach teachers” believe that students learn through “high-quality engagement in particular lesson activities, and . . . take a special interest in stimulating and directing that engagement” and that the primary purpose of school is to nurture child growth and development; and (4) “helper teachers” believe that “education consists of a set of ‘experiences’ which children encounter, learn to cope with, and eventually master” and that the primary purpose of school is to nurture child growth and development (p. 64). To summarize, the “master” and “helper” teachers share the desire to provide ability-based experiences for their students in the classroom but differ in their perceptions of the purpose of school; the “master” teacher is concerned with producing student academic achievement while the “helper” teacher is concerned with nurturing the emotional and social growth of students. The “instructor” and “coach” teachers share the desire

to provide engagement-based activities for their students in the classroom but also differ in their perceptions of the purpose of school; the “instructor” teacher is concerned with producing student academic achievement while the “coach” teacher is concerned with nurturing the emotional and social growth of students.

Mitchell, et al.’s (1987) findings were of particular interest to my study because the personal and professional characteristics of Mitchell, et al.’s participants—when categorized by typology—closely aligned with the personal and professional characteristics of my study participants. While none of my participants ended up aligning with the “helper” teacher typology, this finding was logical as Mitchell, et al.’s “helper” teachers were primarily veteran teachers (with 20 or more years of teaching experience) and identified by their principals as being weak teachers. Mitchell, et al.’s findings discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher typology and provided insight into the work orientations and incentive systems of teachers based on their typology. Similar to my study, Mitchell, et al.’s research was exploratory in nature and sought to understand the motivations of teachers so that theories for improved teacher incentive systems and administrative management protocols could be developed.

**Positive, sustaining events.** Mitchell, et al.’s (1987) and Morgan et al.’s (2010) research showed similar intent with regard to studying the motivations of teachers. Using a survey research design, Morgan et al. analyzed the “affective experiences” of 749 inductive teachers in search of phenomena that influence teacher motivation on a day-to-day basis. An “affective experience” was defined by Morgan et al. as an emotional episode that was (1) colored by positive or negative feelings, (2) marked with a beginning and an end, (3) often triggered by “an interaction involving teachers’ professional work and identity,” and (4) had the potential to recur on a routine basis (p. 192). For Morgan et al.’s study participants, some of the *strongest*

affective events were intrinsically motivated—such as the desire to make a difference in students’ lives—and directly related to the reasons why the study participants entered the profession. In summary, Morgan et al. found that “Recurring experiences of positive events emanating from the intrinsic rewards of teaching . . . [are what] help maintain teachers’ motivation” (p. 201). One significant outcome of Morgan et al.’s (2010) research that was of particular interest to this study was the policy implication that educational reforms should “keep a clear focus on the intrinsic motivation of teachers, particularly around students’ engagement of learning” (p. 202).

### **Conclusion**

This literature review is a comprehensive summary of the educational research on teacher attrition and retention factors. I began the literature review with commonly cited and/or agreed-upon statistics on inductive teachers. Then, I synthesized the predominantly quantitative findings of researchers whose studies have contributed significantly to the literature on inductive teachers. Finally, I concluded the literature review with notable qualitative studies on inductive teachers by Smethem (2007) and Mitchell, et al. (1987), along with current research by Morgan, et al. (2010) on factors that influence teacher motivation on a day-to-day basis. Within the last three decades, a significant amount of valuable research has been collected on various demographic and quantifiably measured traits of inductive teachers. However, there appears to be a lack of qualitative research on inductive teachers in the educational literature. Specifically, this study was designed to address the lack of qualitative data on why teachers *stay* in the profession.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

As stated in chapter 1, the purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education. I used personal interviews, within a microethnographic research design, to explore four issues related to inductive teachers: (1) the process of entering the teaching profession, (2) significant personal and professional transitions, (3) motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and (4) perceptions on self-defined roles. A major objective of my study was to provide insight into the influences that brought the study participants into the teaching profession and what motivated them to stay.

#### **Participants and Sampling Strategy**

I was successful in securing a purposeful sample of inductive teachers for my research study. A purposeful sample in an ethnographic study consists of participants with different perspectives on the problem, process, and culture of the group under study. I planned for my sample to include approximately 10 to 12 inductive teachers from various public and private secondary schools. My final sample included 11 licensed, inductive teachers from 10 different schools spanning eight school districts within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. Ten of my research study participants were licensed at the secondary level while one participant was licensed at the middle school level. While the only requirement for participants was that they be licensed, inductive teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience, I recruited and chose to include the middle school teacher in my research because I judged this teacher's unique perspectives to be invaluable toward achieving the objectives of my study.

I attempted to achieve as much variation as possible in the perspectives, genders, ages, and races of the sample of participants. The official procedure for selecting my participants was

to request referrals from gatekeepers, and then I completed the following protocols with the participants through e-mail: (1) initiated contact; (2) discussed informed consent, the selection of a pseudonym label, the purpose of the research study, and how the data would be used and published; (3) requested and confirmed a mutually agreed upon personal interview time in a room amenable to audio recording; (4) requested the completion of a questionnaire before the personal interview; and (5) thanked each participant for his or her willingness to participate and contribute to my research project.

The majority of the participants were recommended through referrals. I gained access to three inductive teachers at two public 9-12 high schools in the same school district through a two-step process: First, I presented my proposal to the district superintendent and two other district level administrators; then, once the district administrators approved my proposal, they asked administrators at each of the high schools to refer qualified teachers to me. The district administrators from this school district were the ones who initially suggested that I narrow the focus of my research from K-12 inductive teachers to either elementary or secondary inductive teachers. I gained access to one inductive teacher at a private-religious 9-12 high school through permission and referrals from two administrators at the school. At the private-religious high school, the administrators identified all the teachers who met my qualifications and then allowed the teachers to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. I also gained access to three inductive teachers through referrals from a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) professor. Finally, I gained access to four inductive teachers through my own personal contacts.

While the only requirement of the participants was that they be licensed, inductive teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience, I attempted to secure referrals who met the following additional criteria: (1) two inductive teachers from each school who were willing

to complete a brief questionnaire and participate in a personal interview lasting approximately one hour; (2) if possible, the referral of one male and one female teacher from each school; and (3) referrals of diverse ages and races. While all of the participants completed the questionnaire and personal interview, only two of the participants ended up being from the same school. In hindsight, I believe that not securing two participants from each school ended up improving the diversity of my sample population. I was able to interview six male participants and five female participants, and the participants ranged from 23 to 41 years of age. The mean age of the participants was 28, the median age was 26, and—regarding mode—two participants each were 25, 26, and 28. I was not able to secure participants of different races; all of my participants reported their race as white or Caucasian.

### **Setting**

The focus of my study was the inductive teachers; however, the setting where my participants worked is also important to note. As noted earlier, the 11 study participants represented 10 different schools and eight different school districts within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. The study participants worked in school districts that were located in rural, suburban, and urban cities. The study participants worked in secondary schools that had student populations ranging from approximately 1,100 to 2,600 students. Nine out of the 10 schools had student populations that were over 70% white with four schools being over 90% white. Two of the schools had student populations that were considerably more racially diverse, with closer to half of the student population including Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and American Indian students. Six of the schools had fewer than 15% of its student population enrolled in the federal free- and reduced-lunch program for students from lower-income families; however, the remaining five schools ranged from 29 to 60% of its student population enrolled in

free and reduced lunch. All the schools had 10% or fewer of its student population enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. I am confident that the settings where my study participants worked represented a diverse range of demographic conditions.

### **Research Ethics**

The ethics of qualitative research require careful and thoughtful considerations to be made in the areas of research design, data collection, and data storage. Regarding research design, I submitted an ethical considerations plan to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of my university before I collected any research data (see Appendix A). According to Creswell (2007), an ethical considerations plan must include a letter of informed consent that is to be signed by the researcher and participant before the start of data collection. My letter of informed consent included the following information: (1) explicit knowledge of the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; (2) the central purpose of the study; (3) the procedures used in data collection; (4) the procedures for protecting confidentiality; (5) the expected benefits for the participants; and (6) any known risks of participating in the study. As explained earlier regarding confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to identify the research participants during data storage and in the published literature. As there were no expected risks of participating in my study, and all my research participants were over 18 years of age, my ethical considerations plan was approved through an expedited Institutional Review Board process (see Appendix B).

The issues of reciprocity, respect, deciding who owns the research data, reflexivity, and researcher motivations are paramount in qualitative research (T. Huffman, personal communication, July 2011). I consider the first two issues— reciprocity and respect—to be mutually dependent and carefully planned how I could honor my research participants properly. I provided reciprocity to my research participants through carefully recording and writing the

results of my study without undue manipulation of the data. While I took extensive notes during each personal interview, I also audio recorded and then later transcribed each interview word for word. In addition, I treated my participants with the utmost professional respect and courtesy and made every effort to honestly portray their voices in any presentation of my research. I also offered my participants the knowledge that their participation in my study would add to and hopefully improve upon the educational literature on inductive teachers. As a final gesture of appreciation, I gave each participant a \$5.00 coffee gift card.

The other three ethical issues paramount in qualitative research that were identified above—reflexivity, researcher motivations, and deciding who owns the research data—were also carefully considered and addressed in my study. Regarding data ownership, in some ethnographic studies the research participants contribute to the final analysis of the data. In my study, due to time constraints on both the researcher and the participants, no request was made of the participants to contribute in this area. However, my contact information was made available if the participants wished to add anything more to their data after the personal interview. Therefore, I own my research data, but I did commit to sharing the results of my study with my participants before publication of any sort. Throughout the research process, I demonstrated reflexivity by disclosing the biases, values, and experiences that I brought to the study as someone who left the classroom while still an inductive teacher. My motivations for conducting research included completing the requirements for a dissertation and doctorate, preparing for presentations at educational conferences, and pursuing academic journal publication. My motivations were made explicit to the research participants before any data were collected. In summary, the issues of reciprocity, respect, data ownership, reflexivity, and researcher motivations were accounted for in the design of my research project.

Along with the procedural plans for conducting research in an ethical manner, there were clerical, albeit important, aspects to ethical research design that were considered as well. For example, just before I began the personal interviews with each participant, I obtained oral and written consent through the letter of informed consent (see Appendix C). During the pre-interview time I also reiterated to each participant the purpose of the study, the expected amount of time that the interview would take, and the plans for using the results from the interview. In addition, I offered each participant an abstract of the results and discussion section before publication of any sort. During the personal interviews, I refrained from any personal sharing that might influence the answers of each participant. In addition, I used a high-quality recording device and maintained awareness of the quality of the recording location to ensure the best possible audio record of the interview. To protect against losses of data, after each interview I copied and stored my audio recordings on privately owned devices including my digital voice recorder, the hard drive of my computer, and one flash drive. Pseudonyms were used in my interview transcriptions and questionnaire hard copies to protect the anonymity of all the participants, and exceptional care for the organization of both my hard and electronic copies of data were paramount to minimize any losses or misplacement of sensitive and relevant data. Finally, the destruction of any data that could be directly traced to the research participants are planned to occur three years after the publication of my research in accordance with the IRB rules of ethical research.

### **Research Design and Data Collection Methods**

I used the qualitative research method of microethnography to shape my research design and data collection processes. The purpose of ethnographic research is to thoroughly describe an individual culture, social group, or cultural experience through the perspectives of those in the

study. Microethnography is a subset of ethnography and studies a narrowly defined cultural experience and/or group. A majority of ethnographic research in academic literature uses a microethnographic design and reports the life experiences of several individuals. As stated earlier in the “Participants and Sampling Strategy” section, I studied the cultural experiences of 11 inductive teachers and used personal interviews as my data-collection technique. Within the umbrella of the personal interview process, I used the data-collection devices of a field journal, field notes, personal interviews, and a questionnaire (see Appendices D, E, F, and G, respectively). The questionnaire was used simply as a way to gather data on easily defined but individual attributes that would have otherwise squandered personal interview time.

The overarching goal of ethnographic and microethnographic research is the expansion and/or creation of academic theory to help describe the cultural experiences of people. Typically, ethnographic research progresses through the following five steps: (1) a topic is selected; (2) an extensive literature review is produced; (3) a carefully crafted plan for data collection using but not limited to personal interviews and observation is created; (4) data collection involving a concurrent search for themes is conducted; and (5) data analysis occurs—through a coding process—to uncover themes that might provide the foundation for expanding upon and/or creating new academic theory (T. Huffman, personal communication, July 2011). I naturally process ideas and information in alignment with the above five steps. However, and probably most importantly, I believe I have an aptitude for seeing connections between seemingly dissonant phenomena (e.g., coding and theory-building), earning the social acceptance and trust of others (which generally improves the depth of personal interview data shared by research participants), and being meticulous about recording details *in situ* (i.e., managing extensive and varied amounts of data in the setting of the research participant). The qualitative

research method of microethnography requires the aptitudes listed above and suits both my research questions and my preferred method for conducting research.

The purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education in an attempt to provide a cultural analysis of inductive teachers. The more abstract objective of my study was to provide a possible theoretical explanation for how inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession. I was hopeful that if I could record, analyze, and share the insights of inductive teachers regarding what brought them into the teaching profession and what motivated them to stay—that is, how they “found or are finding their place” as educational professionals—I could provide the educational community with valuable insights on how to best mentor and encourage teachers through their early professional years. Johnson et al. (2004) and Darling-Hammond’s (2000) research showed that approximately 30% of teachers leave the profession by their third year. I wanted to discover possible explanations for this phenomenon because I continually aspire to offer new ways for individuals involved in the education, hiring, and training of inductive teachers to understand and *care* for those new to the teaching profession.

I planned to conduct my research from a realist ethnographic approach, which means I attempted to collect and record my data in an objective manner void of personal biases. However, my understanding of the culture of inductive teachers was influenced by my experience of leaving the classroom while still a secondary-level inductive teacher. My professional experiences gave me an understanding of the culture of the group I was researching; in the field of ethnography, such an understanding is essential. However, my professional experiences also tested my ability to remain unbiased in creating and enacting my data methods and collection procedures.

As stated earlier, the data collection tool of personal interview primarily informed my research. Specifically, I asked approximately 25 questions of my sample participants during the personal interview and 33 questions through the pre-interview questionnaire. Along with collecting personal interview and questionnaire data, I recorded extensive field notes of observations and participant-provided information at the interview site. The field notes included brief highlights of the answers provided during the personal interview and other salient observations like the state of mind of the participant, his or her appearance and levels of alertness, and a description of the interview surroundings. In addition, I used a field journal to record personal reflections on (1) my performance as a researcher; (2) needed modifications in my interviewing and/or data collection methods and techniques; (3) the pace and progress of my study; and (4) possible themes that might be emerging from my research. As a reminder, my field journal instrument, field note instrument, guide and probing questions for the personal interviews, and pre-interview questionnaire are located in Appendices D, E, F, and G, respectively.

I developed my guide questions, probing questions, and questionnaire to support an inductive reasoning process for theory-building research. During my dissertation proposal meeting, my dissertation committee confirmed that my research design had the potential to provide credible results. I pretested my data collection instruments on two licensed teachers (one with elementary teaching experience and one with high school and university teaching experience) who also happened to be close friends. I was confident that my closest friends would not hesitate to inform me of misleading, faulty, and/or unclear aspects of my data collection and questioning processes. In addition, I was acutely aware of my friends' perceptions

and experiences as educational professionals, and was confident that I selected a pretest group with diverse perspectives on how they viewed themselves within the educational profession.

In summary, my research study was designed to provide data with significant depth regarding the attitudes and perceptions of a purposive sample of inductive teachers. Using the data collection tools of personal interviews, a questionnaire, observations recorded in field notes, and reflections written in a field journal, I conducted my research with the goal of providing theoretical insights into how inductive teachers find their place in the educational field. A multitude of factors—some of which are under teachers' control and others not—appear to have an impact on how teachers find their place in the profession. My study was designed to provide insight into the influences that brought the study participants into the teaching profession and what motivated them to remain in the field so that administrators and other educational leaders, such as preservice teacher educators and faculty department chairs, would have additional ways to help inductive teachers find their place in the profession.

### **Data Analytical Procedures**

The data methods and collection processes of my study closely follow a microethnographic research approach. However, while the data analytical procedures I used are not uncommon to ethnographic research, they are generally identified with grounded theory research. Grounded theory and ethnographic research are similar in that both methods use an inductive reasoning approach and seek to build academic theory. However, unlike ethnographic research, grounded theory does not encourage the use of *a priori* concepts. Grounded theory research uses open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to organize and search for themes in research data. I used a slightly modified version of grounded theory's coding techniques—

known in ethnographic research as initial coding, focused coding, and thematic coding—to organize and search for themes in my research data.

Initial coding is the process of taking research data and organizing it into categories. At the start of my initial coding process, I procured a large number of categories that gave name to and identified similar phenomena within my plethora of transcribed personal interview research data. Since I had five major interview questions and questionnaire data, my initial coding strategy was to group my participants' responses from each major question and the questionnaire into four generic categories. The generic categories I used included: (1) repetition, (2) indigenous categories, (3) analogies, and (4) *a priori* themes. A brief description of each category is as follows: (1) Repetitive ideas are similar ideas shared by more than one participant; (2) indigenous categories come from the local language of the participants and generally involve an expression not easily defined by outsiders; (3) analogies are comparisons between two things and may be represented with metaphorical language; and (4) *a priori* themes are theoretical concepts previously established in academic literature. After each of my major interview questions were generically categorized, I renamed each category using a title that I felt best represented that category. Thus, at the conclusion of the initial coding process, I had 20 categories with titles that represented the attitudes and perceptions of my study participants.

Next, I used focused coding to reduce the 20 categories into six similarly themed groups. I gave each of the six similarly themed groups a title that best described and represented the ideas within that grouping. Then, using a similar process as in the initial coding stage of analysis, I looked for relationships and/or patterns in my participants' responses within each of the six similarly themed groups by research question. The relationships and/or patterns that I found during focused coding became the major themes of my study. Finally, I used thematic

coding to look for patterns within the themes, resulting in the five theoretical claims of my research study.

The identification of themes is central to the analysis of most qualitative research data and was a focus of my research project. The basic premise of qualitative research is to create, modify, or use existing theory to explain, explore, or understand an idea—and a collection of similar ideas is a theme. Given a formal label (i.e., a name), themes identify a shared perception or experience common to a sample of research participants. As discussed earlier, the four major strategies I used to identify themes from my research data included searching for: (1) repetition, (2) indigenous categories, (3) analogies, and/or (4) *a priori* themes. When coding my research data, the names of my categories closely aligned with one of the above four strategies.

Identifying valid themes from research data was challenging work. Deciphering themes from abstract ideas and copious amounts of data is both a skill and art. However, by using a clear and established format for my coding processes—which is not required in ethnographic research—I put myself in the best position, as a newcomer to formal academic research, for identifying themes that others can concur were discovered in a valid manner.

The potential reliability and validity of the thematic or theoretical claims that I deduced from my research was increased through the process of triangulating my data. In my case, I used the research tools of personal interview, a questionnaire, field notes, and a field journal to provide varied methods for data collection on the same phenomenon. I coded the questionnaire, field notes, and field journal data and then compared those results to the personal interview data. My research results have perceived greater reliability and validity since, after triangulation, my thematic and theoretical claims from my personal interview data were supported throughout the aggregate of my research data.

Along with triangulation, I used extensive peer review throughout my research project to increase the potential for my research to be perceived with high reliability and validity. My primary reviewers were my dissertation chair and committee members. In addition, I selected two licensed teachers who were willing to pretest my data collection instruments. Finally, I used an editor to help me with the grammar, format, and clarity of my writing. Since my editor is not directly involved in educational research, she provided excellent insights that improved the clarity of my writing for a diverse audience. In summary, during my research project I used peer review extensively to achieve research results with the greatest potential for perceived validity.

I expected the data-analysis section of my study to take a significant amount of time and effort. The following conglomerate of approaches summarizes the plan I executed for conducting my research study in a way that would achieve high qualitative research standards for reliability and validity. First, my data-collection procedures and tools were carefully designed and pretested by two licensed teachers. Second, my use of three major methods of data collection ensured the ability to triangulate the research data among varied sources. Third, I used six highly qualified peer reviewers to advise me throughout my research project, one of whom fulfilled the role of an external auditor (i.e., she had no connection to the study). Fourth, I provided a rich and thick written description of my research data so that any readers of my research would be able to decide for themselves the transferability of the results to their situations. Last, and as discussed in chapter 1, I was transparent regarding the experiences, biases, and prejudices that I brought to the research project as well as the inherent limitations and delimitations of my research design. In summary, I believe that my data analysis plan provided a solid foundation for collecting research that accurately portrayed the attitudes and perceptions of my study participants.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My primary role as the researcher in this study was to complete the requirements for my dissertation and doctorate. While I had a vested interest in the successful completion of my research study, I remained acutely aware of the need to complete my study in an ethical manner. Therefore, I took every effort to avoid any undue manipulation of my participant's narratives when I collected, coded, and analyzed their data. I was also in the role of graduate student and, as such, regularly conferred with the chair of my dissertation committee and other peer reviewers for advice on research design and data analysis. Lastly, I had always planned to use the results of my study to teach others about the culture of inductive teachers, whether through conference presentations or published literature. Therefore, my ultimate role as the researcher in this study was to gain authentic knowledge on inductive teachers, from their perspective, so that I might be able to teach others about the culture of inductive teachers and add to the educational literature on this topic.

### **Potential Contributions of the Research**

My study puts into words the *culture* of inductive teachers from their perspective, and this in and of itself is perhaps the most significant contribution of my research. Additionally, however, my research adds to the literature on inductive teachers in the following ways. First, my study was limited to secondary teachers who have worked in the profession five years or fewer, which is a population of teachers who—statistically—are highly likely to have already left the profession. Second, my study is investigating why, from a qualitative perspective, inductive teachers stay in the profession. As noted in the literature review, the breadth of data available on teacher attrition and retention factors is expansive. However, the depth of and explanation behind the data from the perspectives of inductive teachers is limited. Third, my study was

conducted from a theory-building perspective, with the potential of offering the educational community research-based themes on inductive teachers regarding what brought them into the teaching profession and what motivates them to stay. Fourth, my study has the possibility of being the start of a new longitudinal study on the career patterns of inductive teachers. Last, new teachers, preservice teachers, and individuals who think they might want to become teachers may benefit from reading the insights of individuals not far from their own stage of professional development.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education. Over the course of six weeks in the winter of 2011-12, I interviewed 11 teachers at their place of employment. In all, I spent an average of 56 minutes with each research participant. This chapter presents the findings through the insights of my research participants, and addresses the following research questions: (1) How do the participants describe their decision to become teachers? (2) How do the participants describe their professional entry experiences? (3) How does becoming a teacher change the participants' lives and views on the teaching profession? (4) What motivates the participants to stay in the teaching profession or leads them to leave the profession? and (5) How do the participants describe themselves as educators or as individuals? I present the major findings of my study as follows and conclude with a summary of the five thematic claims that emerged from the research.

### **Findings: Initial and Focused Coding**

The research participants' personal interview transcriptions yielded approximately 110 pages of data. While the personal interviews were my primary data collection tool, I also accumulated 44 pages of questionnaire data, 11 pages of field journal entries, and 11 pages of field notes. As noted earlier, my 11 study participants represented 10 different schools and eight different school districts within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, my participants were equally represented by gender (i.e., 6 males and 5 females) and were diverse in age, ranging from age 23 to 41. The participants' demographic data and the settings in which they were employed allowed for the collection of qualitative data with both depth and breadth among a broad range of conditions.

I used initial coding as the first step in my data-analysis process. Initial coding is the process of taking research data and organizing it into categories. At the start of my initial coding process, I searched for similar phenomena within my personal interview research data. Because I had five major interview questions along with the questionnaire data, my initial coding strategy was to group my participants' responses from each major question by their corresponding probing questions (which can be viewed in Appendix F). Then, I searched for similarities in my participants' answers using the four generic categories of (1) repetition, (2) indigenous categories, (3) analogies, and (4) *a priori* themes to provide structure to the process. Finally, I used focused coding to reduce the 20 categories I identified into six similarly themed groups. The initial and focused coding results are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1

*Initial and Focused Coding Results*

| Identified Phenomena   | Themed Grouping  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Likes building relationships.   | Relationships    |
| 2. Teachers were and are influential in own lives.   | Relationships    |
| 3. Family influence is strong (both before and after becoming a teacher).  | Relationships    |
| 4. Teaching was a natural and/or implied career choice.  | Relationships    |
| 5. The decision to enter the profession was a gradual process.   | Relationships    |
| 6. Relationships with colleagues are highly valued.  | Collegiality     |
| 7. Heavy workloads and negatively perceived teaching environments cause significant stress but do not quell the desire to teach. | Collegiality     |
| 8. Likes teaching his or her content area.   | Lifelong Learner |

| Identified Phenomena   | Themed Grouping                         |
|--|---|
| 9. Teachers with diverse educations and employment backgrounds also reflected diverse teaching assignments in current place of employment. | Lifelong Learner                        |
| 10. The perceived and actual workload of teaching was as expected.   | Lifelong Learner                        |
| 11. Patience, empathy, and knowledge are necessary characteristics for teachers.   | Personal Characteristics                |
| 12. Enjoys being a teacher and wants to remain in profession.  | Personal Characteristics                |
| 13. Males appear more cognizant of their teaching salaries than females.   | Personal Characteristics                |
| 14. More male teachers exhibited predominant “career” teacher traits (Smethem, 2007).  | <i>A Priori</i> Theme: Teacher Typology |
| 15. More female teachers exhibited predominant “classroom” teacher traits (Smethem, 2007).   | <i>A Priori</i> Theme: Teacher Typology |
| 16. The two oldest teachers exhibited dominant “master” teacher traits (Mitchell et al., 1987).  | <i>A Priori</i> Theme: Teacher Typology |
| 17. Two of the youngest teachers exhibited dominant “instructor” teacher traits (Mitchell et al., 1987).                                   | <i>A Priori</i> Theme: Teacher Typology |
| 18. A majority of the teachers exhibited dominant “coach” teacher traits (Mitchell et al., 1987).  | <i>A Priori</i> Theme: Teacher Typology |
| 19. Wants to be a positive influence and/or mentor.  | Mentoring                               |
| 20. Teaching is a way to “give back.”  | Mentoring                               |

In summary, the six themed groupings that emerged from the initial and focused coding stage of my data analysis are: (1) relationships, (2) collegiality, (3) lifelong learner, (4) personal characteristics, (5) *a priori* themes, and (6) mentoring. The next step in analyzing the research data was to search for relationships and/or patterns in the participants’ responses within each of the six groupings. The relationships and/or patterns that I identified were then linked with one of

the five research study questions, providing a synopsis of the similarly themed answers from the study participants to each question. The following sections present each of the five major research questions, the themed grouping(s) most related to each question, and quotations from the study participants that reflect the significance of the identified theme(s) to the research question.

### **Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #1: How do the participants describe their decision to become teachers?**

Data analysis showed that the desire to build and maintain relationships was the primary reason why the study participants became licensed teachers. This section presents the results from the *relationships* thematic grouping of my research study, segmented into the three categories of relationships as teachers, relationships with teachers, and relationships with family members. All the participants had significant levels of involvement with various tutoring, coaching, peer mentoring, and/or group leadership positions, along with positive relationships with their own teachers and family members, before entering their formal teacher-preparation programs. The results from this thematic grouping suggest that the ability to form meaningful relationships was a primary factor in the participants' decision to become teachers.

**Relationships as teachers (before licensure).** The decision to become a teacher was reported as a gradual process by most of the research participants. While two participants identified teaching as a career goal in early elementary school, and another participant noted that becoming a teacher was “kind of just implied” due to his interests and family background, the remaining eight teachers did not identify teaching as their career of choice until, at the earliest, high school. Two participants identified teaching as a career choice in high school, four participants recognized their desire to become teachers during their mid to late undergraduate

years, and two participants chose to become teachers after earning degrees and working in other professions. Of the participants who decided to become teachers during or after their mid to late undergraduate years, a similar theme emerged: They were recognized and accepted by others in successful teaching relationships before the participants themselves recognized the level of successful teacher-student relationships they were able to facilitate.

“I was majoring in [XYZ], and I started working as a tutor, and I really enjoyed that. I was having a lot of success; I had a lot of kids asking to be in my tutoring sessions, and [XYZ] was not really doing it for me. So I figured teaching was a good way to go from there.” (9)

“They learned not to [suggest I become a teacher] because I got mad at them. Everybody in my family does math, or science, or is a teacher, or both! I vowed to be different. Two of my professors knew that about me and had to . . . let me come to my own conclusions.” (10)

“I had people comment, ‘You really seem to have a gift for teaching’ . . . . It was really experiences outside my vocation that caused me to think about teaching.” (6)

“I did do the [XYZ mentoring] programs once in high school . . . and we went into the middle schools and talked . . . . When I was making the decision [to become a teacher] it helped; seems small, but I remember going back and thinking about that.” (4)

While the participants who decided to become teachers during or after their mid to late undergraduate years took longer to recognize their natural ability to teach, all the study participants had significant levels of involvement with various tutoring, coaching, peer mentoring, and/or group leadership positions before entering their formal teacher-preparation programs. For example, a small sample of my participants' self-reported questionnaire data regarding their paid and volunteer work experience showed that three study participants had been teacher's aides, three more provided tutoring or taught small group classes, and another had worked as a coach before applying to teacher licensure programs. Furthermore, these results excluded my participants' listed work experience that was left undated on the questionnaire, or work experience that was performed while already enrolled in teacher licensure programs. In summary, the data suggest that the role of teacher existed as part of my participants' identity—whether recognized or not by the participant—before teaching was ever professionally pursued as a career choice.

If *teacher* was part of my participants' identity before they enrolled in teacher licensure programs, then the frequently noted theme of teaching being a natural, or even implied, career choice of my research participants would be logical. Eight of the participants identified teaching as a natural career choice and/or had a difficult time picturing themselves doing other professions.

“I always feel like there's certain jobs out there that it's natural to do it, and you don't have to think about it and it's common sense . . . . I think that when I try to picture myself in a different position, I don't see it fitting nearly as well as teaching is.” (4)

“First thing is just I enjoy it, I love it, like I said nothing else that I can think of that I’d rather be doing.” (9)

“I just think that it’s what I’m most talented at, in addition, which makes it something I most enjoy. And [my content area] is something that has come easily to me. And, I haven’t even thought of something else that I would be good at doing and enjoy so much.” (8)

“It’s come easier to me than maybe I thought it would. It just seems like what I’m doing now, the job itself, comes a lot easier to me, and makes more sense than anything else I’ve ever done.” (6)

Overall, the data show that my participants perceived their decision to become teachers a natural career choice, and their ability to facilitate successful teacher-student relationships was apparent even before entry into teacher licensure programs. So, in continuing to work backwards in deciphering the factors that may have influenced the participants’ entry into the teaching profession, two more groups of people were identified by my participants as having significant relationships with them before they became teachers: (1) former teachers, and (2) family members.

**Relationships with teachers (before licensure).** When I asked my participants specifically if anyone gave them advice, encouragement, and/or suggested that they should become a teacher, six research participants recalled that other teachers or coaches had encouraged them to enter the profession. However, it was interesting that the remaining five participants noted at various levels of certainty that their decision to become a teacher was their

own idea, or that support from family, friends, and/or other teachers came only after they made the decision to enter the profession. When I asked my participants what they thought influenced their decision to become teachers—a similarly themed question as above—only one more teacher out of that group of five mentioned the influence of a teacher. However, when I asked the participants who inspired them (and I clarified in the personal interviews that whomever they identified could be living, deceased, and/or historical figures), the four remaining participants who had not already indicated that teachers were influential in their decision to become a teacher identified family members who had significant roles as educators. Specifically, two of the participants had parents who both worked in education their entire professional careers, and the other two participants identified family members who worked as pastors or missionaries for close to three decades.

“They [my teachers] wanted to see me be successful and they asked the right questions and were involved and it was [because of] that influence that I am successful today, and their influence got me there.” (3)

“I remember from a very young age thinking school was amazing and really admiring my teachers . . . . Hopefully I’m giving to [my students] some of what my teachers gave to me . . . they really impacted my life.” (5)

“Growing up I always had good role models and I think I kind of want to pass on the torch of good male role models in kids’ lives because I think that is lacking a lot these days.” (11)

“My middle school band teacher . . . served as the principal chair of the Navy band. Which means he’s a pretty incredible saxophonist. And all the people he was with there went on to get higher degrees and teach saxophone at college . . . and throughout the whole time he knew he still wanted to be a middle school teacher . . . . That’s inspiring when so many people hope to attain the level that he did, and think that teaching middle school is below that. And he did not.” (8)

My participants’ entire influential relationships list was composed of former teachers and family members. Of the participants who did not specifically mention the influence of teachers in their youth, the influence was somewhat implied due to family circumstances such as having professional educators as parents. Therefore, all the participants had significant, positive relationships with educators during their youth that influenced them to enter the teaching profession.

To summarize the *relationships* thematic grouping, all the study participants had significant, positive relationships with educators that influenced their decision to become teachers. As noted earlier, all the participants, as well, had significant levels of involvement with various tutoring, coaching, peer mentoring, and/or group leadership positions before entering their formal teacher-preparation programs. In addition, a majority of the participants identified teaching as a natural career choice and/or had a difficult time picturing themselves doing other professions. A final factor that appeared to influence a majority of my participants’ entry—as well as retention—in the teaching profession was the significant, positive relationships the participants identified as having with family members.

**Relationships with family members (before and after licensure).** I recognize that this entire section has been an attempt to provide insights on influences that brought the participants

into the teaching profession. However, I included the family relationships that were identified by my participants both before and after licensure in this segment because of the overwhelming significance most of my participants placed on the family relationships they were a part of at all stages in their lives. When explicitly given the opportunity to identify anyone who was influential or inspiring to them at various times throughout the personal interview—and without the questions specifically alluding to the role family, friends, or other teachers may have played—10 of the 11 participants repeatedly identified family members, often throughout various points within the interview. The significance of these family relationships is shown through the following examples.

“My wife inspires me the most. Especially in this profession . . . . What she has accomplished has been pretty phenomenal [given circumstances in her personal life].” (1)

“My dad, he’s [been] an educator for his whole life, he’s been through everything . . . . I talk to him a lot . . . . It makes it easy having someone that you can have those conversations with outside of your own school.” (4)

“My mom has always been a big influence, and she always told me I could do whatever I wanted . . . . But [there isn’t anybody] . . . besides people close to me, that I admire.” (5)

“My mom, and you know mostly because she encourages me like crazy. She was valedictorian and graduated magna cum laude in college and school was a very big part of her life and so it was also a big part of my sister’s and my life, as well.” (12)

“My dad . . . even though he did all those things [i.e., coach, teach], still [made] it important that family was important as I grew up, and still [made] sure there was time that he spent with my brother and I . . . [and] the way he treated my mom, the way he treated us, the values he set for our family . . . I’ve kind of followed in his footsteps.”  
(11)

One participant did not give significant mention of relationships with family anywhere within her personal interview. However, this individual was also the only participant to identify the desire to have a professional role in mentoring other inductive teachers upon their entry to the profession, saying “I think that kind of goes along with liking teaching, you like to help other people get settled in” (9). In addition, this participant shared that she “didn’t have any big role models or anything” (9) and that students succeeding were her biggest inspiration. I note this participant’s emphasis on recognizing the significance of her relationships within her educational community, despite the omission of recognizing family relationships.

Regarding family relationships, the data show that the majority of the participants perceived their family relationships to be significant factors in their lives, both before and after entry into the profession. My participants were, overwhelmingly, individuals who put a high value on the relationships they were a part of. One participant even said, when asked what piece of advice that he would want his students to remember, that “I’d say it’s all about relationships and the relationships that you form throughout life and the way you treat people. You know, leadership is all about that. And, I think regardless of what profession you’re in it’s all about relationships” (11).

**Summary for the relationships thematic grouping.** Building, maintaining, and enjoying relationships with students, colleagues, friends, and family were frequently identified

themes throughout the personal interview transcriptions. It became apparent that the importance of positive relationships was felt—if not recognized—by my research participants long before they became professional educators. Specifically, the *relationships* thematic grouping produced the following insights about this sample of inductive teachers. First, all the participants were recognized and accepted as being the teacher in teacher-student relationships before becoming licensed teachers. *Teacher* was already who they were, and part of their identity. Second, the participants' decision to enter the profession was a natural, or even implied, career choice. Third, all the participants had significant, positive relationships with educators during their youth that influenced them to enter the teaching profession. Fourth, the participants were, overwhelmingly, individuals who put a high value on their family relationships. Last, all the participants identified the development of positive relationships with their students as a professional goal. My data support the conclusion that the desire and ability of my participants to build and maintain significant relationships was a principal reason why they entered, and remain in, the teaching profession.

**Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #2: How do the participants describe their professional entry experiences?**

The participants vividly recalled their entry experiences into the teaching profession. When I asked my participants to summarize their experiences as a new teacher for each of their years of their teaching experience, three major similarities emerged: (1) The participants placed a high value on their relationships with colleagues, (2) they had a strong desire to be department contributors, while remaining humble regarding their colleagues' experience, and (3) even participants with significant, negative experiences in the profession wanted to remain as educators. This section presents the results from the *collegiality* thematic grouping of my

research study, segmented into the above three categories. The results from this thematic grouping suggest that collegial relationships are highly desired and valued by the participants, and that negative experiences with administrators and/or colleagues did not translate into a dislike for the teaching profession.

**Collegiality (relationships with colleagues).** The data analysis showed that the participants desired and appreciated the practical and emotional support of their colleagues during their inductive years. Additionally, those participants with the most support from their colleagues had the most positive recollections of their professional entry experiences.

“When I talked to [my current department head] about possibly becoming a teacher and moving up here, he was excited and saw this as an opportunity to collectively share knowledge and further his program. He really encouraged me, of course, with the hopes that I would teach here . . . . I felt very welcomed here, [the XYZ] department is a pretty close-knit group. We’re able to share information and ideas and not really feel like somebody is trying to overpower somebody else and tell them what to do.” (1)

“[My colleagues] really helped me . . . . When I found out I was teaching [XYZ], I told them, you know, ‘I really need help here.’ And they just gave me everything they had in terms of lesson plans and how to do things.” (6)

“We hang out and debrief after work most days, you know, before we go home, we just stop and grab something to eat and can talk about anything or anyone. And, so it’s made me feel very comfortable with making decisions in a new place. Because I know that the

administration is supportive of me. And, I do think that's a unique situation, that I can be such good friends right off the bat with my colleagues and my administrators." (8)

The quotations above represent the significance all the participants placed on positive collegial relationships. Participants who received both practical and emotional support from their colleagues felt supported and accepted by their colleagues. For the few participants who did not have a strong network of collegial support—especially during their first year of teaching—the absence of collegiality was strongly felt.

"[My] first year . . . I didn't have an advocate that said, 'Wait, you know what? That schedule is not something we should ever give a 1st year teacher, let alone a 5th or 10th or 15th.' [An advocate] would have said, 'That's inequitable and we shouldn't do it.' I wish I would have had an advocate because I didn't know any different." (3)

"Because I did my student teaching here nobody really acknowledged that I was a new teacher. There was the expectation that, 'Oh, you were here before, you know what you're doing, here's some budget information, here's all your bank accounts, have fun.' I had maybe one observation all year, and that was just an administrator in my classroom at all. And, it was very much swim on your own." (5)

A common theme among the participants who experienced poor collegial relationships was the desire to prevent experiences like theirs from happening to other inductive teachers.

In summary, my participants could not overemphasize how much they valued the colleagues who were mentors and friends to them throughout their inductive years. Based on

workload, student population, and school location, there were five participants whose first-year teaching placements were more challenging than those of the other six participants' placements. Three of those five participants had challenging relationships with coworkers, as well, and for use of a better word felt badly about their first year of teaching. These three participants did not feel bad about their efforts in the classroom; however, the lack of support and acceptance from their colleagues and/or administrators led to two of my participants, especially, to feel bad about themselves.

**Collegiality (desire to be department contributors).** All my participants recognized themselves as both takers and sharers of information with their colleagues. In addition, a majority of my participants had the desire and/or wisdom to display humility toward their colleagues with more teaching experience.

“When we have department meetings, they are looking to me as they would anyone else about what I have to contribute, what’s going on in my class, [and] asking for new ideas. At the same time I feel my role is to humble myself before their years of experience, and learn as much as I can from them.” (2)

“I’ve actually been able to offer some things to them that they’ve found helpful. So my role is as a listener, but I’m also confident enough to offer my ideas about what I think might work, and I think, generally, I’m pretty quick to show my appreciation to them for how they help me. And, I also like the fact that I can be an encourager . . . it’s come pretty natural to me to have an encouraging word for a teacher . . . who is kind of down about how things are going, and I try to remind them of that they are a really good teacher and have had lots of successes.” (6)

Along with a majority of my participants, the above two participants displayed an intense desire to both learn from their colleagues as well as find ways to give back of themselves to their colleagues. Those participants who appeared to be the most accepted by their colleagues also *overtly* displayed humility in regard to the experiences and knowledge of their colleagues. Despite success in the classroom, full social acceptance as department members did not automatically occur for some of my participants, as the following quotation illustrates.

“[I] kind of expect[ed] some of that camaraderie in [my] school. And, it’s not there. I’ve had to learn from that lack of interaction or the interaction that I’ve tried to create that if I want to become better that I need to go ask for help . . . . There are some that I interact with that I don’t understand how they think their style of teaching is effective . . . . So there’s been sometimes where I feel that I need to teach them things that they are not doing that might help them.” (5)

The participant quoted above felt significantly isolated from her colleagues during her first two years of teaching experience, even though she was demonstrating notable success in the classroom and with her extra and co-curricular teaching assignments. For example, a team she coached took third place in the state championship, the national scores on her students’ publications increased from the previous year, her students sold out of the school yearbook for the first time in school history, and she worked her way up from a part to full-time teaching schedule by the middle of her second year of employment. It is unknown whether or not this participant entered the profession with humility toward her colleagues, becoming jaded toward them only after not feeling accepted, or if little humility was shown toward her colleagues from the start. Either way, there was a noticeable difference in the perceptions this participant had

toward her colleagues, and her colleagues' competencies as educators, versus the remaining participants in my study. While all my participants displayed varied levels of humility toward their colleagues, in general, those participants who displayed less humility also appeared to have fewer positive, significant relationships with colleagues.

In summary, the majority of the participants expressed a strong desire to be significant and valued department contributors. Additionally, all the participants noted their desire for collegial support, with perhaps the following reflection summarizing the perceptions of the group most succinctly.

“I’d say . . . [the] first years that you teach I think it’s so important to . . . [have] support as far as colleagues that teach similar subjects as you . . . . There were years that I had that and years that I didn’t and the years that I did have that was, oh my gosh, so much easier than having to come up with everything on your own, [it’s] night and day.” (11)

My participants, overwhelmingly, wanted their colleagues to be teachers to them. However, the participants who verbalized the most humility toward their colleagues, as well as desire to give back to their colleagues professionally, also appeared to have the strongest levels of acceptance and support from their colleagues. Collegiality, in the broadest sense, involves shared responsibility among a group of individuals. While collegiality was extremely important to all my participants, some participants understood the give and take of collegiality better than others and, as such, had stronger collegial relationships to show for it.

**Collegiality (negative experiences did not quell the desire to teach).** Five of my participants shared significantly challenging inductive experiences. Three of the five participants

were assigned challenging workloads under difficult circumstances, and the remaining two participants experienced significant tension with administrative and/or collegial relationships.

“Teaching [XYZ] at that school was very tough; the one [with the severely inadequate facilities] . . . . Especially like psychologically, just moving up here, and going ‘oh my gosh, this is what I moved up here [for], this is my job is teaching here?’ . . . . [I] could only do so much with what I was given there . . . . So that was a very, very difficult experience. That was definitely a low point in my career.” (11)

“We teach five classes a day, and I would have four different classes every day all year. Nobody in my department had a schedule like that . . . . I would be here by 7:15 [or] 7:20 and would work until 5:00 or 6:00 or 7:00 at night every night and then I coached [XYZ] and [XYZ], too. Not only was I starting all my lessons from scratch for four different preps a day, but I was also coaching; it was a lot, it was too much.” (3)

“Because of how [the students] were used to behaving in class and getting along with their teacher, once I pushed them a little bit they decided they didn’t want to be in [my class] anymore. And so it was disappointing to me . . . [and] also challenging from an administrative standpoint. When the numbers go down when you first get here and you have to just wait for them to get built back up. When you’re at central office, looking at the number of kids in each class and its lower than it should be, there’s not a whole explanation on a sheet of why that is. That’s challenging.” (8)

The first two of the above quotations are from participants in their fifth year of teaching, and both participants had a difficult time meeting their own expectations as educators in their second and first year of teaching, respectively. The third quotation was from a third-year teacher reflecting on his first year of teaching. All the above participants were no strangers to hard work, as reflected in their prior work and educational experiences, but the workload expectations that were placed upon them during their early years of teaching strained their own physical and emotional health.

Two additional participants experienced significant tension with administrative and/or collegial relationships in their first year of teaching. With regard to professional relationships, it became apparent when listening to the full account of these participants' stories that their first-year experiences were crushing to their egos and morale.

“Feeling like I had to fight for myself was pretty discouraging. Having other teachers come to me and say ‘You know your job isn’t really yours, and you’re not getting hired back,’ and just rumors like that and when administration won’t tell you even when you ask, ‘Okay, I’ve heard this, can you please talk to me?’ . . . . It just felt like being drug through the mud . . . . It lasted almost all summer. It was the back and forth; and then at the last second, something else happened, and now we need you again.” (5)

“There was an issue that happened with [me and] three other first year teachers in the [XYZ] School District. The principals observed us, gave us ‘did not meets’ on our evaluations, told us it was no big deal, and then terminated our contracts three weeks later, without any more observations, without any more support, we were done . . . . A week before the hearing, there went from nothing in my permanent file to 10 pages of

evidence, supporting [and] detailing all the supports I had been given and the ways I had continued to not measure up.” (10)

As second-year teachers, neither of the above two participants appeared concerned with their ability to teach content to their students. Participant 5 was very proud, in fact, of the successes her students were achieving with regard to classroom work and competitions related to that work. However, these two participants were significantly wounded by the way other colleagues and/or administrators treated them as first-year teachers.

Despite the described challenges, all the above listed participants are still happy with their choice to become teachers and want to remain in the profession. Participant 11 and Participant 10, however, did not remain at the schools where they had the challenging workload or collegial relationships, respectively. Both participants are content in their current teaching placements; Participant 11 is now teaching subjects he enjoys in an appropriately outfitted facility and Participant 10 is now teaching where she feels respected by her colleagues and administrators. The other three participants—Participants 3, 5, and 8—have remained at the schools where their challenging experiences occurred. Participant 3 has taken on various leadership positions at the school to promote equitable practices within the school community and Participant 8 is enjoying increasing student numbers in his academic and co-curricular programs. The remaining participant has started to find some solace in new administrative leadership, noting, “I’ve definitely noticed . . . the difference between an administrator that is involved and that knows his teachers and some that are not” (5). In summary, heavy workloads or poor collegial relationships caused significant stress for the above participants, but those experiences did not quell their desire to remain in the profession.

**Summary for the collegiality thematic grouping.** The *collegiality* thematic grouping produced the following data about my sample of inductive teachers. First, collegial relationships—or the absence thereof—were the most significant difference between participants who viewed their professional entry experiences as manageable versus stressful. Second, my participants who verbalized the most humility toward their colleagues, as well as desire to give back to their colleagues professionally, appeared to have the strongest levels of acceptance and support from their colleagues. Finally, even participants who were assigned heavy workloads and/or had negative experiences with their colleagues still enjoyed teaching and remained working as teachers. In summary, the results from this thematic grouping suggest that while collegial relationships are highly desired and valued by my participants, even heavy workloads and/or negative experiences with colleagues do not dissuade my participants from remaining in the profession.

**Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #3: How does becoming a teacher change the participants' lives and views on the teaching profession?**

The participants' answer to question three might be best summarized as follows: "it didn't." When I asked multiple questions, phrased differently, attempting to decipher if becoming a teacher changed my participants' lives, or views of the teaching profession, their answers revealed the following similarities: (1) They liked teaching their content area, and enjoyed sharing their knowledge with others; (2) the participants with the most diverse educations and employment backgrounds also reflected the most diverse teaching assignments in their current place of employment; and (3) the perceived and actual workload of teaching was as they expected. In summary, the participants were teaching in content areas they had already been interested in before becoming teachers and were prepared and capable of handling the

workload their administrators assigned them once they were hired. This section presents the results from the *lifelong learner* thematic grouping of my research study, segmented into the above three categories, and shows how becoming a teacher did not significantly change the participants' lives or views on the teaching profession.

**Lifelong learner (content area).** The participants' interview data overwhelmingly reflected both my participants' enjoyment of learning and enjoyment of the content area they were teaching. Additionally, the aggregate of the data showed that a history of enjoying learning—and a desire to learn more—was prevalent, giving credence to the participants' status as lifelong learners.

“A huge reason to stay in the profession and my current job [is] . . . Just to experience more students, different types of students, different types of [XYZ content area].” (8)

“I am someone that has always enjoyed learning, if I find something I don't know about, I try to dissect it, to understand it in more detail so I can understand it, why it does this . . .” (1)

“I view my role as someone who can influence the way they think about learning, and education, and lifelong learning. It's something that's really important to me, in my life. Like I never want to stop being a student, to never stop learning about new things.” (2)

“I really do have a passion for [XYZ content]; I was a [XYZ] major, so I do very much enjoy the process of [doing XYZ content], or whatever, and I also really love the process of teaching.” (7)

It was apparent throughout the aggregate of my data that the participants enjoyed being students as well as teachers. They all enjoyed the content areas that they were teaching, and they all expressed the desire to continually improve upon their abilities as teachers. My participants' enjoyment of learning and desire to teach aligns well with the idea that *teacher* is who these participants are (versus something that they became), which is a concept that was also discussed earlier in the findings for research question one. In summary, the participants displayed the characteristics of lifelong learners through their descriptions of the enjoyment and fulfillment they experience as both teachers and learners.

**Lifelong learner (diversity of teaching assignments).** There was a very clear distinction between the education and life experiences of the research participants who taught a varied class load and the research participants who taught primarily the same class each day, repeated times. The data analysis shows that the participants were assigned responsibilities in areas that were comfortably aligned with their abilities and interests. The divide was too clear between the education and life experiences of the participants and their assigned work responsibilities to assume that the diversity—or relative uniformity—of their class loads happened by chance, as displayed in Tables 2 and 3. Participant numbers remain unidentified in the following tables to avoid potential comparisons to other quotations in this document.

Table 2

*The Educational and Life Experiences of Participants with Diverse Teaching Loads.*

|   | Education                                     | Life Experience  | Current Teaching Load   |
|---|---|--|---|
| A | 1 BS, 1 MS, and 1 M.A.T.                      | Prior career (10 years), age 35  | 3 different preps in same subject area* with 1 prep (of the 3) for ELL students |
| B | 1 BA, 1 M.A.T.                                | Teaching experience outside the United States, age 26                          | 3 different preps in 2 subject areas  |
| C | 1 EMT Certification, 1 BS, 1 BA, and 1 M.A.T. | Diverse education, parents w/o college education, age 28                       | 5 different preps in same subject   |
| D | 1 BA, 1 BS, and 1 M.A.T.                      | Diverse education, parents w/o college education, age 28                       | 5 different preps in 3 subjects   |
| E | 1 BS, 1 MBA, and 1 M.A.T.                     | Prior career (14 years), teaching experience outside the United States, age 41 | 2 different preps in 2 subjects**   |
| F | 1 BA, and teaching credentials                | Prior career (1 year), teaching experience outside the United States, age 29   | 2 different preps in 2 subjects***  |

*Note.* The letters A through F identify the research participants without using their participant number, and are simply used to show that each row displays the results of one participant.

\* “Three different preps in same subject area” means, for example, the participant teaches only math classes, but three of them are different math classes (e.x., algebra, geometry, and statistics).

\*\*This participant was asked to teach a core content area subject (outside of his or her license endorsements) with little notice and initially on an emergency basis. \*\*\* This participant, in five years of teaching, has taught students ranging from fifth grade to seniors in high school, has worked in four different schools, and has taught seven different subjects.

Table 3

*The Educational and Life Experiences of Participants with Relatively Uniform Teaching Loads.*

|   | Education           | Life Experience   | Current Teaching Load     |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------|
| G | 1 B.S.              | Teaches near hometown, both parents are educators, age 26.  | 3 preps in same subject   |
| H | 1 B.S. and 1 M.A.T. | Teaches in hometown, one parent is an educator, age 25.   | 2 preps in same subject   |
| I | 1 B.A.              | Hometown is in another state, one parent works in education, age 24.  | 4 preps in same subject   |
| J | 1 B.S.              | Hometown is in another state, both parents work in a similar field as the participant (similar content area), age 23. | 1 prep in same subject*   |
| K | 1 B.S., 1 M.A.T.    | Teaches near hometown, lives with parents, age 25.  | 2 preps in two subjects** |

*Note.* The letters G-K identify the research participants without using their participant number, and are simply used to show that each row displays the results of one participant. \* This participant works part time with a current teaching load of one class, taught multiple times. However, this participant was also asked to create the curriculum for a different class in the same subject area for the upcoming school year. \*\* This participant works part time.

To present the most accurate and fair comparison between the participants in Table 2 and Table 3, I want to note that participants A through D teach in or near their hometown, and participants E and F have hometowns in other states. Therefore, there is a similar comparison between the two groups regarding where my participants grew up and where they are teaching now. Perhaps even more relevant, however, is the similarity between the two groups regarding what types of schools they attended as a youth (i.e., public, private, urban, suburban, rural).

Only two of the participants (both from out-of-state, one in each group) lived in cities and/or attended high schools with significantly different demographics than the demographics of the city they are currently living and/or working in.

In summary, the data show that there is a difference between the education and life experiences of the participants in Tables 2 and 3. The participants with more diverse backgrounds have been assigned more diverse class loads. Additionally, most of my participants live in cities and teach in schools similar to the ones they grew up in as children.

**Lifelong learner (workload as expected).** The interview data show that the majority of my participants found the workload of teaching to be as they expected. While time was listed frequently as a commodity most of the participants did not feel like they had enough of, their overall perceptions of the perceived and actual demands of the profession were accurate. Many of the participants did note, however, that nothing could have prepared them, emotionally, for the task of teacher. Participant 4 noted, “Obviously, you can never prepare yourself for the things that I’ve experienced.” Participant 3 echoed the same sentiments, saying, “I didn’t have a clue before actually sitting behind a desk, and given the keys, and here you go, you’re a teacher now, and now I’m responsible.” However, regarding workload and professional expectations, a comment by Participant 9 reflected the sentiments of a majority of my participants: “[My life is] not that much different, I mean, it was mostly a transition from doing homework to making homework, basically. Not that much different overall.” Only Participant 5 stressed that her workload was more than expected, saying, “It is phenomenally harder than I ever imagined . . . . It is definitely the most challenging thing I ever done and is way harder than I would have ever thought.” It should be noted, however—and this is quite interesting—that this teacher has a teacher typology of a “classroom” teacher (Smethem, 2007). Teacher typology data is presented

in the results for research question five and in Table 4. In summary, however, Participant 5 was the only participant in Table 2 (above) not to fit the “career” teacher typology (Smethem, 2007). This finding suggests that the workload assigned to this teacher—despite her qualifications—does not align well with her teacher typology and, as such, causes significant stress.

**Summary for the lifelong learner thematic grouping.** In summary, my data support the following three conclusions in the *lifelong learner* thematic grouping: (1) My research participants are, and have always been, lifelong learners, (2) the diversity of what my participants are interested in was reflected in their teaching assignments, and (3) teacher typology should be considered when workloads are assigned to inductive teachers. In summary, the majority of my participants were teaching in content areas they had already been interested in before becoming teachers and they were prepared and capable of handling the workload their administrators assigned them once they were hired.

#### **Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #4: What motivates the participants to stay in the teaching profession or leads them to leave the profession?**

The research data showed that the personal characteristics of patience, content knowledge, empathy, and enjoyment of the profession provided some insights into factors that influence the motivation of my participants to remain in the teaching profession. This section presents the results from the *personal characteristics* thematic grouping of my research study, segmented into the following three categories: (1) patience, empathy, and knowledge, (2) enjoyment of the profession, and (3) perspectives on money. The results from the first category showed that patience was identified as a necessary trait by all the participants, while empathy and knowledge were recognized as necessary by the “career” and “classroom” teachers, respectively (defined, below). Regarding the second category, all the participants indicated that

they liked being teachers or working in education, and all but one participant indicated that they would choose to enter the profession again given a second chance. Regarding the third category, the topic of money was a relatively unimportant point in the interview data, excluding the perspectives of the two male research participants with young children living in their household. In summary, the data showed that my participants' personal characteristics provided some clarity as to reasons why they were finding teaching an enjoyable profession. However, the ability to identify specific, commonly shared reasons for why the participants were choosing to stay in (or leave) the teaching profession remained somewhat elusive.

**Personal characteristics (patience, empathy, and knowledge).** All the participants identified patience as a personal characteristic necessary for teachers to have. Nine participants specifically stated that patience was an important characteristic, and the two participants who did not mention the word patience demonstrated their ability to display patience. Other words for patience include perseverance, endurance, and tenacity; the two participants who omitted saying but did display patience did so through some relatively extreme teaching experiences. For example, Participant 8 (in his 3rd year of teaching) petitioned the teacher's union for a memorandum of understanding in order to teach more than a full time class load—resulting in less overall prep time and no additional pay—because he “wanted to teach the [beginners] . . . [and] was frustrated with the acclimation to my style of teaching, so I wanted to take it all.”

“It's interesting in [a XYZ] program, because you take over from what one [teacher] has built: A certain program, a certain way about them, they have certain expectations. And when a new [teacher] comes in, if I don't work exactly the same way, you know, if I don't have the same expectations or want to go in the same direction, it's a lot about changing a culture . . . and so the first year was just getting by, the second year was trying

to instill my morals a bit. And just get the program in a direction that I wanted it to go.”

(8)

Additionally, Participant 10 (in her second year of teaching) had an emotionally difficult first year of teaching, feeling blindsided when the administration recommended, in February, her termination at the end of the academic school year. This participant shared, “I felt really betrayed, because I had sought my administrator for help, and he threw me under the bus.” Without the desire to remain employed at this particular school, even if it had been an option, this participant challenged the contract termination with the school board and teacher’s union because she felt so strongly about the injustice of the experience, especially as a first year teacher.

“I didn’t want anybody to have to experience what I’d experienced ever again. It’s not fair to have to deal with that, when you’re dealing with everything else that’s difficult in your first year of teaching. That’s just not fair.” (10)

“I was so burned out, I was so upset, I was so hurt, and had my confidence punched in the face. I couldn’t hardly stand on [my] own two feet anymore. That was year one.” (10)

In summary, patience was identified and/or displayed by all the participants as a necessary personal characteristic for teachers.

In addition to patience, empathy and content knowledge were two more characteristics that were commonly identified by the participants as being necessary for teachers. However, there was a significant difference between the six teachers who identified empathy as a necessary

trait for teachers and the five teachers who did not. The teachers who identified empathy as a necessary trait showed dominant “career” teacher typology while the teachers who identified content knowledge as a necessary trait showed dominant “classroom” teacher typology (Smethem, 2007). To further recognize the divide, only one of the six teachers who identified empathy as an important personal characteristic for teachers also recognized the importance of having strong content knowledge. Teacher typology is discussed further in the *a priori* themes segment of research question five. Briefly, however, “career teachers” are defined by Smethem (2007) as perceiving themselves to be “committed to teaching as a long-term, permanent career with ambitions for remunerated promotion” and “classroom teachers” are defined as perceiving themselves to be in the profession long-term and are generally “content to remain in the classroom with the pupils” (p. 470).

While five of the six career teachers did not mention content knowledge as a necessary personal characteristic, their personal academic achievements indicated that they had strong content knowledge of their subjects. As a group, the career teachers held a cumulative total of 13 college or university degrees (averaging 2.1 degrees per career teacher) to the eight degrees held by the classroom teachers (averaging 1.6 degrees per classroom teacher). Perhaps more telling, four of the six career teachers held Master’s degrees, with two of those four having two Master’s degrees, and another one of those four having two Bachelor’s degrees and an EMT certification in basic medicine. Additionally, the career teachers taught more diverse class loads than the classroom teachers. For example, the career teachers were responsible for teaching an average of 3 different classes per academic year (e.g., a workday consisting of teaching three classes requires three significantly different lesson plans), to 2.2 different classes per classroom teacher. In summary, content knowledge was not specifically noted as a personal characteristic

necessary for teachers by most of the career teachers; however, content knowledge was definitely not lacking in their résumés or current teaching loads.

While the five classroom teachers did not mention empathy as a necessary personal characteristic, their personal interview transcriptions did reveal specific instances where they demonstrated empathy toward their students. However, if empathy is understood as the ability to understand the feelings of another, the classroom teachers primarily had empathy for the different instructional needs their students had within the classroom.

“I make sure my special ones have [seminar] with me at a time that I’m going to be able to give them my time because I know they are going to need that and that’s why they’re there.” (5)

“There are different words you can use that mean the exact same thing but for some reason that word means so much more to that student than this student and this student works well with that word and when they have those ‘ah ha’ moments it’s so wonderful.” (7)

“I think one of the biggest things is trying to motivate students who don’t want to look like they care; because I think everyone cares a little bit . . . [I] just try to be goofy myself, so they don’t feel like they have to be cool and impress anybody.” (9)

In contrast to the classroom teachers, the career teachers shared views of empathy beyond instructional needs.

“I have a variety of students in here with different situations at home; [I] try to differentiate between not just in instruction but in my expectations. Like, one of my students right now works late every night, and is going to school full time, and wants to take this advanced program that I teach, and because she got a C last trimester she want to quit, because a C is not acceptable to her, not acceptable to her family, her parents. And, she just thought that the easiest way was for her to quit. I helped her understand that a C is still great for everything else that she has going on in her world, and for her to still be able to experience the class and learn, not only the information but the skills that she’ll gain from the class is worth the C, and that she needed to change the way she thought about it.” (3)

“[I] started to realize that my own education was a really positive experience in my life and I started to realize that it’s not for most people, most people have a really tough time in high school . . . I felt fortunate in that aspect and wanted to be able to help people potentially have a similar experience . . . [Education as] a justice oriented profession appealed to me a little more as I got older.” (2)

“We just had a meeting today, an IEP meeting, and the boy we met with he had failed first trimester, and now he has a B, and I think a lot of that has to do with me just really encouraging him, not getting on him about what a goof off he is, but rather saying, ‘hey, I really saw you doing well working in that group’ or ‘you really had a good idea the other day in class, it seemed like you got it quicker than the other kids did’. So, my positive experiences have really come when I look intentionally to give kids positive feedback who generally aren’t used to getting positive feedback.” (6)

In the interviews, both the career and classroom teachers displayed their abilities to show empathy to their students. For example, the career teacher participants, quoted above, showed a keen awareness for the different academic needs of students based on their students' *personal* situations. In contrast, the classroom teacher participants, quoted earlier, showed a keen awareness for the different academic needs of their students based within their students' *classroom* environment.

In summary, the way empathy was shown toward students was different between career and classroom-type teachers. The data show that empathy was understood at a broader level of awareness for the career teachers, and that the career teachers had a self-reported awareness of empathy as a necessary personal characteristic of teachers. Nonetheless, both types of teachers have different strengths as educators, and the implications of these findings are further discussed in chapter 5.

**Personal characteristics (enjoyment of the profession).** As stated earlier, my research data show that all the participants indicated that they liked being teachers or working in education, and all but one participant indicated that they would choose to enter the profession again, given a second chance. The participant who was noncommittal to choosing the profession again noted, "That's a hard question to answer. I do enjoy what I do, at the same time there are things I don't enjoy . . . Lots of meetings . . . Difficult classroom management stuff . . . At this point, [it's] hard for me to say yes or no" (1). However, if all the participants were similar in that they enjoyed being teachers, the difference was in the self-reported intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they perceived from being in the profession. The most common intrinsic rewards specifically identified by the participants included the good feelings that came from:

(1) relationship building, (2) students achieving success, and (3) giving back and/or helping people. The most common extrinsic rewards specifically identified by the participants included: (1) students, parents, and/or community members saying “thank-you” and (2) the family-friendly work schedule. However, there was not a majority consensus on the value of any of the rewards; each of the above rewards only had between three to five participants who identified the same reward. The one notable consistency in the extrinsic rewards grouping was that only teachers with young children at home identified the teaching lifestyle (e.g., work hours, vacation schedule, and the ability to do some work at home) as a reward of being in the profession.

There was similar inconsistency when the participants described their motivations for remaining in or potentially leaving the profession. Other than answers pertaining to enjoyment or building relationships to related questions regarding why the participants wanted to stay in the profession, the reasons they choose to stay or potentially leave the profession were remarkably inconsistent. Only two categories had three or four participants identify similar factors relating to why they might potentially leave the profession: (1) poor administrative support and/or collegiality with peers, and (2) wanting a job with less responsibility and/or workload. In summary, the reasons that might lead the participants to stay in or leave the teaching profession and the perceived rewards they receive from being in the profession are inconsistent and difficult to generalize even among my small sample of participants.

**Personal characteristics (perspectives on money).** While two teachers specifically mentioned money as a reason for potentially leaving the profession, the topic of money was a relatively unimportant point throughout the personal interviews. However, both of the male teachers with young children at home shared similar perspectives on the amount of money teachers make. To clarify, only one other male and one other female participant had children

living in their households, an older teenager and an infant, respectively. All the study participants with children in their households were married, and their spouses were also employed. As shown below, both of the male teachers with young children at home were cognizant of their salaries as related to their lifestyle.

“I can think the only motivator to leave would be money. I just can’t, I like all the other perks about this. It really is just the money, I think. I like the hours, I like—I love—the people I work with, I love everything else, [just] being able to provide.” (11)

“[Material things are not] that important to me, but I do see that yeah, there are maybe some things that we’ve done without; but just learning that to be able to maybe do without some things . . .” (6)

One female teacher (without children) also noted that if she were on her own financially, money would be a reason for potentially leaving the profession.

“If I was on my own financially, probably the money, especially [working] half time. I don’t make that much, fresh out of college, it’s not like I have wealth saved up.” (9)

In summary, the topic of money was relatively insignificant within the personal interview data, excluding the above examples. Other references to money were very brief (e.g., two participants noted spending their own money on teaching supplies) and four participants made no reference at all to money throughout their entire interview.

**Summary for the personal characteristics thematic grouping.** Regarding the *personal characteristics* thematic grouping, patience was identified as a necessary trait by all the

participants, while empathy and content knowledge were recognized as necessary by the career and classroom teachers, respectively. The instruction-focused empathy shown by the classroom teachers, versus the relationship-focused empathy shown by the career teachers, might simply be character differences between the two groups. However, because five of the six career teachers were either fourth or fifth year teachers and/or older, second-career teachers, these participants' level of teaching experience and/or emotional maturity might be factors related to their broader application of empathy in the classroom. Additionally, while all the participants identified that they enjoy being in the profession, trying to decipher the reasons behind the enjoyment revealed inconsistent results. Rewards, motivations for remaining in the profession, and motivations for leaving the profession were, decidedly, individualized for each participant. Finally, money was a relatively unimportant topic among my participants. In summary, my data support the following two conclusions with regard to the study participants: (1) The self-reported awareness of empathy or content knowledge as necessary personal characteristics of teachers provided insight into the participants' level of emotional development and career-stage maturity, and (2) attempts by administrators or educational policy-makers to use a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective as there was little consensus between my participants on the perceived rewards of teaching or motivations for remaining in the profession.

**Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #5: How do the participants describe themselves as educators or as individuals?**

My research data showed that teacher typologies as defined by Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987) provided an accurate way to condense and describe how the participants viewed themselves as educators. Additionally, the data showed that all the participants viewed themselves as mentors to their students, and a majority of them recognized the significant role

they filled as role models in their communities. This section presents the results from the *teacher typology* and *mentoring* thematic groupings of my research study. In summary, the results from these thematic groupings suggest that accurate *a priori* themes regarding teacher typologies have been established in other literature, and that the mentoring of students, community members, and other teachers is a significant professional responsibility of teachers.

***A priori* theme: Teacher typology.** I found the teacher typology theories of Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987) to accurately describe my participants' ethos based on their interview data. Smethem studied 18 secondary inductive teachers and suggested that inductive teachers could be consistently classified within a threefold typology consisting of career, classroom, and portfolio teachers. Smethem defined career teachers as those who perceive themselves to be "committed to teaching as a long-term, permanent career with ambitions for remunerated promotion" and classroom teachers as those who perceive themselves to be in the profession long-term and are generally "content to remain in the classroom with the pupils." The typology of portfolio teachers, defined as those who envision "teaching as a temporary measure or actively consider leaving teaching, en route to another, perhaps, temporary career," did not apply to any of my research participants (p. 470).

Mitchell et al.'s (1987) study on 15 teachers suggested three levels of categories to understand how teachers perceive their role and career orientations within a school:

- (1) achievement production versus child nurture, (2) keeping school versus teaching lessons, and (3) role definitions and career orientations (i.e., master teachers, instructors, coaches, and helpers). With regard to the first category, achievement production refers to teachers who believe that the primary purpose of school is achievement and learning while child nurture teachers believe the primary purpose of school is to nurture child growth and development. With

regard to the second category, keeping school refers to teachers who believe that “education consists of a set of ‘experiences’ which children encounter, learn to cope with, and eventually master” while teaching lessons refers to teachers who believe that students learn through “high-quality engagement in particular lesson activities, and they take a special interest in stimulating and directing that engagement” (p. 64). Finally, with regard to the third category, the teacher typologies of master teacher, instructor, coach, and helper provide a name for teachers using the first two categories of data for reference. Master teachers are characterized by keeping school and producing achievement, instructors by teaching lessons and producing achievement, coaches by teaching lessons and nurturing children, and helpers as keeping school and nurturing children.

During data analysis, I categorized my participants’ perceptions and experiences as secondary teachers according to the teacher typologies as defined by Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987). The process I used to categorize each teacher by typology is as follows. Using the spreadsheet I created during my initial coding process—which ended up being almost 500 rows deep and 15 columns wide—I looked at the aggregate of all the participants’ interview data by research question. For example, as my first research question included four probing questions, I looked at my first participant’s answers to all four of the probing questions to see if his responses showed any similarities to a teacher typology as defined by Mitchell et al. (1987) and Smethem (2007). Then, I placed a tally in the appropriate categories that I felt his responses best aligned with. For example, my first participant showed dominant career (Smethem) and master (Mitchell et al.) teacher typologies throughout his personal interview data. However, not all participants were as easy to classify. If I could not determine a dominant typology within a participant’s answers to one of the five research questions, I put tallies in all the appropriate categories. For example, participant three showed dominant career (Smethem), master, and

coach (Mitchell et al.) teacher typologies throughout her personal interview data. In attempt to avoid bias, I was careful not to refer to the typologies I assigned a participant in previously analyzed questions. For example, I analyzed and classified my participants' responses to research question one and then placed those results out of sight before I analyzed and classified my participants' responses to research question two.

In summary, I followed the above coding and classifying process for all 11 participants. Therefore, at the end of the analysis, each participant had a minimum of five tallies—one for each research question—that categorized the participant into one (or more) of Smethem's typologies. Correspondingly, each participant had a minimum of five tallies that categorized the participant into one (or more) of Mitchell et al.'s typologies. The results are shown as follows in Table 4.

Table 4

*Teacher Typologies as Defined by Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987), Categorized by Research Participant.*

| Participant | Career | Classroom | Master | Instructor | Coach |
|-------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|-------|
| 1           | *****  | **        | *****  |            |       |
| 2           | *****  | **        |        | **         | ****  |
| 3           | *****  |           | ****   |            | **    |
| 4           | *****  |           |        |            | ***** |
| 5           | **     | *****     |        | **         | **    |
| 6           | *****  |           | *****  | **         |       |
| 7           |        | *****     |        | *****      |       |
| 8           | **     | ****      | **     | *          | ****  |
| 9           |        | *****     |        | *****      |       |
| 10          |        | *****     |        |            | ***** |
| 11          | *****  | **        |        |            | ***** |

*Note.* The career and classroom typologies arise from Smethem's (2007) research; the master, instructor, and coach typologies arise from Mitchell et al.'s (1987) research. The categories of portfolio teacher (Smethem) and helpers (Mitchell et al.) were not significantly applicable to my research participants and as such were excluded from this table.

As shown in Table 4, most of the research participants identified strongly with one typology each from Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987). I found the typologies to describe each participant accurately, and noticed the following themes from the aggregate of data: (1) More male teachers exhibited predominant "career" teacher traits, (2) more female teachers exhibited predominant "classroom" teacher traits, (3) the two oldest teachers exhibited

dominant “master” teacher traits, (4) the two youngest teachers exhibited dominant “instructor” teacher traits, and (5) a majority of the teachers exhibited dominant “coach” teacher traits. In summary, the teacher typology results accurately described and represented the attitudes and perceptions of my participants.

**Mentoring.** All the participants expressed the desire to be a positive influence and mentor to their students. Given the results to the *relationships* thematic grouping (re: research question one), the desire of my participants to be mentors is not surprising. Still, the attitudes and perceptions my participants shared regarding why they wanted to be a positive influence and mentor to their students were significant and provided insights into how they viewed themselves both as educators and individuals.

“Being a teacher is like you’re a mentor . . . I think it’s, there’s more that goes into teacher than just someone who stands up there and just tells them, teaches them about [XYZ] or something. You’re not just giving them facts, you’re a role model.” (11)

“You’ve got to be a good role model. I think you have to make good decisions. And, you have to have morals that are of high standing . . . It’s something that when your students look at you they say, ‘I could be that person’ and [it’s] something that parents look at you and say, ‘okay, I trust this person to take care of [my] children.’” (4)

“You’re extremely influential; the kids are sponges and they listen and they watch you, you have to be a positive role model. You can’t mess up one time. I live in this community; it’s really hard sometimes because I’m not just a teacher in this building I’m

a teacher to them in the community. If they see me out in their community I'm their teacher. That's a very big responsibility." (3)

As reflected through the above quotations, the participants understand the job of teacher to include the responsibility of being a role model. The definition of teacher for my participants, therefore, includes being an individual worthy of emulation. A majority of the participants recognized that their role as *teacher* did not stop at the end of their school day, nor did it stop with their students. The three participants quoted above, who all fit the career teacher typology, noted a strong preference for *being* the people to emulate in their communities. *Teacher*, for these participants, was who they were, all the time. Participants 9 and 7, quoted below, fit the classroom and instructor teacher typologies and displayed a slightly different perspective on their positions as role models.

"[I] try to help let the parents know that their students can take on more than they think that they can . . . . Sometimes parents need a little help understanding that their kids are not 12 anymore." (9)

"Playing the role of encouraging them to be just better citizens, better people, and suggesting that if they are doing something that maybe is kind of borderline, maybe being an example to them of 'maybe you should go on the better side of that line.'" (7)

The above two participants still viewed themselves leaders, but their views on leadership were decidedly more classroom focused. For Participants 9 and 7, lessons on leadership generally happened within the context of a classroom lesson plan, and even interactions with parents were

deemed successful (or not) around instructional goals. Life lessons, therefore, were usually perceived as being taught within content lessons by the classroom/instructor teachers.

In summary, all the participants had an acute awareness of their position as potential role models and mentors to their students, and a majority of them expressed specific ways they were role models or mentors in their community, as well. The career teachers were more likely to perceive their position of teacher as synonymous with the position of community role model, and the classroom/instructor teachers were more likely to view their leadership sphere of influence from within their classroom walls. In summary, my data support the conclusion that my participants' educational and personal ethos includes the responsibilities of being a role model and mentor within their classrooms and/or communities.

**Summary for the teacher typology and mentoring thematic groupings.** The teacher typologies, as defined by Smethem (2007) and Mitchell et al. (1987), provided an accurate and concise way to describe how the participants viewed themselves as educators, as presented in Table 4. Additionally, the participants' attitudes and perspectives on mentoring provided insights into how they viewed themselves as educators and individuals. Specifically, the participants all recognized their responsibility as mentors for their students, and a majority of them specifically recognized their position as role models in their community. Earlier in this chapter I reported the participants' desire to be mentored by other teachers, and one participant specifically identified the desire to be a mentor other teachers, saying, "I think that kind of goes along with liking teaching, you like to help other people get settled in" (9). In summary, the results from these thematic groupings suggest that accurate *a priori* themes regarding teacher typologies have been established in other literature, and that the mentoring of students, community members, and other teachers are significant professional responsibilities of teachers.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, six thematic groupings emerged from the aggregate of my participants' comments regarding their attitudes and perceptions as inductive teachers. As noted in Table 1, the six thematic groupings included: (1) relationships, (2) collegiality, (3) lifelong learner, (4) personal characteristics, (5) teacher typology, and (6) mentoring. While I understand that my findings are not generalizable to a population beyond these study participants, I offer the following five thematic claims regarding inductive teachers. First, the high desire and ability of inductive teachers to build and maintain significant relationships is a principal reason why they enter, and remain in, the teaching profession. Second, the notable presence or noticeable absence of collegial relationships is the most significant difference between inductive teachers who view their professional entry experiences as manageable versus stressful, respectively. Third, the use of *a priori* teacher typologies provides a valid and reliable way to gain insight into the level of emotional development and career-stage maturity of inductive teachers, thus suggesting the most appropriate workload demands. Fourth, inductive teachers perceive decidedly different rewards for being in the profession, and attempts by administrators or educational policy-makers to use a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective. Finally, my research suggests a connection between inductive teachers with strong *teacher* identity and their inclination toward being a mentor not only of students, but also of other colleagues and community members. A discussion of the above five thematic claims is presented next in chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

### Discussion

The purpose of my study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary education. I used personal interviews, within a microethnographic research design, to explore four issues related to inductive teachers: (1) the process of entering the teaching profession, (2) significant personal and professional transitions, (3) motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and (4) perceptions on self-defined roles. My final sample included 11 licensed, inductive teachers from 10 different schools spanning eight school districts within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. A major objective of my study was to provide insight into the influences that brought the study participants into the teaching profession and what motivated them to stay, and I am confident that my study results identify phenomena—related to inductive teachers—with the potential to be used in future, and possibly more generalizable, research designs.

While my research problem explored four issues related to the attitudes and perceptions of inductive teachers, five thematic claims emerged from the results of my study. First, the high desire and ability of inductive teachers to build and maintain significant relationships is a principal reason they enter, and remain in, the teaching profession. Second, the notable presence or noticeable absence of collegial relationships is the most significant difference between inductive teachers who view their professional entry experiences as manageable versus stressful, respectively. Third, the use of *a priori* teacher typologies provides a valid and reliable way to gain insight into the level of emotional development and career-stage maturity of inductive teachers, thus suggesting the most appropriate workload demands. Fourth, inductive teachers

perceive decidedly different rewards for being in the profession, and attempts by administrators or educational policy-makers to use a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective. Finally, my research suggests a connection between inductive teachers with strong *teacher* identity and their inclination toward being a mentor not only of students, but also of other colleagues and community members.

Concerning the four issues noted in my research problem, thematic claims one and two align with issue one (the process of entering the teaching profession), thematic claims three and four align with issue three (motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field), and thematic claim five aligns with issue four (perceptions on self-defined roles). My findings did not show any thematic claims in connection with issue two (significant personal and professional transitions), as there was a relative absence of answers from the study participants on this topic. While the possibility exists that I did not ask the right questions of my study participants with regard to the topic of personal and professional transitions, the possibility also exists that any personal or professional transitions that my participants experienced to date were not perceived as significant. For example, my findings did show that *teacher* is who my participants were versus something that they became—which was a concept that was discussed in-depth in chapter 4 under “Thematic Coding Findings, Research Question #1”—and therefore it would be logical that there would be little recognition of my participants for personal transitions that occurred once they became teachers. Additionally, as I was studying inductive teachers, there might not have been enough time for the participants to experience significant professional transitions (e.g., changes in teaching philosophy); therefore, this area in particular would be an excellent area for future study. Consequently, while I did not find thematic claims to address issue two of my problem statement, I do believe that the relative absence of data on this topic is an answer in and

of itself. My five thematic claims that address issues one, three, and four of my problem statement are discussed in further detail below.

**Thematic Claim #1: The high desire and ability of inductive teachers to build and maintain significant relationships is a principal reason they enter and remain in the teaching profession.**

With the data from the personal interviews as evidence, it appears that the underlying reason inductive teachers enter and remain in the teaching profession is their high desire and ability to build and maintain significant relationships. Inductive teachers who have remained in the profession do not appear to enter the profession—or even teacher preparation programs—without their identity already being that of *teacher* as demonstrated through personal and preprofessional teaching experiences. For example, the participants in my study were recognized and accepted as the teachers in teacher-student relationships before becoming licensed teachers, their decision to enter the profession was perceived as a natural career choice, they had significant relationships with teachers in their youth, and they placed a high value on family relationships. The primary motivator for my participants to remain in the profession was their high desire and ability to build and maintain significant relationships with their students. My results are consistent with the recent findings of Morgan et al. (2011) who found that frequently occurring and intrinsically positive events are what help to maintain teachers' motivation to remain in the profession. In summary, while the high desire and ability of inductive teachers to build significant relationships with students was not an unexpected finding, my results provide support for the significant role that family members, teachers, and preprofessional teaching experiences have in the development of future educators.

**Thematic Claim #2: The notable presence or noticeable absence of collegial relationships is the most significant difference between inductive teachers who view their professional entry experiences as manageable versus stressful, respectively.**

With the data from the personal interviews as evidence, it became apparent that one factor—the strength or absence of collegial relationships—consistently identified inductive teachers who perceived their professional entry experiences as manageable or stressful, respectively. Inductive teachers who had colleagues as mentors and friends viewed their inductive experiences as challenging but manageable. Even inductive teachers placed in difficult teaching circumstances reflected positively on their professional entry experiences if they had collegial support. For example, five of my participants had extremely stressful experiences as first-year teachers based on their assigned workload, student population, and school location; however, these types of challenges were perceived largely as simply hazards of the trade *unless* poor collegial relationships were a factor in the equation, as well. The two participants with supportive colleagues remembered, in great detail, the ways their colleagues provided encouragement, treated them as professionals, and helped them with unit and lesson planning. As first-year teachers, these two participants were most concerned with learning the culture of their school communities. In contrast, the three participants without supportive colleagues remembered, in great detail, the effort they had to put into making lesson plans, the difficulty of their assigned workloads, the challenges they had with their student populations, and/or the lack of support and acceptance they received from their colleagues. In summary, inductive teachers with supportive colleagues viewed work-related challenges much more benignly than inductive teachers without supportive colleagues.

My findings also showed that inductive teachers want their colleagues to teach and mentor them. It is perhaps not surprising that the inductive teachers who demonstrated the most collegiality toward their colleagues—doing things such as sharing ideas at department meetings, displaying humility with regard to the experience and knowledge of their colleagues, and purposely eating lunch and/or socializing with their colleagues—were also the inductive teachers who received the strongest levels of acceptance and support from their colleagues. Overall, collegiality was extremely important to all my participants; however, some participants understood the give-and-take of collegiality better than others and, as such, had stronger collegial relationships to show for it. In summary, my research results suggest that inductive teachers' strength of collegial relationships is the most significant factor concerning their perceptions of their professional entry experiences.

**Thematic Claim #3: The use of *a priori* teacher typologies provides a valid and reliable way to gain insight into the level of emotional development and career-stage maturity of inductive teachers, thus suggesting the most appropriate workload demands.**

The findings seem to confirm that a way to gain insights into appropriate workload demands for inductive teachers can be found by comparing inductive teachers' educational and life experiences with their teacher typologies as defined by Mitchell et al. (1987) and Smethem (2007). My participants' teacher typologies, educational and life experiences, and current workload demands showed consistent combinations of themes. For example, if the data from Tables 2, 3, and 4 are combined, it is not difficult to tell—even on paper—the educational philosophies of, and optimal working conditions for, a particular teacher. Teachers with narrowly focused résumés regarding their educational backgrounds and content area study, and whose personalities indicate a “classroom” and “instructor” teacher typology combination, are

most likely going to have the most professional success if their teaching assignments are similar to their résumés and, as such, are narrowly focused. In contrast, if an administrator needs a teacher to teach five different classes in three different content areas each day, a teacher with the above typology is not going to be a good fit for that position. He or she may be able to do the job, but will most likely experience significantly more emotional stress—as well as fewer intrinsic rewards—than if that position were filled by a teacher with a diverse résumé and a career/master or career/coach teacher typology.

In summary, the findings indicate that a way to gain insights into the career-stage maturity of and appropriate workload demands for inductive teachers can be found by comparing inductive teachers' educational and life experiences with their teacher typologies as defined by Mitchell et al. (1987) and Smethem (2007). This finding provides a way not only to quantify who the “right” teacher might be for a position but also predicts their optimal teaching load, estimated career trajectory, and current mentoring needs. For example, an administrator who understands the teacher typology theories of Mitchell et al. (1987) and Smethem (2007)—and who has an in-depth knowledge of the education and life experiences of the inductive teachers under his or her watch—can create job interview questions and classroom observation tools tailored to determine the career-stage maturity of their inductive teachers so that the best possible placement and mentoring decisions can be made. An administrator who does these types of purposive analyses is helping to control some of the workplace factors that inductive teachers have little control over upon entry to the profession, and is a way for an administrator to have an active role in helping his or her inductive teachers find their place in the profession.

**Thematic Claim #4: Inductive teachers perceive decidedly different rewards for being in the profession, and attempts by administrators or educational policy-makers to use a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective.**

The research findings suggest that while inductive teachers perceive decidedly individualized rewards for being in the profession, themes do emerge regarding the personal characteristics that inductive teachers believe are necessary for teachers. For example, all the inductive teachers in my study recognized the characteristic of patience as necessary for teachers, while different groups of inductive teachers identified the characteristics of empathy and content knowledge. *Empathy* and *content knowledge* ended up being trigger words, which accurately identified teachers who fit the “career” or “classroom” teacher typologies, respectively. In summary, the career (empathy) teachers displayed strong leadership abilities—they were the ones who were or who aspired to become department heads, administrators, professional development leaders, and/or high profile coaches—and they generally perceived the content they taught as a tool for teaching life skills in areas such work ethic, maturity, and self confidence. In contrast, the classroom (content knowledge) teachers were generally content to remain as classroom teachers for the duration of their career, they often perceived the content they taught as *the* tool that would have an impact on their students’ lives, and they were very aware of extrinsic indicators that measured student success (e.g., testing, awards, competitions).

In summary, just as different students have different educational needs, different teachers are best suited to meet the diverse needs within an educational community. For example, a school community misses out on using the strengths of teachers with different typologies if the faculty roster is heavy with teachers of the same typology or the culture of the school community does not recognize, respect, or understand the strengths inherent to each typology. My research

results showed that inductive teachers perceive decidedly individualized rewards for being in the profession and, as such, a one-size-fits-all approach to inductive teacher retention is not likely to be effective. Therefore, my finding of *empathy* and *content knowledge* as trigger words for identifying teachers' typologies is significant because teacher typology data provide a structure for understanding the motivations, educational philosophy, and career goals of individual teachers, thus giving educational leaders another method to understand the best ways to support the inductive teachers under their watch.

**Thematic Claim #5: The more that *teacher* encompasses an inductive teacher's personal identity, the higher the level of accountability that inductive teacher will have toward being a mentor of not only students, but also of other colleagues and community members.**

The data analysis revealed that inductive teachers' attitudes and perspectives on mentoring provided insights into how they viewed themselves as both educators and individuals. For example, while the identity of *teacher* was apparent in all the participants in my study—with the identity of *teacher* encompassing, but not limited to, the ability and desire to (1) build relationships, (2) remain lifelong learners, (3) consistently demonstrate patience, empathy, and content knowledge, and (4) be a mentor—some participants had a very broad awareness of *teacher* as being their identity no matter what their surroundings were. These teachers understood their role as *being* the people to emulate in their communities, while other participants had a *teacher* ethos that was decidedly more classroom and content-area focused. My findings showed that the more that *teacher* encompassed an inductive teacher's personal identity—meaning “this is who I am, all the time”—the higher the level of accountability that teacher had toward being a mentor of not only students, but also of other colleagues and community members. As *all* my participants wanted to mentor students as well as be mentored

by their colleagues, this finding is significant and warrants more research because those with the broadest perspectives regarding their identity as *teacher* showed the greatest desire and ability to fulfill the role of mentor all the time, no matter what the context. If the educational profession is going to start filling its ranks with teachers who understand their purpose as being mentors of students, mentors of teachers, and mentors within their communities, the need to hire teachers who view themselves as *teacher* in the broadest sense is necessary. *Teacher* is a lifetime leadership position.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Study**

I began this study with the belief that a careful analysis of the attitudes and perceptions of secondary inductive teachers had the potential to provide valuable insights on how best to mentor and encourage teachers through their early professional years. When completing the literature review, I found it noteworthy that a majority of the research on teacher attrition focused on the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession as opposed to focusing on the reasons they stay. In my research, therefore, I set out to find out why inductive teachers stay in the profession. Considering the sample population, my research produced the following findings: (1) Inductive teachers stay in the profession because *teacher* is not only their profession but also who they are and who they have always been; (2) the strength or absence of collegial relationships defines the perceptions of inductive teachers' professional entry experiences, with work related challenges perceived somewhat benignly by teachers with supportive colleagues; (3) a way for educational leaders to gain insights into appropriate and optimal workload demands for inductive teachers can be found by comparing inductive teachers' educational and life experiences with their teacher typologies as defined by Mitchell et al. (1987) and Smethem (2007); (4) *empathy* and *content knowledge* are trigger words which accurately classified my

participants by typology, thus providing insight into their motivations for remaining in the profession; and (5) the more that *teacher* encompasses an inductive teacher's personal identity—meaning “this is who I am, all the time”—the higher the level of accountability that teacher will have toward being a mentor of not only students, but also of other colleagues and community members. In summary, my research results did provide valuable insights on why inductive teachers remain in the profession, thus offering understanding on ways to best mentor and encourage inductive teachers through their early professional years.

The most significant limitation of my study is its lack of generalizability; I am aware that my study results are not generalizable to a population beyond the actual study participants. However, as my study was designed to build theory, the following suggestions are ways to test my findings and theoretical conclusions. Areas for future study based on my research include:

- Longitudinal research on the attitudes and career trajectories of inductive teachers who fit the typologies described in this study (i.e., career, classroom, master, instructor, and coach). It would be interesting to see if and/or when transitions occur in the educational philosophies of teachers throughout their careers.
- Longitudinal research on the entire faculty in individual schools to compare their teacher typologies, workload assignments, and perceived job satisfaction with their longevity at that school and/or in the profession.
- Case study research on inductive teachers who received targeted mentoring and support based their teacher typology data.
- Longitudinal research on the retention rate of teachers who are hired, placed, and mentored based on the findings of this study.

- Quasi-experimental research on various types of induction teacher programs (e.g., Professional Learning Communities, in-school teacher mentoring programs, and district level mentoring programs) to judge the relative effectiveness of various induction models.

In conclusion, if the responsibilities of teachers are to educate students, then the responsibilities of educational leaders are to ensure the proper support for teachers so they can do the best possible job educating students. Effective induction practices are an important part of protecting the integrity of the teaching profession. For example, by displaying the same teaching *ethos* toward their students, colleagues, and community members versus only toward their students, teachers show high integrity. By recognizing the influential role that effective induction practices can have on a school community, educational leaders such as preservice teacher educators, administrators, and faculty department chairs can provide the impetus for supporting effective inductive practices in educational communities.

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## Appendix A: George Fox University HSRC Initial Review Questionnaire

Date submitted: December 1, 2011

Date received: December 1, 2011

### GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY Human Subjects Research Committee

#### PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS INITIAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of Proposed Research: Exploring the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education: How do inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession, and what motivates them to remain in the field?

Principal Researcher: Jaliene R. Hollabaugh

Degree Program: Ed. D.

Rank/Academic Standing: Graduate Student

Other Responsible Parties: Ken Badley, dissertation chair; Amy Dee, committee member; Terry Huffman, committee member

#### **(1) Characteristics of Subjects (including age range, status, how obtained, etc.):**

My expected research participants include approximately 10 to 12 licensed, secondary-level teachers who work within a large metropolitan area of the Pacific Northwest. My research participants must be classified as inductive teachers (i.e., five years or fewer of teaching experience). I am expecting to gain entry and access to inductive teachers at three large public high schools (1000+ students) and one large private-religious high school (1000+ students). In addition, I expect to gain entry and access to approximately four at-large inductive teachers (i.e., teachers not from one of the above specific schools) through referrals from a M.A.T. professor and/or personal contacts of my own. While the only requirements of my research participants are that they be licensed secondary-level teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience, I am attempting to secure both male and female participants of diverse ages and ethnicities.

#### **(2) Describe Any Risks to the Subjects (physical, psychological, social, economic, or discomfort/ inconvenience):**

My participants are going to be asked a number of questions regarding the reasons they entered the teaching profession and why they plan to stay in the profession (or not). Depending on how each participant feels about their inductive-level teaching experiences, the answers to these questions might evoke a range of emotions (e.g., joy, anger, satisfaction, frustration, etc.) that I must be prepared to address with compassion and without bias. I do not foresee any physical risks. Any social or economic risks that have the potential to surface due to my participants' responses being recognized by a supervisor is mitigated with pseudonym labels. My participants may consider their involvement in my study to be an inconvenience as participation includes the following activities: 1) filling out a questionnaire, and 2) participating in an interview lasting approximately one hour. In an attempt to mitigate feelings of inconvenience, I plan to give my participants their questionnaires and interview questions approximately one week before their interview date. In addition, I will offer to bring a Starbucks drink to each participant at his or her interview session, and will interview each participant at a location of their choice (e.g., their school classroom, GFU library room) that is amenable to audio recording.

#### **(3) Are the risks to subjects minimized by (i) using procedures that are consistent with sound research design and that do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk, and (ii) whenever appropriate, using procedures already being performed on the subjects for diagnostic or treatment purposes? YES**

**Degree of risk:** My data collection tools (i.e., questionnaire and interview questions) will be vetted by my dissertation committee; no attempt to ask questions that expose my research participants to undue risk is planned nor expected.

**(4) Briefly describe the objectives, methods, and procedures used:**Statement of the Problem

The purpose of my study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary-level education. I will use the research design of personal interviews, within a microethnographic approach, to explore the process of entering the teaching profession, significant personal and professional transitions, motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and perceptions on self-defined roles. A major objective of my study will be to provide insight on the influences that brought the study participants into the teaching profession and what motivates them to stay.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: How do the participants describe their decision to become teachers?

Research Question #2: How do the participants describe their professional entry experiences?

Research Question #3: How does becoming a teacher change the participants' lives and views on the teaching profession?

Research Question #4: What motivates the participants to stay in the teaching profession or leads them to leave the profession?

Research Question #5: How do the participants describe themselves as educators or as individuals?

Research Design and Data Collection Methods

I plan to use the qualitative research method of microethnography to influence my research design and data collection processes. The purpose of ethnographic research is to thoroughly describe an individual culture, social group, or cultural experience through the perspectives of those in the study. I plan to study the cultural experiences of approximately 10 to 12 secondary-level inductive teachers and to use personal interviews as my data-collection technique. Within the umbrella of the personal interview process, I will use the data-collection devices of a field journal, field notes, personal interviews, and a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be used simply as a way to gather data on easily defined but individual attributes that would otherwise squander personal interview time. The overarching goal of ethnographic and microethnographic research is the expansion and/or creation of academic theory to help describe the cultural experiences of people; my study is designed with this theory-building emphasis in mind. My role in my research study will be to observe my participants, gather data with my data-collection devices, and interpret and present the findings.

**(5) Briefly describe any instruments used in the study (attach a copy of each):**

The study will use four instruments for data gathering. These instruments will be a:

1. Field journal (researcher reflection of research processes)
2. Field notes (direct observation of research participants)
3. Participant interview questions
4. Pre-interview questionnaire

Field Journal

I will use a field journal throughout my data-collection and analysis period to record my own personal reflections which will include: 1) notes on my own performance, 2) any necessary modifications that I feel need to be made in my study format and/or questioning techniques, 3) new questions that I believe might need to be asked of my participants, 4) follow-up notes, and 5) basic reflections on "how the research is going." My field journal outline is located in Appendix D.

Field Notes (Direct Observation)

As soon as I enter each interview site, I will begin recording observations in my field notes. I have designed a data-collection tool for this process, located in "Appendix E: Field Notes Instrument". The data collected will include, but is not limited to, the following: 1) participant attitudes towards the interview; 2) participant level of engagement in the interview process; 3) participant level of preparedness for the interview; 4) physical surroundings; and 5) other

relevant data that cannot be captured through an audio recording. My field notes tool has been designed to record the above data as objectively as possible.

#### Participant Interview Questions

Interviews will be conducted with each inductive teacher at an interview location of the participant's choice. The guide and probing questions are listed in "Appendix F: Guide and Probing Questions for Personal Interview." The guide questions were designed to allow the participants to describe—without undue influence or direction—their individual perceptions of their preservice and inductive teaching experiences, and how those perceptions influence their desire to remain in the profession. Interpretation of the interview data will consist of a process using initial coding, focused coding, and thematic coding.

#### Pre-interview Questionnaire

The pre-interview questionnaire will be used as a way to gather data on easily defined—but individual—attributes of my research participants that would otherwise squander personal interview time. The pre-interview questionnaire is designed to record basic demographic data of my research participants. The questionnaire will include, but is not limited to, the following questions regarding: 1) ethnicity; 2) age; 3) gender; 4) type(s) of college degrees earned; 5) type(s) of teaching endorsements earned; 6) the highest degree-attainment of the research participants' parents; 7) the field of employment of the research participants' parents; 8) the number and type of school(s) currently and/or previously employed at; 9) the average number of classes and subject(s) taught each day; 10) any paid or volunteer work experience before becoming a teacher; 11) if the research participant has family and/or close friends near his or her place of work; 12) home ownership status; and 13) if the research participant has dependents he or she is responsible for. This segment will facilitate the development of categories that can be used to compare the demographic information provided by my research participants to my literature review data and the results from my research participants' interview questions. The pre-interview questionnaire is located in Appendix G.

#### **(6) How does the research plan make adequate provision for monitoring the data collected so as to ensure the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of subjects?**

Confidentiality and anonymity of my participants will be ensured by assigning each participant a pseudonym that will be used in place of a name on all documents. No person shall be identified by name, and all records (such as the pre-interview questionnaire, interview question responses, my field notes, and my field journal) will be kept in locked files and/or on personal electronic devices, to which only I, as the researcher, will have access.

Prior to any collection of data, surveys, or interviews, all participants will receive a letter of consent which will describe the nature and purpose of the study. The letter of informed consent includes the following information: (1) explicit knowledge of the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; (2) what the central purpose of the study is; (3) the procedures to be used in data collection; (4) the procedures for protecting confidentiality; (5) the expected benefits for the participants; and (6) any known risks of participating in the study. The letter will specify that participation is purely voluntary and that permission to participate may be withdrawn at any time (Appendix D). The letters of permission will be kept in a locked file separate from other collected data. No data will be collected until final approval is secured from the George Fox University Human Subjects Committee (Appendix F).

In summary, completed questionnaires will be anonymous and kept in locked files and on privately owned electronic devices. Personal interviews will be conducted using a digital data recorder. All recorded materials and transcriptions will be kept in locked files and on privately owned electronic devices. Only I will have access to my research files, and exceptional care for the organization of both my hard and electronic copies of data will be paramount to minimize any losses or misplacement of sensitive and relevant data. To ensure anonymity, no names will be used in the course of reporting the study, nor will any personally identifying material be included. Finally, the destruction of any data that can be directly traced to the research participants will occur three years after the publication of my research in accordance to the IRB rules of ethical research.

**(7) Briefly describe the benefits that may be reasonably expected from the proposed study, both to the subject and to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Are the risks to subjects reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits?**

The purpose of my study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of a purposive sample of licensed inductive teachers in secondary-level education in attempt to provide a cultural analysis of inductive teachers. The particular goals of my study include exploring the process of entering the teaching profession, significant personal and professional transitions, motivations for remaining or not remaining in the field, and perceptions on self-defined roles. The more abstract objective of my study is to provide a possible theoretical explanation for how inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession. If I can help record, analyze, and share the insights of inductive teachers regarding what brought them into the teaching profession and what motivates them to stay—that is, how they “found or are finding their place” as educational professionals—hopefully more qualified inductive teachers will make it past the inductive stage. Darling-Hammond cites that approximately 30% of inductive teachers leave the profession within five years (as cited in Smethem, 2007). I want to discover possible explanations for this phenomenon because I aspire to offer new ways for individuals involved in the education, hiring, and training of inductive teachers to understand and care for those new to the teaching profession.

I can provide reciprocity to my research participants through honestly portraying their voices in any presentation of my research, carefully recording and writing the results of my study without undue manipulation of the data, and treating my participants with the utmost professional respect and courtesy. I can also offer my participants the knowledge that their participation in my study will add and hopefully improve upon the educational literature on inductive teachers.

**(8) Where some or all of the subjects are likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence (such as children, persons with acute or severe physical or mental illness, or persons who are economically or educationally disadvantaged), what appropriate additional safeguards are included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of these individuals?**

All of my research participants are adults and are voluntarily consenting to be involved with my research. All the personal interviews will be conducted at an appropriate location of each participant’s choice (e.g., at their school, at the GFU library). As there are no expected risks inherent to my research project—and since participation is voluntary—no additional safeguards are needed.

**(9) Does the research place participants “at risk?” Yes/No. If so, describe the procedures employed for obtaining informed consent (in every case, attach copy of informed consent form; if none, explain).**

No. Please see the answers to questions 2, 3, 6, and 8 for further assurance that all considerations for mitigating potential risk to the participants are in place.

**COMMITTEE REVIEW**

| HSRC Member Signature | Recommend<br>Approval | Conditional<br>Approval | Not<br>Recommended |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Chair _____           |                       |                         |                    |
| Member _____          |                       |                         |                    |
| Member _____          |                       |                         |                    |
| Member _____          |                       |                         |                    |

Comments (continue on back if necessary, use asterisk to identify):

## Appendix B: George Fox University HSRC Approval Letter

Title: Exploring the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education: How do inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession, and what motivates them to remain in the field?

Principal Researcher(s): Jaliene Hollabaugh

Date application completed: December 1, 2011

### COMMITTEE FINDING:



GEORGE FOX  
UNIVERSITY

School of Education

414 N. Meridian St., V124, Newberg, OR 97132

503.538.8383 | Fax 503.554.2868 | [soc.georgefox.edu](mailto:soc.georgefox.edu)

Dec. 13, 2011

Ms. Jaliene Hollabaugh  
Ed.D. Candidate  
George Fox University

Dear Jaliene:

This letter is to inform you that as a representative of the GFU Institutional Review Board I have reviewed your proposal for research investigation entitled “Exploring the Perceptions and Experiences of Inductive Teachers in Secondary-Level Education: How Do Inductive Teachers ‘Find their place.’” The proposal is approved.

Best wishes as you complete your research investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Huffman', written over a horizontal line.

Terry Huffman, Ph.D.  
Professor of Education  
Human Subjects Research Committee  
George Fox University  
(503) 554-2856

## Appendix C: Letter of Consent

### Letter of Consent

#### Exploring the perceptions and experiences of inductive teachers in secondary education: How do inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession, and what motivates them to remain in the field?

Dear Professional Educator,

My name is Jaliene Hollabaugh and I am an Ed.D. candidate at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. I am conducting research on the experiences of secondary-level inductive teachers (i.e., teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience). You are invited to engage in my research through 1) the completion of a questionnaire on your basic demographic data and 2) participation in a personal interview regarding your perceptions and experiences as an inductive teacher. The personal interview should last no longer than one hour. The interview questions are rather general and relate to your background, professional entry experiences, significant personal and professional transitions as a teacher, and motivations for remaining in the profession.

The findings of my study will provide greater insight on the self-reported cultural complexities and opportunities facing inductive-level teachers. In addition, my findings have the potential to provide a possible theoretical explanation for how inductive teachers “find their place” in the teaching profession; I aspire to offer new ways for individuals involved in the education, hiring, and training of inductive teachers to understand and care for those new to the teaching profession.

The risks associated with my research are minimal as both the questionnaire and personal interview questions are benign and presented primarily in open-ended formats. However, please remember that your participation in my study is voluntary, and you may decline to participate and/or decline to answer any question at your discretion.

The results of my study will be used to complete the requirements for a dissertation and doctorate and will also be shared at an educational conference and possibly in academic journal publication. All data will be analyzed and presented with the use of pseudonyms, therefore, no individual data will be personally identifiable to anyone but myself at any time. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked file cabinet; the personal interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed. All research materials (e.g., recordings, transcriptions, and signed consent forms) will be either locked in a file cabinet or secured with password protection on personal electronic devices. All relevant materials will be destroyed three years from the date the research is completed.

Thank you for your willingness to consider participating in my research study. Your participation, if you choose to do so, will be making a valuable contribution to inductive teacher educational research! If you have any questions regarding my research please contact me by email at [jrhollab@georgefox.edu](mailto:jrhollab@georgefox.edu) or by phone at 503-804-6628. If you would like to speak with my dissertation chairperson, you may reach Dr. Ken Badly by email at [kbadley@georgefox.edu](mailto:kbadley@georgefox.edu) or by phone at 503-554-2843.

If you understand the potential uses of my research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D: Field Journal Instrument**

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

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes on my performance as a researcher/interviewer:

Are there any needed modifications in my study format and/or questioning techniques?

Are there any new questions I should ask of future participants?

Are any follow-up notes needed (for me or my study participant)?

Basic reflections on “how my research is going”:

**Appendix E: Field Notes Instrument**

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

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of physical surroundings:

Participant level of preparedness for interview:

Participant level of engagement in the interview process:

Participant attitudes towards the interview:

Other relevant data that cannot be captured through my audio recording:

## **Appendix F: Guide and Probing Questions for Personal Interview**

Research Question #1: *How do the participants describe their decision to become teachers?*

- 1a. What influenced you to enter the teaching profession?
- 1b. What personal traits do you believe you have that make you a valuable teacher?
- 1c. Did anyone give you advice, encouragement, and/or suggest that you should become a teacher? If yes, who was that person and what was the context of the discussion?
- 1d. How would you describe your life before you became a teacher?

Research Question #2: *How do the participants describe their professional entry experiences?*

- 2a. How would you summarize your experience as a new teacher during each of the following years (if applicable)?  
Year 1:  
Year 2:  
Year 3:  
Year 4:  
Year 5:
- 2b. Please describe any significant professional relationships with your colleagues and/or administrators that have influenced you during your inductive years.
- 2c. How do you describe your role as an inductive teacher in relationship to your colleagues who have more teaching experience?
- 2d. Please describe significant positive, disappointing, and/or challenging experiences you have encountered during your inductive years.

Research Question #3: *How does becoming a teacher change the participants' lives and views on the teaching profession?*

- 3a. How do you define success in your sphere of influence at your school (e.g., inside the classroom, during co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, as a department or grade-level colleague, as a coach, as a mentor and/or someone being mentored, as a professional relating to the parents of your students)?
- 3b. How does your teaching experience to date match up with what you expected teaching to be like?
- 3c. Would you choose the teaching profession again? If so, why? If not, why?
- 3d. Would you advise other family members or close friends to become teachers? If so, why? If not, why?
- 3e. If you could give your students one piece of advice that you knew they would remember, what would it be?

Research Question #4: *What motivates the participants to stay in the teaching profession or leads them to potentially leave the profession?*

- 4a. What influences you to stay in the teaching profession?
- 4b. What would influence you leave the teaching profession?
- 4c. Describe any intrinsic rewards you perceive from your role as a teacher.
- 4d. Describe any extrinsic rewards you perceive from your role as a teacher.
- 4e. If you remain in the teaching profession, where do you see yourself in 5 more years? 10 more years? 20 more years?

- 4f. Describe the characteristics of people who you believe should become teachers.
- 4g. What do you perceive are significant difficulties, challenges, and responsibilities of being a teacher? How do you respond to these situations?

Research Question #5: *How do the participants describe themselves as educators or as individuals?*

- 5a. How do you describe your purpose or role as a teacher?
- 5b. Describe events, activities, and/or projects where you have completely lost track of time and were absorbed in whatever task or activity was at hand.
- 5c. Professionally, when do you feel uncomfortable and/or unprepared?
- 5d. Describe your typical day as an inductive teacher.
- 5e. Who inspires you, and why?
- 5f. Would you like to share or add anything else about your role as an inductive teacher?

## Appendix G: Pre-interview Questionnaire

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of years employed as a teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Please complete the following questionnaire and bring it to your scheduled interview date. Remember, your participation in this research study is completely voluntary, and you may decline to continue or decline to answer any question at your discretion. All the questions below have specific relevance to my study. If you wish to know the rationale behind any of the questions you are welcome to contact me for further clarification at [jrhollab@georgefox.edu](mailto:jrhollab@georgefox.edu) or at 503-804-6628 (cell). *Your participation is appreciated—thank-you! Jaliene Hollabaugh*

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Current school (place of employment): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date of hire: \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Is your current school public or private? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Approximate number of students at your school: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Approximate percentage of students on free or reduced lunches: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Approximate percentage of ESL students: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please comment on the ethnic diversity at your school (percentages, if possible): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Current teaching assignments (i.e., subjects): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. On average, how many classes and/or subjects do you teach each day? \_\_\_\_\_

14. On average, how many students do you have in each of your classes? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Grade level(s) taught: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Former schools (if any) in which you have been employed at (please indicate if public or private): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Length of employment at schools listed in question #16 (months and/or years): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Any former teaching assignments (i.e., subjects) not included in question #12: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Former grade-level(s) taught in question #18, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. All college and/or university degrees earned (please include type, major, school, and year of graduation): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. All teaching endorsements earned (please include subject and level): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Please list any college and/or university degrees and/or endorsements in progress AND expected completion date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Highest degree attainment of parents (please include level of degree, major, and school, if possible):

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. Field(s) of employment of parents (please include approximate number of years in each field of employment, if possible):

Mother \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. What paid work experience do you have, excluding your current teaching position?

Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26. What non-paid volunteer experience do you have? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you have extended family and/or close friends who live near your place of employment?

Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

28. What city/state is your hometown in? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Have you purchased a home near your place of employment? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you have dependents you are responsible for? Please describe (e.g., spouse or significant other, children, and/or extended family members): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

31. Does anyone else in your household contribute to the family income? Please describe who, and his/her field of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

32. What are your favorite hobbies and/or interests? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

33. Is there any other demographic information that you would like to share about yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_